

Expanding Rights, Gender, and Diversities

Concepts and Design Criteria in Public Buildings



Directorate of Architecture,
Ministry of Public Works
Government of Chile



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Foreword

Ministry of Public Works

The wide gap in the economic participation of men and women in our country frames one of the challenges the Ministry of Public Works faces in this area: to deliver on the government's mandate and Chile's commitments on gender equality and non-discrimination, contributing to more just, prosperous, and sustainable societies.

The fifth Gender Indicators Report in Chilean Companies—an annual study by the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economy, and Fundación ChileMujeres in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO)—shows that, as the level of responsibility within organizations rises, women's participation falls. Overall, women account for 38.8% of the workforce, a figure that drops to 23% in first-line management and 15.9% on boards.

The MOP has taken several steps to contribute to change. Among them, in public works construction we set a minimum percentage for women's participation and incorporated a gender perspective into risk-prevention bases. We also issued the first Ministerial Policy on Gender and Diversity, implementing procedures for reporting and sanctioning violence, workplace and sexual harassment, and enabling people within our organization to be recognized and to use the chosen social name.

In this context, we are proud to present this publication, which offers design criteria for inclusive public architecture aimed at creating democratic, welcoming spaces for all users.

We hope this text is amplified by all actors in the field—public, private, academic, research, and community.

I thank those who drove the preparation of this book and those working on equality of rights across the Ministry—in every region and service—and especially the team at the Directorate of Architecture, who led this project.

Since March 2023 I have led the Ministry of Public Works. I am the second woman to hold this office in the 138 years since this ministry was created. I close with this fact, which speaks for itself when addressing inclusion and progress on gender within this ministry.

Jessica López Saffie.
Minister of Public Works

Foreword

Ministry of Women and Gender Equity of Chile

This publication, an initiative of the Directorate of Architecture of the Ministry of Public Works, seeks to improve the quality of our country's public infrastructure by incorporating—throughout planning and implementation—the differentiated needs of all inhabitants, especially women and people of sexual and gender diversities.

Public infrastructure is not merely a set of neutral physical constructions. It comprises interconnected spaces that enable services, facilitate mobility, and shape life dynamics, creating opportunities in every territory.

The Government Plan of President Gabriel Boric prioritizes advancing toward a society that places the sustainability of life, care, safety, and the well-being of people and communities at the center.

In this direction, the Fourth National Equality Plan between Women and Men 2018–2030—the principal public policy instrument on gender equality developed by the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity—aims to address key gender gaps by strengthening public policies that guarantee the autonomy and full exercise of human rights of all women and girls, overcoming discrimination, prejudice, and resistance. Among its guiding approaches is interculturality and intersectionality, with goals (284 and 285) to ensure that all public services incorporate a gender perspective in the delivery of their policies, plans, and programs, and in processes related to inspections, regulations, standards, and laws.

The Ministry's work has been decisive in driving more inclusive, comprehensive, and effective public policies designed to address the diverse realities women face in Chile and to significantly improve their living conditions—promoting their well-being, autonomy, and full development in all areas of society.

Through gender mainstreaming across the State, we have advanced the incorporation of a gender perspective in all public policies and in initiatives such as this Guide, in coordinated work among ministries and regional and local governments. This tool seeks to respond to the varied realities faced by women in our country—rural, urban, Indigenous, sexually diverse, and migrant—ensuring that their needs and rights are considered across every area of State action.

Antonia Orellana Guarello
Minister of Women and Gender Equity of Chile

Foreword

Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning

Incorporating a gender and care perspective at the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning responds to the recognition that we are moving toward a care-oriented society, where inequalities in presence and use of public space still persist. Accordingly, we created a ministerial gender policy that has progressively integrated gender and care into MINVU's housing and urban projects.

We are working to advance methodologies that integrate—both in diagnosis and design—strategies to recognize the time and space needed for daily life, a central focus in the planning of public buildings. We created the Gender and Care axis within the Quiero Mi Barrio program and developed guidelines for community diagnosis and gender-sensitive design. These allow us to identify continuity across daily activities, make visible the unequal distribution of tasks and responsibilities by gender, and determine whether urban areas and infrastructure respond to daily needs.

During this administration we developed the concept of Just Cities, aimed at reversing urban deficits through timely territorial planning and investment. One of its key pillars is the Territory of Care, which recognizes that care has a spatial dimension and therefore requires facilities, places, and infrastructure. From this perspective, proximity to services in the neighborhood is vital for life and is linked to compact urban environments that provide access to more services in less distance, improving quality of life.

Another key factor guiding our decisions is the creation of the National System Chile Cuida, which seeks to install a new way of organizing care socially to improve the well-being of those who need care and those who provide it. Under this approach MINVU has developed Community Care Centers, facilities integrated with State and municipal services and articulated with urban parks, housing, and other public services. We also consider the life cycle by incorporating into the existing urban offer Assisted Living Homes for autonomous older persons and long-stay residential facilities (ELEAM) for those in situations of dependency.

As this publication by the Directorate of Architecture rightly emphasizes—and which we welcome—planning from a gender perspective implies considering all stages of human development and recognizing the interdependence between spaces of production and those of daily life. It means conceiving the city and territory as environments that accompany these dynamics, designing with territorial relevance, and articulating strategies that respond to diverse needs throughout the life course.

Gabriela Elgueta Poblete,
Undersecretary of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning

Foreword

National Directorate of Architecture, MOP

In recent decades, Chile has made notable progress on civil rights and public awareness of their essential role in coexistence. A central place in this landscape is the pursuit of gender equality—an area in which Chile has advanced, even as significant gaps remain in employment, pay, care, and more.

In public architecture, the challenge is to address the non-neutrality of the use and perception of built space, gender inequalities, and their impact on the territory and the infrastructure of daily life. The Directorate of Architecture places this challenge at the core of sustainable development, contributing to significant projects within national public policy at different urban scales, with quality architecture at the service of people in their diversity.

Public buildings that house functions such as safety, health, education, culture, and recreation, among others, have a decisive impact on people's lives—particularly women, who still assume most care and reproductive tasks and consequently are heavy users of these services. This publication responds to these concerns and aims, continuing an institutional reflection on public architecture and its appropriate use by the population in its social, cultural, gender, and territorial diversity. It proposes planning approaches and gender-sensitive, innovative design attributes that invite us to question whether traditional project decision criteria reflect androcentric perspectives, in order to foster change toward more inclusive and equitable public buildings and spaces.

In this line, the publication maintains that citizen participation is central to recognizing the needs of the most invisibilized groups—particularly on the grounds of gender—and highlights the need to advance women's inclusion in the construction industry, promoting policies and programs that integrate more women.

This publication will form part of the set of design-criteria guides developed by the Directorate of Architecture and made available to the public for the sound development of architecture across the national territory, especially that of Indigenous peoples. These are principles, guidelines, and criteria that I invite you to reflect upon, discuss, apply, and continue to disseminate.

Finally, I thank the expert advice of two architects with long trajectories and broad national and international experience in gender and women's rights—Olga Segovia and Ana Falú—whose interest in teaming with the Directorate of Architecture I value. I also thank the professionals within and beyond the MOP who contributed observations that improved the quality of this text.

As the Directorate of Architecture, we welcome the opening—within our Ministry—of spaces that generate visions and content that enrich the execution of institutional public building with innovative qualities.

Loreto Wahr Rivas
National Director of Architecture
Ministry of Public Works

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INTRODUCTION

The Directorate of Architecture of the Ministry of Public Works and Infrastructure of Chile, as the State's Technical Unit responsible for providing and ensuring the quality of public architecture under public policy mandates, seeks to contribute within its sphere to sustainable, inclusive, and participatory development across the country's diverse territories.

Within this mandate, the institution is expected to remain current in its management practices and to accelerate processes of social transformation; in particular, advancing the fulfilment of women's rights and gender equality in line with contemporary demands and government commitments. In this regard, different branches of the State are committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda. Of particular relevance is SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, a goal that requires addressing the current demands of society.

It is from this perspective that the present publication is framed, acknowledging the work carried out by the Directorate of Architecture and articulating it more closely with other actors—especially those capable of contributing to the definitions of public architecture that appropriately respond to the needs of citizens in their social, cultural, gender, and territorial diversity.

Throughout the Ministry's trajectory, there have been advances in this field. In 2009, the first Guide for the Application of Gender Perspective Criteria: Equitable Design, Building for All was published, conceived in the context of the 2006–2010 Gender Agenda promoted by the country's first woman President. The 2009 Guide sought “to reduce the existing gaps between men and women, in their evident interrelations, and in the different roles socially assigned to them. Moreover, the concept of Gender not only accounts for differences between the feminine and the masculine but also makes visible the relationships between men and women.”

Later, in line with the government's commitments regarding gender and universal accessibility, the 2016 edition of the Guide to Gender Perspective in Public Architecture: Building for All stressed the need “to deepen the incorporation of gender perspective criteria in all projects, so that they may be embedded from conception, thereby enabling the development of public architecture oriented toward greater equity in its design” (p. 3). In addition, following Supreme Decree No. 50 of 2015—issued under Law No. 20.422 on equal opportunities and social inclusion for persons with disabilities—the 2016 Guide also addressed disability as it intersects with gender considerations.

In light of these mandates, the Ministry issued in 2024 its New Institutional Gender Policy, aimed at consolidating respect for the principles of equality, freedom, and non-discrimination on the basis of sex; making visible gender-based discrimination, gaps,

and inequities; employing inclusive and non-sexist language; producing disaggregated statistical data for proper analysis and decision-making; and making progress toward integrating a gender perspective into the strategic products executed by each service, among other measures.

The present volume, *Expanding Rights, Gender and Diversities: Design in Public Architecture*, has as its primary objective to contribute to the improvement of the quality of public architecture and its appropriate use by citizens in all their social, cultural, gender, and territorial diversity. This is achieved through updated design guidelines that expand a rights-based approach, deepen a gender and intersectional perspective, and address the needs of greater inclusion, equity, and sustainability.

The content of this document is organized into four chapters.

The first chapter, *Public Architecture and Public Spaces for Today's Chile: Changes and New Responses for Inclusion*, highlights how social and demographic changes demand new approaches in building and the design of public spaces. It outlines the main gender-related dynamics currently present in Chilean society, within the broader context of transformations in households and family economies: population ageing and the feminization of old age; the use of time and its connection to unpaid work; disability and gender gaps; and identities and gender diversity.

Through data analysis, it illustrates key trends such as the increase in female-headed households—now nearly half of all households in the country—along with declining birth rates, the postponement or free rejection of motherhood, and rising life expectancy. Together, these factors indicate that Chile is experiencing both a slowing of population growth and an accelerated ageing process, compared to the same trend in developed countries.

This section underscores that the incorporation of women into the labour market—without a parallel reduction in their domestic and/or caregiving responsibilities—perpetuates inequities, gaps, and gender barriers. This reality is observed among younger women as well as adults, including older women who remain active.

In this context, a central question emerges: how can public architecture and infrastructure acknowledge and promote proposals that contribute to equity and inclusion, ensuring the dignified and autonomous participation of diverse groups?

It is essential that proposals for public infrastructure adapt to local needs and sustainability criteria, while reflecting the specific dynamics of communities. This requires applying a gender perspective and avoiding standardized solutions. Among other findings, the chapter notes that women with disabilities face greater barriers than men in similar circumstances—not only because of disability itself, but also due to their gender. This intersection highlights the urgent need for social protection and service systems to recognise the overlapping dimensions of gender and disability.

The chapter concludes that, despite progress in rights and gender equity, significant social gaps persist. This demands that architecture and urban design acknowledge the diversity of their users, integrating functional and symbolic elements that promote inclusion and sustainability.

The second chapter, *Rights, Gender and Intersectionality in the Design of Public Architecture*, is framed by a rights-based approach aligned with the international normative framework, which promotes the identification of marginalized or excluded groups and the development of policies to guarantee the universal fulfilment of rights (Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, 2017). Applied to gender issues, this approach reveals how human rights affect women and men differently, and how power relations and gender discrimination shape the effective enjoyment of rights (United Nations Sustainable Development Group, 2016).

The chapter highlights specific human rights that address the needs and vulnerabilities of women, such as the right to a life free from gender-based violence, to reproductive health, and to political and social participation—bearing in mind that women represent more than half of the world’s population.

The first section emphasizes the importance of adopting a gender and intersectional perspective in the design of public architecture—intersectionality understood as the overlap of gender with other social categories such as race, ethnicity, social class, age, disability, or sexuality. By considering differences in how people use and perceive built space, and how infrastructure affects them differently depending on their gender and other intersecting factors, the need to rethink androcentric planning and design models becomes evident.

The incorporation of a gender perspective into public policy and architectural planning makes visible existing structural inequalities, while also enabling solutions that respond to the real needs of the entire population—particularly women and diverse groups. The active participation of these groups is crucial to ensuring that public architecture projects do not reproduce exclusionary patterns.

For this reason, it is essential to implement inclusive strategies at every stage of the project cycle—from planning to execution—and to promote citizen participation processes that are broad, representative, and sensitive to inequality. Ultimately, a gender perspective not only redefines public architecture through a critical and transformative lens, but also constitutes a fundamental step toward building cities and territories that are more liveable, accessible, and equitable for all.

The second section of the chapter presents the principles and values of an inclusive approach: universal design, sustainability, and the participation of women and diverse groups. The third section develops a proposal for gender-sensitive design attributes, describing their central features and providing examples of architectural projects that illustrate these attributes. Gender-sensitive design is presented as a key tool for creating public spaces that promote equity and respond to differentiated needs, eliminating physical, social, and symbolic barriers.

The attributes, proposals, and practices analysed emphasize essential criteria for transformative design, including proximity and accessibility, which ensure the strategic location of public spaces for the benefit of daily life. An inclusive design free of gender stereotypes is promoted, ensuring equitable participation and enjoyment of space.

Another central attribute is security, defined as the creation of safe meeting spaces free from gender-based violence and conducive to well-being. Flexibility of uses, as well as a mix and intensity of activities, are also highlighted as enablers of adaptable, diverse,

and dynamic spaces that can respond to multiple everyday needs. Through various architectural examples, the chapter illustrates how gender-sensitive design not only transforms the conception of public spaces but also contributes to the creation of safe, accessible, and equitable environments.

The fourth section proposes indicators associated with the presented attributes and design guidelines, along with recommendations for project evaluation. Both monitoring and evaluation of public architecture from a gender perspective are identified as fundamental tools to ensure that spaces effectively respond to principles of equity and inclusion in urban and territorial public policies.

The chapter stresses that evaluation frameworks and public procurement terms of reference constitute a strategic mechanism to ensure the effective incorporation of a gender perspective in project design and execution. Concrete measures—such as requiring contractors to hold gender equality certifications or ensuring gender-balanced evaluation and consulting teams—help guarantee more equitable implementation with specialized expertise.

Establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms from a gender perspective is essential to ensuring that architectural projects not only meet technical criteria but also promote gender equality and social inclusion throughout all project phases. These actions enable the transformation of public policies and architectural practices, ensuring that built environments effectively and equitably respond to the diverse realities of the population.

The third chapter, *Participation and Gender-Sensitive Dialogue Tools*, highlights the recognition of every human being's right to actively engage in issues that affect their quality of life. Participation is presented as central to processes of diagnosis and public decision-making at multiple scales—national, regional, municipal, territorial, neighbourhood—thus strengthening transparency, effectiveness, and shared social responsibility.

The chapter's purpose is to emphasize citizen participation as a key tool for identifying the characteristics of diverse users of public services, with special attention to the needs of the most invisible groups, particularly those marginalized by gender. It is structured into four sections: the first addresses the regulatory framework and progress of citizen participation in Chile's public administration and within the Ministry of Public Works and Infrastructure; the second outlines the phases of investment initiatives in public architecture within the national investment system; the third provides the Directorate of Architecture with gender-sensitive citizen participation tools for the design stage; and the fourth offers a reflection and proposal on how participation could be integrated throughout the entire project cycle.

The fourth chapter, *Women in Construction*, underscores the importance of advancing the inclusion of women in the construction industry, promoting policies and programs that integrate more women into its workforce. It analyses the current situation of women in the construction sector and presents Chilean and international experiences where gender strategies have been successfully implemented.

The chapter highlights pending challenges such as pay equity, improved working conditions, and strengthened gender-sensitive hiring policies. It also stresses the

importance of fostering an inclusive organizational culture, encouraging female leadership, and developing training that anticipates future demands of the sector. At a regional level, it incorporates references to successful experiences in Latin America, including the role of the Ministry of Public Works and Infrastructure in Chile, which promotes specific requirements for contractors in favour of gender equity.

The chapter concludes with recommendations for advancing toward a more equitable and sustainable industry, emphasizing that gender equity in construction is not only an ethical imperative driving equality among men and women in all their diversity, but also a strategic necessity for improving efficiency, stimulating innovation, and ensuring long-term sustainability.

CHAPTER

1

PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE
AND PUBLIC SPACES FOR
TODAY'S CHILE: CHANGES
AND NEW RESPONSES FOR
INCLUSION

In recent years, Chile has undergone profound social, economic, and cultural transformations that have redefined the needs and expectations of its inhabitants regarding the spaces they occupy. In this context, public architecture and the design of urban spaces play a crucial role as tools to respond to the changes currently underway, promoting equity, inclusion, and sustainability.

This chapter examines how these transformations affect the configuration of buildings and public spaces, highlighting the importance of considering contemporary social dynamics and the diverse identities and realities that coexist within the country.

Drawing on empirical data, it presents some of the main societal changes observed in Chile over the past three decades—among them, shifts in household composition and family economies; population aging and the feminization of old age; patterns in time use and unpaid work; disability; and gender and sexual diversity.

Alongside these transformations, persistent gender inequality gaps continue to limit women’s autonomy. Recognizing these gaps is a necessary step toward identifying how public architecture can reflect and promote proposals that foster equity, inclusion, and the dignified, autonomous expression of diversity.

The chapter concludes that, despite advances in rights and gender equity, disparities remain in social and infrastructural dimensions. This underscores the need for architecture and urban design to acknowledge the diversity of users, integrating functional and symbolic elements that advance inclusion and sustainability.

1. TRANSFORMATION IN HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND ECONOMY

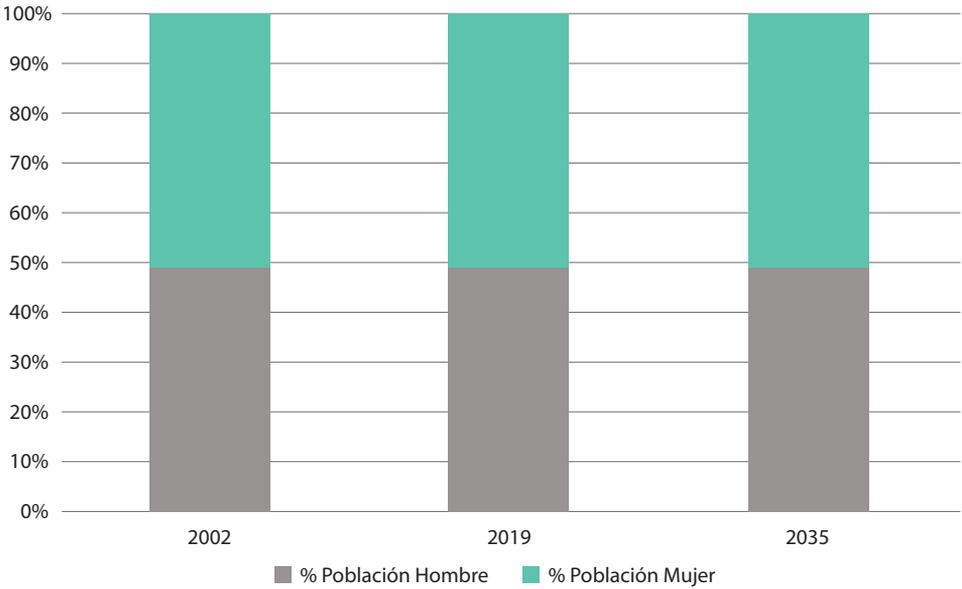
Chile has an estimated population of 17,574,003 inhabitants (Census 2017), with men and women distributed in similar proportions—a pattern expected to remain stable through 2035.

Table 1. Total population disaggregated by gender (male–female) estimated for Chile in 2002, 2019, and projected for 2035

	2002	2019	2035 proyectada
Población total	15.691.701 estimado	19.107.216 proyectado	21.137.769 proyectado
% población hombres	49,2	49,3	49,3
% población mujeres	50,8	50,7	50,7

Source: Directorate of Architecture, Ministry of Public Works (based on) data from the National Statistics Institute (INE), June 2019.]

Figure 1. Total population disaggregated by gender (male–female) estimated for Chile in 2002, 2019, and projected for 2035 (percentages).



Source: Directorate of Architecture, Ministry of Public Works (based on) INE (2019), National Population by Sex, 2002–2035 (p. 8).

Household structures in Chile have evolved over time. There has been an increase in single-person and female-headed households, alongside a decline in household size compared with two decades agos.

According to the Ministry of Social Development and Family, households are categorized as:

- Single-person (Unipersonales): composed of only one person.
- Without nucleus (Sin núcleo): members do not maintain conjugal relationships nor parent–child ties.
- Nuclear family (Familia nuclear): members are connected through conjugal or parent–child relationships.
- Extended family (Familia extendida): includes additional kin, such as grandparents or uncles/aunts.
- Composite family (Familia compuesta): includes non-related individuals in addition to nuclear or extended family members.

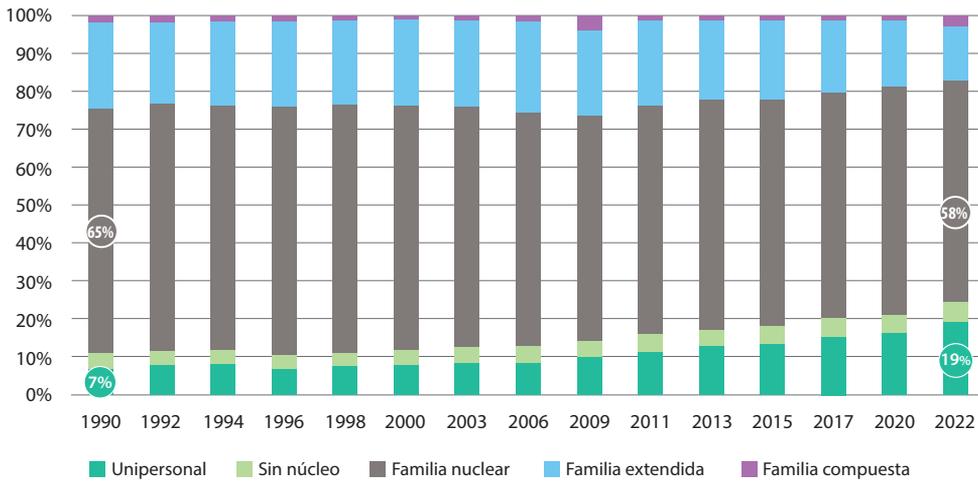
It should be noted that family types have diversified further, including blended, same-sex-parent, and foster families, among others.

The study ‘Transformations of Chilean Households Post-1990’ (Fuentes et al., 2024), based on CASEN¹ survey data, shows that between 1990 and 2022, single-person households rose from 7% to 19%—a 2.8-fold increase in three decades. Extended families

¹ The National Socioeconomic Characterization Survey (CASEN) is a periodic public-sector survey designed to examine household dynamics. It measures poverty both in economic terms and through multidimensional indicators, with national and regional representativeness.

decreased, while nuclear families remain predominant though they dropped from 65% to 58% in the same period.

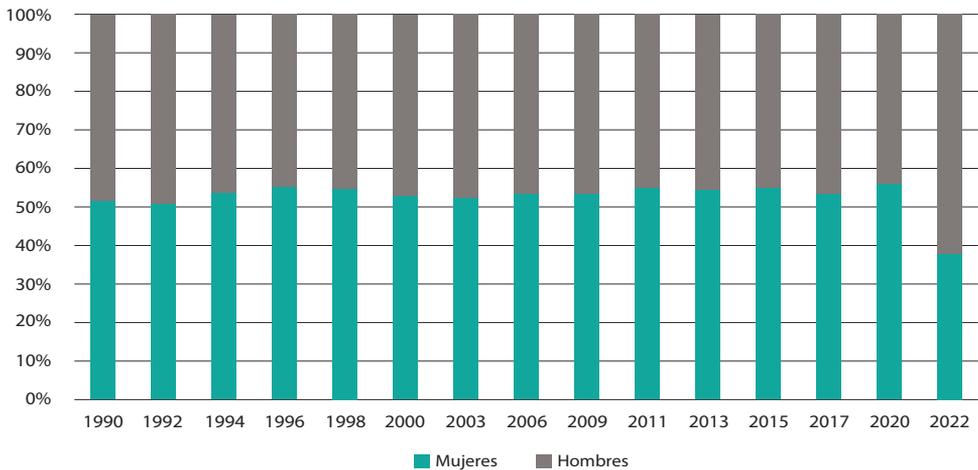
Figure 2. Evolution of household composition in Chile (1990–2022)



Source: Fuentes et al. (2024), p. 4, based on CASEN Surveys 1990–2022.

The same study indicates that over the past thirty years, most single-person households have been female. ‘Since 1990, single-person households have consistently shown a slight female majority, averaging around 54% of the total’ (p. 6)..

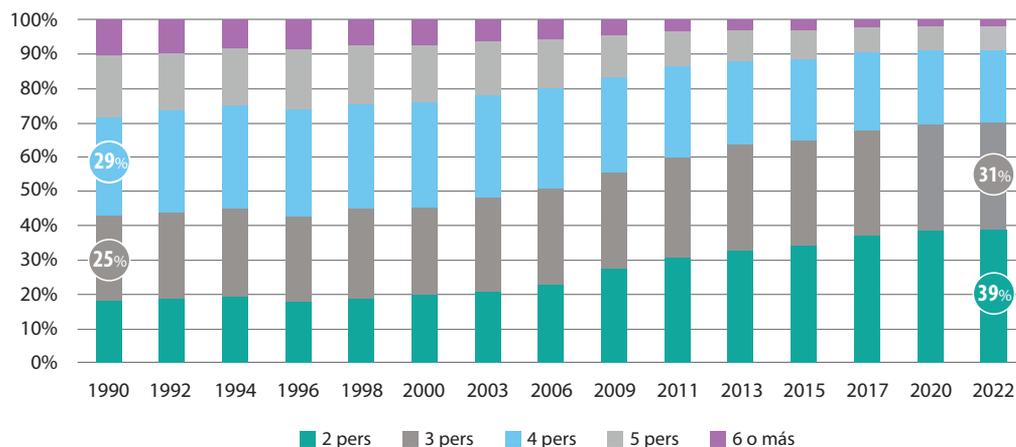
Figure 3. Evolution in gender distribution among individuals living in single-person households



Source: Fuentes et al. (2024), p. 7, based on CASEN Surveys 1990–2022.

Regarding nuclear families, in 1990 most groups had four or three members (29% and 25%, respectively), whereas by 2022 this shifted: two-person nuclear families now predominate, accounting for 39% of all households, followed by three-person families (31%).

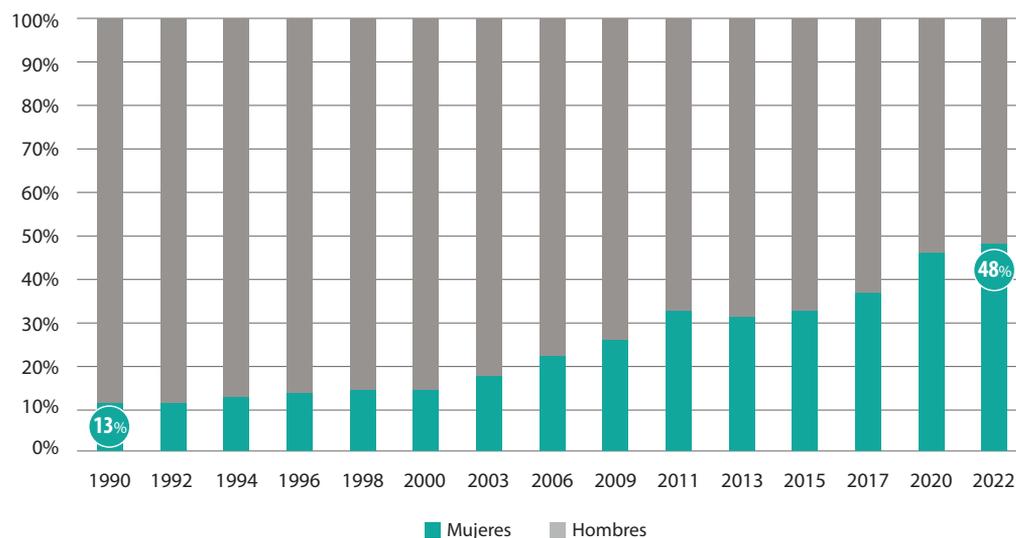
Figure 4. Evolution in household size within nuclear families



Source: Fuentes et al. (2024), p. 9, based on CASEN Surveys 1990–2022.

In earlier decades, most nuclear household heads were aged 26–45. Currently, half of all household heads are aged 36–55. The proportion of female-headed nuclear households has risen steadily—from 13% to 48% in thirty years.

Figure 5. Evolution in gender distribution among nuclear household heads



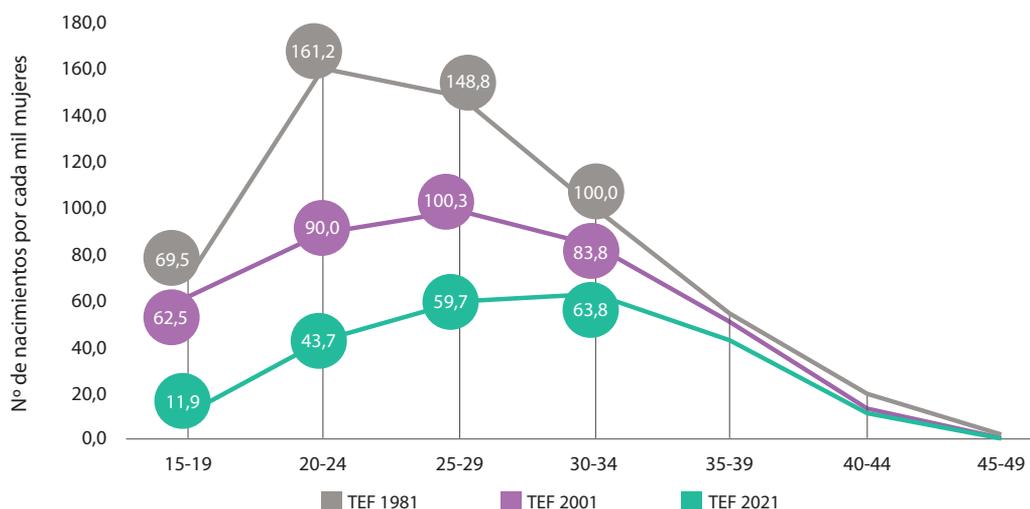
Source: Fuentes et al. (2024), p. 10, based on CASEN Surveys 1990–2022.

Nearly half of all Chilean households (47.7%) are female-headed. Yet women’s primary income has increased by only 16.5%. This economic vulnerability among women-led households is associated with informal employment, persistent wage gaps, and higher rates of single parenthood—factors that perpetuate cycles of poverty (Sato & Durán, 2024).

According to the 2023 Supplementary Income Survey (ESI) by INE, the average wage gap disfavors women by 25.5%. A national profile study indicates that two out of three female household heads earn between 500,000 and one million pesos (approximately USD 540–1,080 in September 2025). In 2022, the wage gap remained at 25.5% (INE, 2022b).

Gender indicators reveal persistent inequality. Despite greater female participation in the labor market, much of this employment remains informal. Women continue to bear primary responsibility for domestic and care work, creating workload imbalances and constraining labor opportunities. Demographic ageing will likely reinforce the economic importance of care work (Nieves & Segovia, 2017).

Figure 6. Specific fertility rates, Chile 1981, 2001, and 2021



Source: INE (2021), p. 5.

Birth data show that while in earlier decades most births occurred among women aged 25–29, today the leading group is 30–34 (INE, 2024, p. 5). The postponement of motherhood has quadrupled the percentage of women having their first child after age 30.

Chile’s total fertility rate (TFR) now falls below replacement level (2.1 children per woman). In 2021, the national average was 1.17, even lower than the regional TFR of 1.8 for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2022, p. 27).

Declining fertility, coupled with scientific, cultural, and political progress, reflects a growing recognition of women’s autonomy over reproductive decisions. The Bicentennial Survey (PUC, 2024) reports that nearly 60% of respondents now support a woman’s right to abortion under specific conditions.

Esping-Andersen (2009) noted that some developed countries reversed their fertility decline by adapting to women’s changing social roles. ‘Gender equality encourages fertility only when women’s public opportunities align with an egalitarian division of domestic roles’ (Cabella & Nathan, 2018, pp. 16–17).

2. POPULATION AGEING AND THE FEMINIZATION OF OLD AGE

Adopting an active ageing approach is essential to improve older persons’ quality of life by promoting full social participation, equitable access to services, and recognition of autonomy. This approach particularly benefits older women, addressing gender inequalities that intensify later in life.

According to the 2017 Population and Housing Census, 16.2% of Chile’s population is aged 60 or over, of which 55.7% are women and 44.3% men. Among older persons, 85.8% remain independent, while 14.2%—mostly over age 80—experience mild to severe dependency. Of the independent group, 31.8% are still employed, predominantly men.²

INE projections estimate that by 2050, one-third of Chile’s population will be aged 60 or over, and 30% of these will surpass age 80—the so-called ‘fourth age’ (World Health Organization).

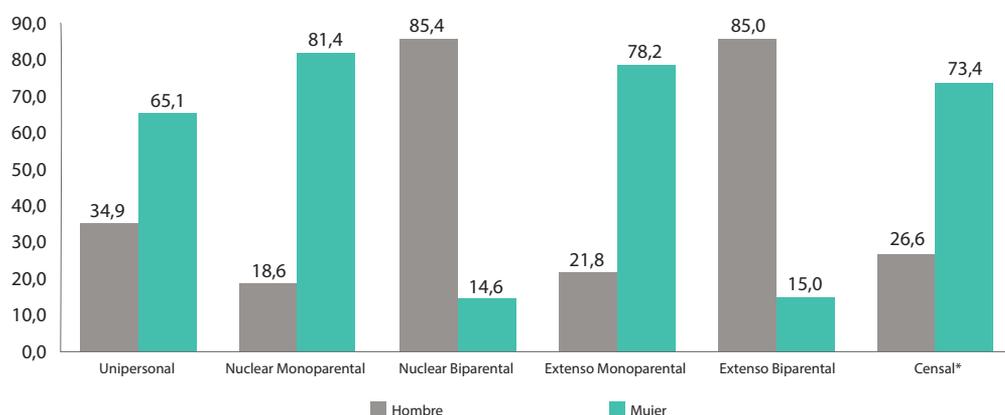
In the region, Chile is the country that has most rapidly increased its life expectancy at birth, now ranking first in South America. This development has taken place within a context of deep socioeconomic, gender, and urban–rural inequality among older adults.³ While European countries aged over the course of a century and under favorable economic conditions, Chile has done so in just twenty years and from a position of far greater precariousness.

Public concern grows over ageing in the context of limited family support and economic vulnerability, as the nation remains underprepared for demographic transition (National Service for Older Persons [SENAMA], 2023).

Current life expectancy is 77.9 years for men and 83.4 for women. By 2035, these figures will reach 80.9 and 86.0, respectively. Women will continue to constitute the majority of the older population, particularly in the 80+ cohort, where they account for 62%. With an average of only 6.5 years of schooling, this group faces lower incomes, more chronic illness, and reduced quality of life (PUC, 2020).

Among households led by older persons, 73% have female heads. Figure 7 illustrates this distribution.

Figura 7. Distribution of households with older-person heads by family structure type and gender (2017) (percentage of households in respective groups)



Source: Ministry of Social Development and Family (2017a), Older Adults: Summary of Results, p. 41.

2 According to data from the 2018 Supplementary Income Survey, employed men aged 60 and over earned an average monthly income of 581,517 Chilean pesos in 2018, while women in the same age group earned 383,913 pesos. In practical terms, women aged 60 and over received a salary 34% lower than that of men.

3 According to the 2017 Census, 8% of adults aged 60 and over — a group largely concentrated in rural areas — are unable to read or write.

Like the feminization of poverty, the feminization of old age demands policy responses from service providers. These phenomena also pose urban and housing challenges requiring territorial approaches to care systems in Chile.

Older women may face double or triple discrimination—by gender, age, and social perception of ageing. Women live longer but experience less stable employment, lower incomes, and weaker social protection, stretching limited pensions across more years of dependency (Smith Kilpela et al., 2015). In the future, more older women will be independent and professionally active, though persistent pay gaps and age discrimination must still be addressed (Larraín & Azócar, 2020).

Geographically, the regions of Valparaíso, Metropolitan, and Biobío currently host the highest concentrations of older adults. Communes such as Algarrobo (29.9%), San Juan de la Costa (30.2%), El Quisco (32.3%), and El Tabo (33.6%) stand out. By 2035, Ñuble, Valparaíso, and Los Ríos are expected to have the highest ageing indices.

Designing urban and rural areas for an ageing population requires rethinking stereotypes and envisioning ageing as a dynamic life stage. Most older persons will remain active and autonomous, though many will also require varying degrees of care.

The feminization of ageing is a global phenomenon. In Chile, women outnumber men in all older age brackets—especially the fourth age—yet live in more precarious conditions, with fewer family networks and limited economic activity.

3. TIME USE, UNPAID CARE WORK, AND LABOUR PARTICIPATION

The 2023 National Time Use Survey (ENUT),⁴ reveals that, on average, women devote two hours and five minutes more per day than men to unpaid care work. Women spend 4 hours 57 minutes daily on such activities, compared with men's 2 hours 52 minutes. Tasks include domestic work, household care, volunteer work, and assistance to other households.

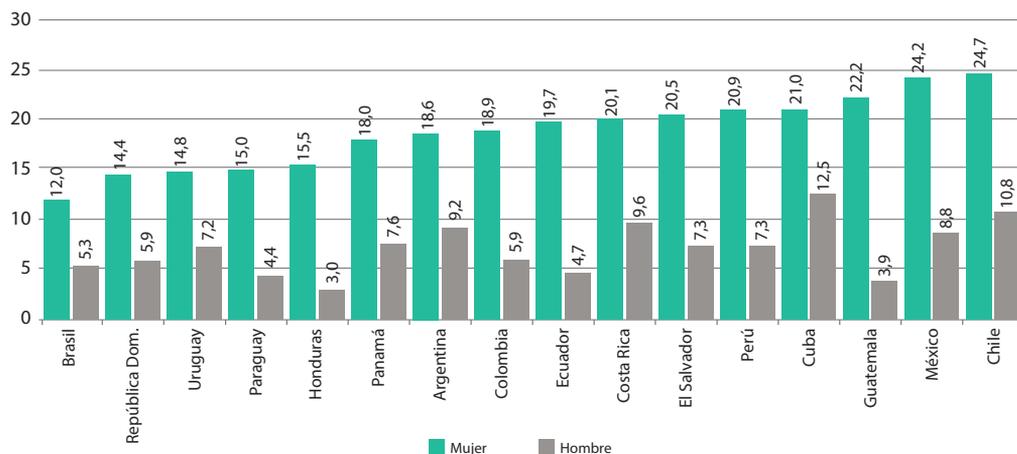
This gap persists across age groups, especially among women aged 25–44. In domestic chores alone, women spend two hours and thirty-two minutes more than men. Men average 6.6 hours of paid work daily, while women average 5.7 hours.

In Greater Santiago, 77.2% of women spend 3.9 hours daily on unpaid domestic work during weekdays, while only 37.7% of men spend 2.9 hours (Segovia, 2016).

ECLAC (2023) illustrates the proportion of time dedicated to unpaid domestic and care work by gender across Latin America, showing women spend, on average, triple the time men do. Chile stands among the countries with the heaviest female unpaid workload.

4 The National Time-Use Survey (ENUT) has an urban national scope. Its fieldwork was conducted between September and December 2023 (see INE, 2024). It targeted people aged 12 and over, collecting data on paid market work, unpaid work, and personal activities. The list of activities included in the ENUT is based on the 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA) conceptual framework. <https://bit.ly/3E4LVy3>

Figure 8. Latin America (16 countries): Proportion of time dedicated to unpaid domestic tasks by gender and country (percentages)



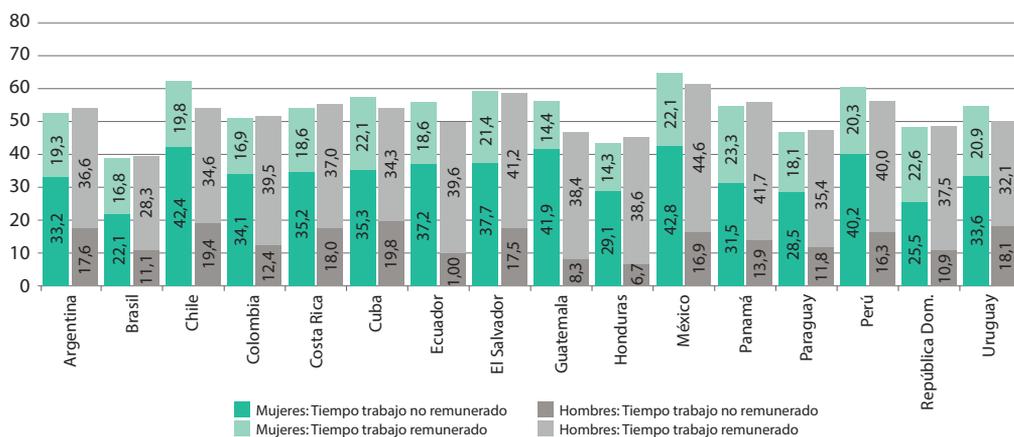
Source: ECLAC (2023), Time Use Repository for Latin America and the Caribbean, p. 2.

95.8% of mothers in Chile identify as their children’s primary caregivers, compared with 1.4% of fathers (Ministry of Social Development and Family, 2017b). Around 80% of dependent older adults are cared for by women (CASEN, 2017a).

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated care burdens, worsening women’s quality of life and exposing what some analysts call a ‘care crisis’ (Albala, 2020). Lockdowns and job precarity further increased unpaid domestic labour for women.

ECLAC (2022) reports that Chile and Mexico rank highest in the region for women’s weekly hours spent on unpaid work. Figure 9 illustrates this comparison.

Figure 9. Latin America (16 countries): Average weekly hours of paid and unpaid work among persons aged 15+, by gender and country

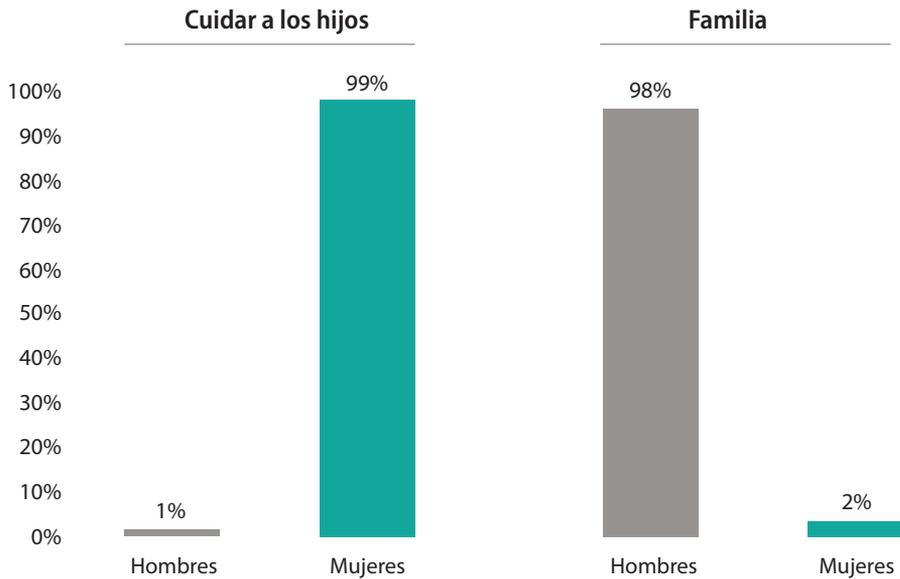


Source: ECLAC (2023), Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean.

A 2024 University of Andrés Bello survey found that when asked ‘What motivates you in

life?’, the two most frequent responses were ‘Caring for children’ and ‘Family’. By gender, 99% of respondents choosing ‘Caring for children’ were women, and 98% of those prioritizing ‘Family’ were men—showing persistent gendered role assignments.

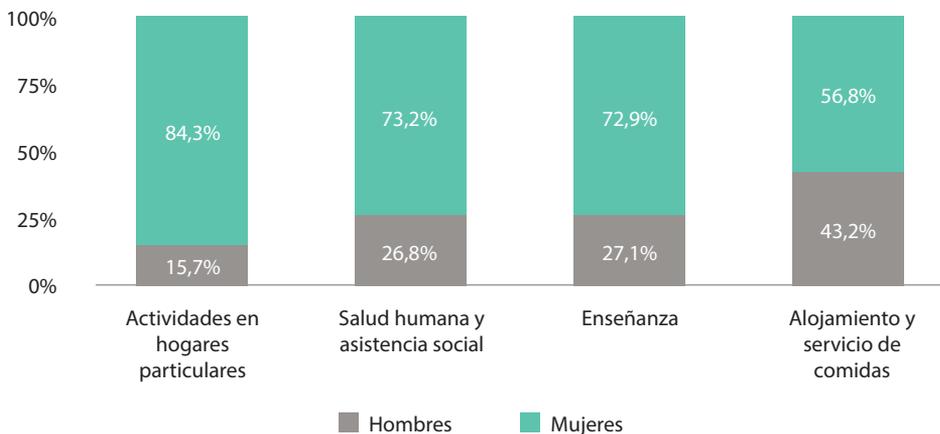
Figure 10. Main life motivations by gender (percentages)



Source: Andrés Bello University, Public Policy Institute (2024), ‘Radiography of Distrust in Chile’, p. 9.

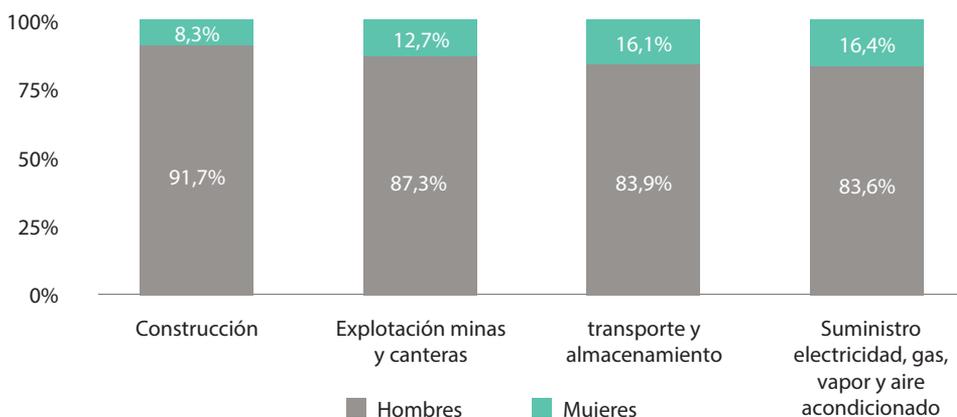
Employment data confirm this gendered division. Women dominate sectors such as domestic service, healthcare, social assistance, and education (Figure 11), while men prevail in industry and manufacturing (Figure 12).

Figure 11. Economic sectors with highest female employment



Source: INE (2023), Gender and Labour Market in Chile, p. 5.

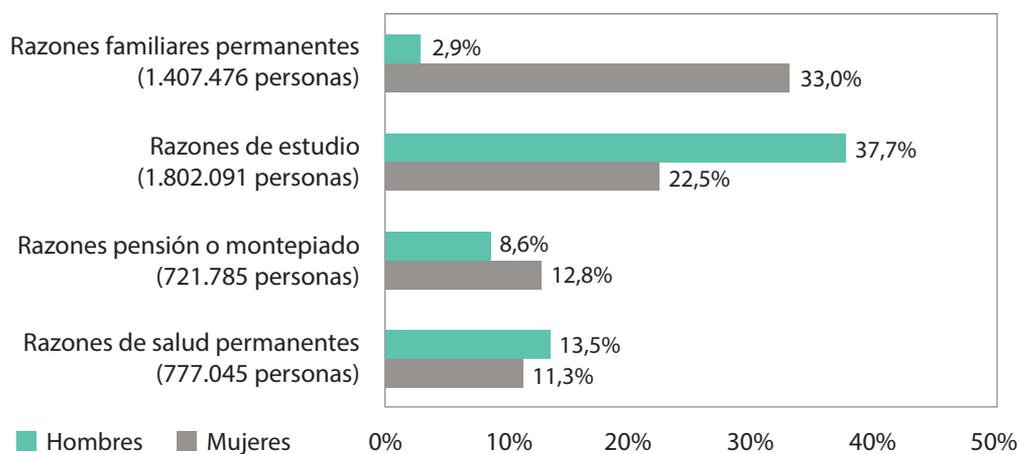
Figure 12. Economic sectors with highest male employment



Source: INE (2023), Gender and Labour Market in Chile, p. 7.

For women outside the labour force, the main reason cited is permanent family responsibility, likely tied to unpaid care work. Men, in contrast, primarily report temporary withdrawal for study (INE, 2023).

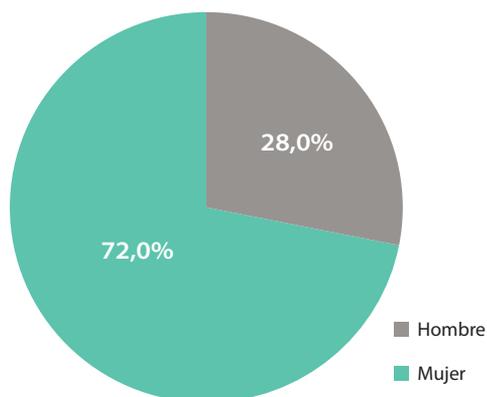
Figure 13. Main reasons for women’s non-participation in the labour market (percentages)



Source: INE (2023), Gender and Labour Market in Chile, p. 4.

The 2017 Census found that in households with dependent older persons, 72% of caregivers were women.

Figure 14. Distribution of persons aged 60+ with functional dependency receiving in-home assistance, by caregiver's gender (2017) (percentages)



Source: Ministry of Social Development and Family (2017a), Older Adults: Summary of Results, p. 141.

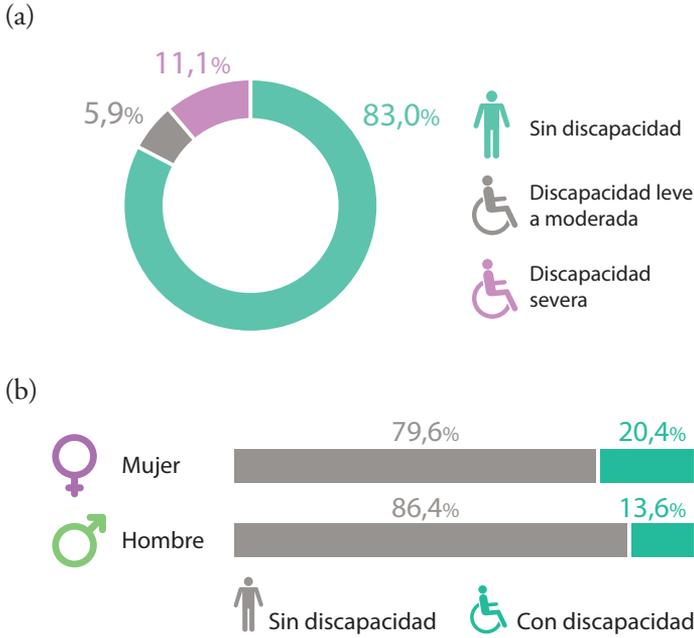
The 2022 National Study on the Economic Valuation of Unpaid Domestic and Care Work estimates its contribution to Chile's GDP at 21.8%. Recognizing this reproductive labour is crucial for understanding social well-being and the gendered experience of space and time in cities (Segovia, 2016, p. 9).

Women's economic autonomy involves not only labour-market participation and income generation, but also equitable access to urban public services that support care infrastructure. Territorial planning must thus integrate the gendered dimension of care policies (Segovia, 2016, p. 9).

4. DISABILITY AND GENDER-BASED GAPS

The 2022 Disability and Dependency Survey (ENDIDE) reports that 17% of the population aged two and over in Chile presents mild, moderate, or severe disability (3,291,602 people), while the remaining 83% do not.

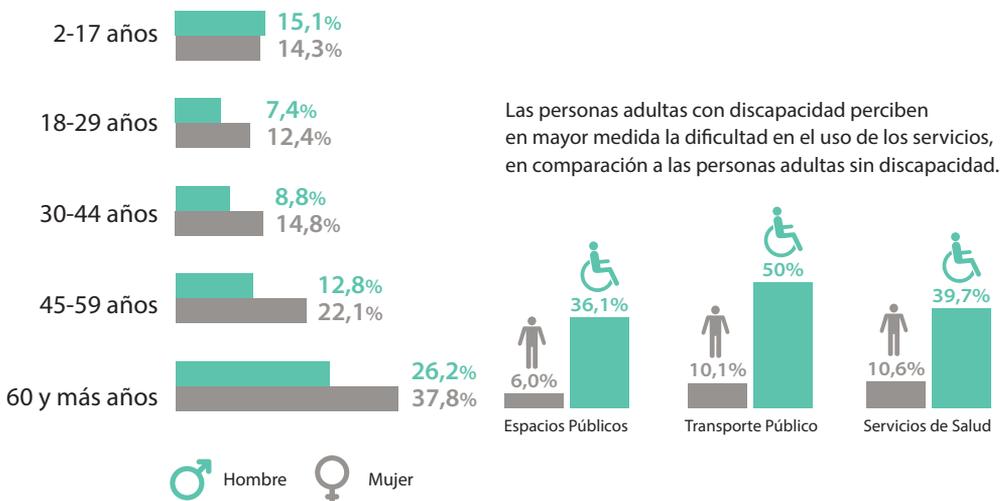
Figure 15. Percentage of population aged two and over: (a) by degree of disability; (b) by sex and degree of disability



Source: National Disability Service (SENADIS), (2022), Third National Disability Study 2022. Left: p. 33 – Right: p. 34.

Among children aged 10 and adolescents, girls have a poorer perception than boys regarding physical and psychological well-being, autonomy, relationships with parents, social and peer support, and even their school environment.

Figure 16. Percentage of population with disability by age group and sex



Source: Left: SENADIS (2022), p. 33 / Right: SENADIS (2023), Leaflet III National Disability Study (ENDISC), Invalidation, p. 3.

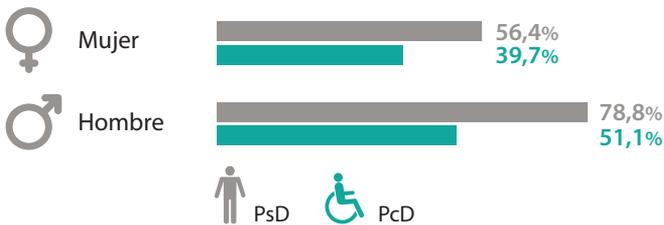
In the population aged 18 and over, women with disabilities outnumber men, with the highest concentration among older adults.

Among persons dependent due to disability in Chile, women again represent the majority (12.4%) compared to 9.8% of adult men. Regionally, the highest percentages of women with disabilities in a dependent condition are found in Araucanía, Ñuble, and Atacama.

Adults with disabilities report greater difficulties using public transportation, public spaces, and health services. This reality can be reversed only if design criteria are applied to reduce physical-space inequalities, making decisive progress in this direction urgently necessary.

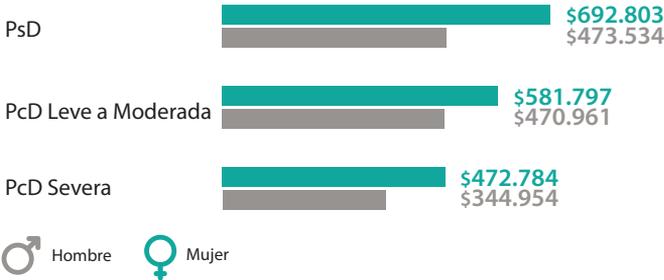
The gender gap that traditionally affects women’s labor participation is aggravated by disability: women with disabilities show lower participation levels than men with disabilities.

Figure 17. Labor force participation rate of the adult population by disability status and sex



Source: SENADIS (2022), Third National Disability Study 2022, p. 54.

Figure 18. Average monthly income in the main occupation of the adult population by disability status and sex



Source: SENADIS (2022), Third National Disability Study 2022, p. 57.

According to data from the Labor Directorate, in January 2023 only 38.1% of active contracts under the Labor Inclusion Law No. 21,015 corresponded to women, versus 61.9% benefiting men. Furthermore, the degree of disability among women tends to be more complex than among men, especially when they live in poverty and/or belong to Indigenous peoples.

5. GENDER IDENTITIES AND DIVERSITY

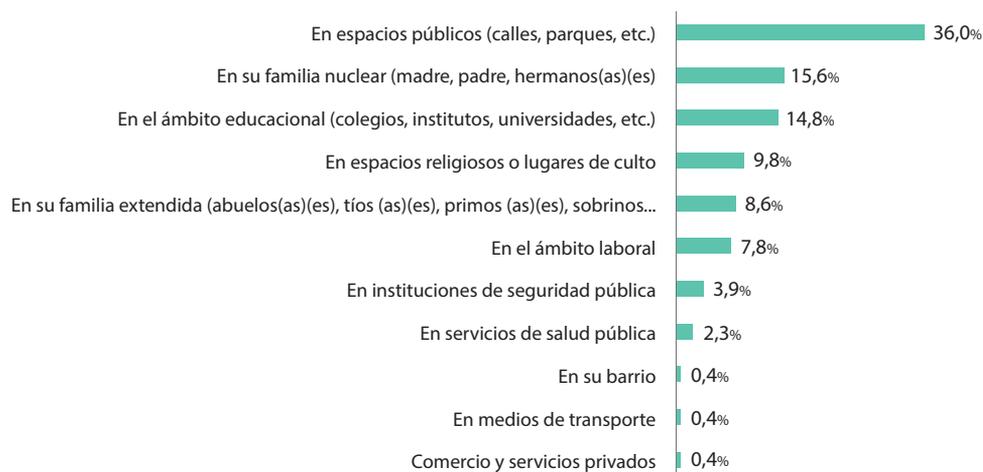
In Latin America and the Caribbean, progress has been made in disaggregating

information by sex and gender. Following ECLAC's recommendation to include gender-identity questions in national censuses, Argentina was the first country to do so (in its 2022 Census), and Chile followed in the 2024 Census. However, as early as 2015, responding to requests from civil-society organizations, Chile had incorporated questions on sexual orientation and gender identity into the CASEN Survey.

Civil-society organizations have contributed valuable studies, such as surveys and reports on sexual and gender diversity.⁵ Results from 2020 show that 3.7% of people aged 18 and older identify as gay/lesbian, bisexual, or another non-heterosexual orientation, with the largest share between 18 and 29 years old. Meanwhile, 1.3% of the adult population report that their gender does not match their sex at birth or identify as trans.

An exploratory study on violence and discrimination against LGBTIQ+ persons, conducted by the Undersecretariat for Crime Prevention in 2021, highlights that, according to respondents, public space is perceived as the setting with the highest level of discrimination (36%), followed by the nuclear family (15.6%) and education (14.8%). The labor (7.8%) and public-health (2.3%) sectors follow. Participants also indicated that being trans or non-binary increases the likelihood of discrimination and victimization compared to being cisgender.

Figura 19. Perception of discrimination by setting



Source: Undersecretariat for Crime Prevention (2021), p. 11.

Since 2012, Chilean legislation has recognized: the right to non-discrimination (Law No. 20,609, which establishes measures against discrimination); civil unions between same-sex couples (Law No. 20,830, which creates the Civil Union Agreement); gender identity (Law No. 21,120, which recognizes and protects the right to gender identity); and marriage between same-sex couples (Law No. 21,400) (Leda, 2022, p. 222).

⁵ See, among others, the Annual Reports on Human Rights of Sexual and Gender Diversity in Chile, published by MOVILH Chile; the 22nd edition was released in March 2023.

Public opinion has also shown incremental progress in recognizing the LGBTIQ+ community. According to the Bicentennial Survey (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 2024), support for same-sex marriage rose from 32% in 2006 to 71% in 2023.

Despite these legal and social advances, they “have not yet led to the end of inequality and discrimination, given the persistence of rejection, violence, and even murder [...] against LGBTIQ+ individuals in Chile” (Leda, 2022, p. 222). A lack of official information remains one of the main obstacles to designing and implementing public policies focused on this group. The 2024 Census will enable an initial, significant analysis and policy development by the State.

Currently, Chile lacks official data to estimate the LGBTIQ+ child population, but public-policy debates have emerged around school-community tensions. The Ministry of Education has responded with guidelines such as “Guidelines for the Inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Persons in the Chilean Educational System” (2017) and “Gender Perspective in Early Childhood Education: An Opportunity for Comprehensive Well-Being. Guidelines for Mainstreaming at This Level” (2023).

In summary this chapter shows that some of the main demographic transformations in Chile are linked to the shrinking of households, the increase in two-person and single-person families, and a rise in female-headed households, now nearly half of the total.

Fewer births, the postponement or voluntary rejection of motherhood, and longer life expectancy are the main factors slowing population growth and accelerating aging in Chile — more rapidly than in developed countries.

Women joining the labor market, formally or informally, without ceasing to bear domestic and/or care responsibilities, remain at the core of persistent gender gaps across age groups.

Among persons with disabilities, women face greater gaps than men — not only because of their disability but also due to gender inequities in environmental perception (girls and adolescents), as well as barriers in labor, social, and political participation, well-being, and experience of discrimination. This is a call for change in all social-protection and care services, to recognize the intersections between gender and disability.

How does public architecture and infrastructure reflect and advance design strategies that promote equity, inclusion, and the dignified, autonomous presence of diversities?

To address low birth rates, the feminization of aging, and labor-market gaps, there is broad agreement on the need to expand care and domestic-work support networks. From an urban planning perspective, this means ensuring greater and better access to nurseries, kindergartens, and schools with full-day schedules, as well as economic conditions that allow households to secure care assistance. These spatial infrastructures for co-responsibility and care must be adapted to local territorial realities under sustainability criteria and community-specific needs, applying a gender-responsive approach and avoiding standardized solutions.

Territorial planning that reflects accessibility and mobility needs — balancing domestic and paid work schedules — directly improves quality of life. In other words, a care infrastructure network, along with policies that encourage men’s shared responsibility

in care and household tasks, is central to achieving equitable, non-discriminatory development and enhancing women's economic and professional participation. It also helps ensure women have the time to engage fully in work, social, family, and personal life — a goal that calls for state leadership to reconcile family and work life, with effects on fertility and elder care.

Public and private employers are now more aware of the need to promote balance between family, work, and personal life. Parental leave, access to nurseries, after-school care, time off for medical appointments or bereavement, flexible work, and remote work — measures expanded after the pandemic — have reshaped both home and work environments. Workplaces increasingly incorporate family-friendly facilities such as family bathrooms, lactation rooms, and waiting areas for children. Given population aging, similar support should also target professionals over 60 who wish to remain active under suitable conditions.

Finally, it is urgent to address the high levels of perceived insecurity in public spaces reported by persons with reduced mobility, LGBTIQ+ individuals, and — as will be explored in the next chapter — women. The following chapter will outline design attributes to be considered in this regard.

For those engaged in public-architecture and urban-design work, this is a call to remain attentive to the visibility of women and the full diversity of users, so that functional, programmatic, identity-based, symbolic, and perceptual design elements are conceived with respectful inclusivity.

CHAPTER

2

RIGHTS, GENDER, AND
INTERSECTIONALITY IN
THE DESIGN OF PUBLIC
ARCHITECTURE

1. WHY A GENDER AND INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVE IN PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE?

Addressing the formulation and design of building and public space projects from a gender and intersectional perspective entails recognizing the structural gender inequality that pervades society. It also points to the importance of identifying the factors that contribute to reducing such inequality and how these influence the development and life experiences of women and men. From this standpoint, advancing reflection and proposals that integrate the needs and interests of women in their diversity contributes to creating better public services for the entire population. This approach goes well beyond a positive discrimination toward women: it aims to move toward a horizon of genuine gender equality.

In this first section, several aspects are highlighted that must be incorporated into the discussion: the non-neutrality of the use and perception of built space; gender inequalities and their impact on the use of territory and the infrastructure of everyday life; the importance of planning and implementing gender policies that make visible women in their sex-gender diversity; and the relevance of their participation and proposals in defining public projects.

1.1 DIFFERENCES IN THE USE AND PERCEPTION OF BUILT SPACE

Gender biases are visible in social, economic, and historical constructions and are expressed through symbols, signs, forms, and uses of architectural spaces. Historically, the built environment has been produced within sociocultural frameworks embedded in a gender system that reinforces the differential traits attributed to the feminine and the masculine. This system operates, among other ways, by dividing masculine and feminine spaces—linking the former with the productive and public sphere, and the latter with the private, domestic, and reproductive one.

A review of history reveals a connection between women's position in society and their relationship to the creation and use of space: "Women and men have had different spatial destinies. The conquest of promised lands, debates and discourses in the public square, the space of war and appropriation, for some [...] belonging and care of the home, childrearing, the reserved and the small, for others." (Segovia, 1992, pp. 89–90). In other words, women have been interpreted by design and architecture according to socially assigned roles and the stereotyped valuation of those roles. Spaces for and of women are generally understood as domestic spaces: the home, the neighborhood—those linked to the private realm. At the same time, it is women—because of these socially imposed roles, and not always by choice—who assume family management, the education of children and youth, and the care of older adults. All these activities connect them directly with public service buildings.

Various international organizations—including the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Inter-American Development Bank, and the

World Bank—have noted that public infrastructure does not always or necessarily benefit men and women equally. The notion of infrastructural neutrality arises from a vision of people as passive beneficiaries rather than as differentiated groups of active participants with distinct social roles, needs, access to economic resources and power, or preferences (Corporación Chile Ambiente et al., 2023).

Proposing spatial and material responses from a gender perspective in the design of buildings and public spaces means questioning the assumed neutrality of planning, construction, and even perception, use, and symbolic value. This leads to the imperative of proposing new models of intervention that incorporate, in particular, women's experiences and rights—and, from an intersectional standpoint, the differences associated with age, racial or ethnic belonging, and socioeconomic position, among other factors (Rico & Segovia, 2017).

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (1989) coined the term intersectionality to describe the phenomenon whereby individuals experience oppression or privilege depending on their belonging to multiple social categories. The concept of intersectionality is crucial in studies of architectural space, as well as in urban design and planning, insofar as it places the focus on the people who inhabit spaces and cities and on the conditions that shape their lives according to sex, social class, and other dimensions of identity.

Intersectionality allows for the examination of design approaches to identify forms of discrimination—particularly those that render women invisible and obscure their characteristics and needs within an androcentric framework that defines a universal subject as a “white, productive, heterosexual, young man,” one that excludes many men and almost all women (Falú, 2022b). Therefore, it is necessary to question the so-called “neutrality” which, far from being neutral, omits, conceals, and erases social subjects and their needs, as well as their differences in how they use and perceive spaces.

Public policies have often been built on supposedly neutral concepts—such as “family” or “population”—that render women and LGBTIQ+ people invisible in all their diversity. A public policy with a gender perspective seeks to address inequality by fostering more equitable and just gender relations. In other words, it acknowledges and acts upon the existence of discrimination based on gender identity or sex assigned at birth, compounded by others such as class, ethnicity, or age, among several factors (Falú, 2022b).

In this regard, the Ministerial Policy on Gender and Diversity of the Ministry of Public Works (MOP, 2024) recognizes and accepts that the ways in which public works are designed and executed, water resource governance is managed, and other strategic services are provided, have been shaped by hegemonic gender definitions that tend to overlook the interests and needs of women and gender-diverse populations. Therefore, it commits to addressing those interests and needs, as well as the specific living conditions of women and gender-diverse people, within the areas under its mandate and throughout the full development cycle of its strategic services (p. 9).

From this standpoint, infrastructures, through their operation and their presence in daily life, can serve to improve and make life more inclusive.

1.2 GENDER DIFFERENCES, TERRITORY, AND INFRASTRUCTURES FOR EVERYDAY LIFE

The roles traditionally assigned to women and men affect their access to and enjoyment of the goods that constitute the spatial and material foundations of cities and territories in different ways. To a large extent, this difference does not stem solely from individuals' sex or gender; it also—and crucially—rests “on the sexual division of labor and, therefore, on the profound inequalities in the availability of time, resources, and responsibilities (particularly with respect to dependents) between men and women” (ECLAC, 2016a, p. 168).

In this context, and due to their traditional association with the private sphere, women face difficulties in reconciling unpaid domestic work with participation in the labor market. As a result, among other consequences, they tend to have lower incomes than men and are more frequently employed in low-productivity occupations associated with lower pay, or in informal employment under precarious conditions. The intersection of socioeconomic and gender inequalities has a significant impact on the autonomy of women and gender-diverse individuals. In a context of inequality—marked by segregation and exclusion from quality infrastructure and services—this not only affects the aforementioned groups but also constitutes one of the main barriers to achieving sustainable development in countries (Rico & Segovia, 2017).

The concepts of “infrastructures for everyday life” and “new everyday life,” developed in the Scandinavian context during the 1980s (Horelli & Vepsä, 1984), make it possible to address the issue of urban services and facilities—and, consequently, questions of quality of life and sustainability—according to the needs of the population (Sánchez de Madariaga, 2018).

One of the main challenges in building inclusive cities and territories lies in revaluing the sphere of reproduction and connecting private space with public space—overcoming the dichotomy between city/public space/production on one hand, and home/private space/reproduction on the other—and achieving a synthesis through an urban fabric that integrates different sectors with adequate services, facilities, infrastructure, and means of transport (Montaner & Muxí, 2011).

From the perspective of feminist urbanism and women's right to the city, Falú and Franganillo (2021) argue that it is necessary to understand how the territories we inhabit influence and shape—their term: intersect with—the ways women and gender-diverse people inhabit them. They emphasize that feminist urbanism seeks to give meaning to people's everyday lives within urban planning. In this line, Rico and Segovia (2017) note, from an inclusive perspective, that providing care services—tasks traditionally assigned to women—requires identifying territorial priorities for location, since long distances affect time use, and designing programs aimed at reconciling domestic and family time with work time. This, in turn, implies considering how the availability, coverage, and scheduling of urban services affect the organization of the care cycle and taking measures to adapt them.

Considering the widespread reality of our cities—particularly the social, economic, political, and cultural gaps between men and women—the New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (United Nations, 2016), proposes advancing toward gender equality. Within this framework, it sets forth, as an urgent measure, a central goal: to prevent and eliminate all

forms of discrimination, violence, or harassment against women and girls in both private and public spaces.

As a central principle of this new urban agenda, the United Nations⁶ maintains that incorporating a gender perspective into infrastructure design is essential for eradicating

poverty and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It stresses that, in line with Sustainable Development Goal No. 5 of the Agenda—“Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”—it is important to include among its targets the provision of safety for women through facilities and infrastructure that prevent violence in public spaces.

In this context, it is necessary to move toward new approaches to policies, programs, and projects that contribute not only to reducing economic, cultural, and political inequalities within the population but also—by recognizing different lived experiences—to addressing the persistent asymmetries between women and men. These asymmetries encompass both material deprivations and symbolic disadvantages in the use of territory—the space where everyday life unfolds.

1.3 GENDER-SENSITIVE PLANNING AND PUBLIC POLICY S

Incorporating a gender perspective in development planning has a strategic impact. The Beijing⁷ Platform for Action states that “the success of policies and measures designed to support or strengthen the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of women must be based on the integration of a gender perspective into general policies related to all areas of society, as well as on the implementation of positive measures with appropriate institutional and financial support at all levels” (UN Women, 1995, p. 40).

If we understand that buildings and infrastructures are the physical expression and material support of these experiences, it becomes urgent to incorporate this perspective into their design and implementation.

Similarly, the Beijing Platform for Action emphasizes the importance of gender mainstreaming. It defines this as “a strategy to make the concerns and experiences of women, as well as men, an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and social spheres, so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality” (United Nations, 1997, p. 28).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which represents the global consensus in the search for a new development paradigm, recognizes the centrality of gender equality and the empowerment of women as essential to transitioning toward sustainable development patterns. It asserts that the systematic incorporation of a gender perspective

6 United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) provides infrastructure, procurement, and project management services to help build a more sustainable world. <https://www.unops.org/es/about>

7 The Beijing Platform for Action, resulting from the Fourth World Conference on Women convened by the UN, was held in Beijing, China, in September 1995.

in its implementation is crucial (United Nations, 2015).

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) is the most comprehensive international treaty on women's human rights. CEDAW obliges State Parties to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women (Art. 2), to guarantee de jure and de facto equality between women and men in all areas of development (Art. 3), and mandates the participation of women in the formulation and implementation of government policies (Art. 7). It also urges State Parties to adopt measures to include a gender perspective in the formulation and implementation of public programs and actions, grounded in empirical evidence and based on public budgets with a gender perspective (Art. 4), and mandates the consideration of women's human rights in the planning, programming, budgeting, implementation, and evaluation of public policies.

Planning that fails to differentiate between the strategic interests and needs of women and men tends, at best, to maintain gender gaps—but generally, it exacerbates them (Inter-American Commission of Women / Organization of American States [CIM/OAS], 2010).

In this regard, it is important to remember that planning without a gender perspective:

- Makes unequal gender relations invisible and fails to question inequality.
- Ignores the consequences of the sexual division of labor.
- Excludes women and other social subjects from development processes.
- Fails to consider intersectionality—gender, age, ethnicity, and other factors relevant to diagnosis.

The Ministry of Women and Gender Equity carries out concrete actions to promote gender equity and improve women's lives in Chile, advancing gender mainstreaming within the State. It pursues this goal through actions that encourage the integration of a gender perspective in all public policies, working in coordination with other ministries and with regional and local governments. Its purpose is to address the diverse realities of women in the country and to help ensure that their needs and rights are considered in every sphere of state action⁸. From this approach, the Ministerial Gender Commitments 2023–2026 constitute an instrument for mainstreaming gender perspective, with the goal of projecting public policies based on the government's program and emphasizing actions directed toward women in all their diversity.⁹

In this framework, the Ministerial Policy on Gender and Diversity of the Ministry of Public Works (MOP, 2024) states that the gender perspective is not neutral; rather, it is essential to promoting architectural and urban proposals for inclusion, fostering spatial equality, and ensuring the enjoyment and use of built spaces by all.

8 Ministry of Women and Gender Equity, "About MinMujeryEG": https://minmujeryeg.gob.cl/?page_id=34975

9 Ministry of Women and Gender Equity, "Ministerial Commitments on Gender": <https://compromisosministerialesdegenero.minmujeryeg.gob.cl/>

The Ministry of Social Development and Family / National Investment System (2020), in turn, notes that the gender perspective enhances effectiveness and identifies opportunities to improve gender redistribution and equity in public policies, programs, and investment projects.

From a gender perspective, throughout the entire cycle of architectural and planning processes, the concept of gender must be present as a transversal axis. By recognizing “the inequalities between men and women and the gender differences in access to economic, social, and cultural resources, gender-sensitive planning helps to propose actions that meet the needs of both genders” (Segovia & Williner, 2016, p. 12).

In summary, what does the gender perspective contribute to public policy?

Figure 20. ¿What does the gender perspective contribute to public policy?

 <p>Rompe con una falsa neutralidad de las políticas que encuentren las desigualdades de género, clase, etnia, edad y condición de discapacidad</p>	 <p>Aporta un enfoque interseccional de las entidades diversas para dar cuenta de opresiones y discriminaciones</p>	 <p>Atiende las necesidades y demandas de las mujeres, niñas y LGBTQ+</p>
 <p>Promueve la igualdad de oportunidades entre los géneros, así como los derechos de las mujeres, niñas, adolescentes y LGTBI+</p>	 <p>Analiza y comprende los roles de género culturalmente asignados y la forma en que condicionan el ejercicio de derechos</p>	 <p>Ofrece una metodología de trabajo para visibilizar las desigualdades y las brechas de género económicas en la calidad de vida y el acceso a los territorios</p>
 <p>Garantiza el marco de los derechos humanos universales al asegurar el principio de igualdad y no discriminación</p>	 <p>Pone en valor el rol y el aporte de las mujeres y diversidad a la sociedad y al desarrollo</p>	 <p>Empodera e impulsa la adquisición individual y colectiva de poder</p>

Source: Prepared by Ana Falú (2022b).

Regarding urban planning and the construction of urban spaces, Paula Santoro (2008) argues that the gender perspective in urbanism is fundamental because it engages with the boundaries between the personal and the political, as well as between public and domestic territories, seeking to recognize cultural diversity as a key to rethinking planning.

Architect and urban planner Zaida Muxí (2007) identifies key female authors in gender-aware urbanism, such as Anna Bofill (2005), who proposed a distinct female view of the environment capable of revealing the relationship between the patriarchal structure and the shape of our cities.

Perspectives such as these—and many others—raise a central idea: integrating a vision that promotes gender equality into the planning of public policies and programs goes far beyond the technical dimension of the problem. It is, above all, a political and ethical position, based on the conviction that representing the interests of all citizens is both a right that must be guaranteed and an essential condition. This implies a political commitment on the part of decision-makers. Political will—in promoting projects and in allocating equitable resources—is a driving force behind actions that truly integrate gender equality.

1.4 PARTICIPATION AND PROPOSALS FROM WOMEN AND GENDER DIVERSITIES

Traditionally—and continuing to this day—women and social organizations have played an active role in improving the living conditions of their communities. Their contributions have been recognized by scholars, activists, and government institutions that value the transformations they have promoted through their own experiences.

The international articulation of multiple organizations, women's networks, social movements, and academic institutions, expressed in the Charter for Women's Right to the City (2004),¹⁰ marked a milestone in the debate around the recognition of women's demands to include their interests in political agendas. The Charter reaffirms the right to sustainable and safe cities that, on one hand, guarantee equitable access to housing and urban facilities and prioritize the creation of services and infrastructure for dependent populations; and on the other, ensure the provision of safe public spaces and transportation systems that respond to women's needs.

For several decades, various networks of feminist women, academics, and policymakers across the region—among them, the Women and Habitat Network of Latin America and the Caribbean (<https://www.redmujer.org.ar/>) have sought to integrate the gender perspective into debates on cities, making visible the asymmetries between men and women and the power relations that shape the dominant gender system. Nevertheless, a notable omission of this perspective persists in architectural thought and in urban and housing policy.

Olga Segovia and María Nieves Rico (2017) note that architect and academic Ana Falú denounces this omission of gender in urban thought and proposes “women's right to their cities [as] a crucial factor in changing the supposed neutrality of the concepts through which planning is conducted” (p. 47). They emphasize the importance of not diluting

10 Este documento se elaboró en el Foro Mundial de las Mujeres, celebrado en Barcelona en 2004 y vinculado al Foro Urbano Mundial (FUM). Véase “Carta por el Derecho de las Mujeres a la Ciudad” [en línea] http://www.ugr.es/~revpaz/documentacion/rpc_n5_2012_doc2.pdf.

women's demands as rights-bearing subjects within the supposed neutrality of planning notions such as population and households, which tend toward homogenization and the concealment of women's specific needs.

For Zaida Muxí and others (2011), it is essential in decision-making to take into account women's lived experiences, as they have historically been ignored in this domain. This should be achieved through participatory processes. Such an approach implies recognizing that women—as diverse and plural subjects—constitute a creative force that can and must contribute, through their embodied and lived experience, the keys to improving our cities.

Among other authors, Susan Buckingham (2010) identifies five interrelated and essential points for achieving women's full and equal participation in exercising their right to the city:

- Safety in urban environments.
- Public infrastructure and transportation.
- Proximity between housing, services, and employment.
- Breaking the dichotomy between public and private spheres.
- Participation in decision-making, governance, and the planning of urban spaces.

In Latin America, women's organizations have demonstrated their capacity to generate proposals related to territory and public services. This active participation of women—assuming a propositional and evaluative, rather than instrumental, role—not only strengthens public policies and programs but also contributes to the civic growth and empowerment of these same women in the exercise of their rights (Bonino & Bidegain, 2011).

A good example of participatory programmatic development was the regional process of constructing the “Women's Agenda for the City in Latin America: For a Shared City with Rights and Gender Equality,”¹¹ an initiative promoted by the Women and Habitat Network of Latin America and the Caribbean. The Agenda constitutes a tool for public awareness that helps to establish agreements among political, social, and local actors. Its goal is to influence a territorial vision that recognizes the rights of women in their diversity. It is the result of participatory processes of observation and reflection carried out by diverse groups of women from social organizations, civil society, and political spaces.

11 See “Agenda de mujeres por la ciudad en América Latina. Por una ciudad compartida, con derechos e igualdad de género.” https://www.redmujer.org.ar/_files/ugd/ef40bd_d92f05a164734299a588ef3de782f469.pdf

Figure 21. Women's Agenda for the City in Latin America



Source: Left – <https://www.sitiosur.cl/agenda-de-mujeres-por-la-ciudad-en-america-latina/>

Right – <https://www.sitiosur.cl/proyecto-vozes-de-mujeres-agenda-de-mujeres-por-la-ciudad-de-santiago/>

From this perspective, it is important to recognize that, in many cases, women are better able to perceive quality over quantity when it comes to the needs of urban life, as well as the value of environmental preexistences and the historical memory of places (Bofill, 2005). Revaluing women's everyday experiences and their appreciation of the spaces they use constitutes a valuable source of information for analyzing and formulating local policy and project proposals.

A clear example of this is how women's perceptions of safety condition their routes and mobility, as well as their use of public spaces. It is therefore essential to incorporate into decision-making processes women's needs and demands regarding, for instance, the location, functionality, and material characteristics of public services and infrastructure—along with the identification of factors that promote the use of public spaces in daily life and facilitate safe circulation within them.

In this regard, it is important to note that Chile has had legal provisions since 2011 that uphold the freedom of association and the participatory principle, regulating citizens' associations and participation in public management. These provide a legal framework to ensure that such participation is real and effective. For its part, the current Ministry of Public Works regulation (2023) defines citizen participation as a cooperative process with the public regarding the provision and management of works and services—developed through methodologies and tools that foster spaces and relationships conducive to the presence of citizens in decisions that affect them.

Considering the above, how can a gender and intersectional perspective be integrated into public building design?

Integrating a gender and intersectional perspective in public building design means moving forward in addressing structural inequalities by promoting inclusive strategies throughout the project cycle and within citizen participation processes.

Table 2. How to Integrate a Gender and Intersectional Perspective in Public Building

<p>Recognize inequalities in the use and perception of the built environment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and question androcentric design approaches that accentuate discrimination—particularly those that render women invisible and overlook their characteristics and needs. • Develop intervention models that incorporate women’s experiences, needs, and interests, and—from an intersectional perspective—their differences in terms of age, racial and ethnic identity, and socioeconomic position, among other conditions.
<p>Promote inclusive proposals for everyday life within the territory.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and consider the demands of daily life and their interrelation with habitat and territory. • Prioritize the location of public buildings in proximity to residential areas to facilitate the reconciliation of family/domestic and work times. • Encourage buildings to contribute to strengthening an urban fabric that integrates different sectors with adequate services, facilities, infrastructure, and means of transportation and mobility.
<p>Plan with a gender and intersectional perspective.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At all stages, consider the starting points of people of diverse genders and the potential changes that project initiatives may generate in their circumstances. • Address the short-term practical needs of women and their strategic interests oriented toward the recognition and strengthening of their rights, capacities, and social and personal value. • Recognize the challenges and potentialities of neighborhood territories, emphasizing the importance of planning and managing health, education, and care services, as well as access to livelihoods, among others.
<p>Strengthen the active and propositional participation of women and gender diversities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight territorial practices implemented by women’s organizations. • Recognize women’s everyday experiences and their appreciation of the spaces and services they use, as a basis for diagnostics and analysis in project formulation processes. • Value the contribution of women’s and gender-diverse people’s bodily and lived experiences in proposals for improving buildings and public spaces.

Fuente: Elaboración propia 2024.

In this section, the importance of adopting a gender and intersectional perspective in the design of public architecture has been emphasized. By considering the differences in how people use and perceive built spaces—and how infrastructures affect individuals differently according to their gender and territorial context—the need to rethink androcentric models of planning and design becomes evident.

Incorporating a gender perspective into public policies and architectural planning makes it possible to expose existing structural inequalities and to propose solutions that respond

to the real needs of the entire population, particularly those of women and gender-diverse people. In this sense, the active participation of these groups is key to ensuring that proposals and public building projects do not reproduce patterns of exclusion and discrimination. It is therefore essential to implement inclusive strategies throughout all phases of each project cycle—from planning to execution—and to promote citizen participation processes that are broad, representative, and sensitive to inequality.

Ultimately, this approach not only allows for a critical and transformative reconsideration of public architecture but also represents an essential step toward building cities and territories that are more livable, accessible, and equitable for everyone.

2. ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN FOR INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

From a perspective based on the recognition and respect of human rights, this section offers guidelines, proposals, and practices that promote the integration of a gender approach in architectural design. It also incorporates the core principles of inclusive architecture, aimed at ensuring spaces that respond to diversity and equity.

2.1 THE GENDER APPROACH IN PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE

Although public policies—and architectural design itself—have historically been dominated by androcentric views, in recent years significant proposals have emerged seeking to reverse this trend. A notable example is provided by the guides and documents produced since 2009 by the Architecture Directorate of the Ministry of Public Works (2016), which propose a gender-based approach to public buildings and public spaces. One example is the *Guide to the Gender Approach in Public Building: Building for Everyone* (2016), which proposes incorporating this approach at every stage of the construction process, from diagnosis to evaluation, and includes definitions of key concepts and specific recommendations.

Other recent and relevant publications on the subject are found in the series of four manuals published by the Ministry of Public Works of Argentina, authored by Ana Falú (2022–2023), which address the challenges of gender mainstreaming in the public works cycle. These manuals—aimed at public officials who design and implement public works policies at various levels of government—identify actions, systematize experiences, and seek to serve as a tool for change in gender relations within a highly masculinized area of public policy.

The first manual, *The Gender Perspective in the Public Works Cycle* (Falú, 2022b), presents conceptual aspects, includes a critical analysis of the main phases of the process, and compiles examples of good practices in this field. The second manual, *The Gender Perspective in Care Infrastructure* (Falú, 2023a), after a conceptual discussion of the topic, analyzes why it is necessary to address care work in public works—both in what is built and in the functioning of the institutional framework itself—and presents examples implemented at international and regional levels. The third manual, *Gender Inclusion in Accessibility and Transport* (Falú, 2023b), offers theoretical elaborations, examples, and practices, emphasizing the importance of incorporating gender inclusion at the core of planning and implementing state policies on mobility and transportation. Finally, the fourth manual, *The Gender Perspective in Urban Infrastructure Works and Public Spaces* (Falú, 2023c), also develops an initial conceptual section, followed by examples related to

these spaces and urban environments, according to the different phases of public works.

In line with the manuals mentioned, there are some key considerations to highlight in architecture with a gender perspective.

2.1.1 Valuing Spatial Conditions Without Discrimination

Novas (2014) states that in architecture and urban planning, the organization or hierarchy of spaces can only be effectively achieved if there is an understanding of how those spaces will be inhabited and used in everyday life. Therefore, it is important to consider:

- Spaces that do not display any form of hierarchical use or restriction, nor explicit exclusion based on sex, gender, or other factors. To create inclusive architectural and urban proposals, it is necessary to avoid spatial hierarchies between the different groups that make up society, thus fostering spatial equality and enabling the enjoyment of built spaces.
- Public spaces that promote a shared city—that is, safe and accessible spaces for all groups: women, men, girls, boys, and older adults, in their multiple racial, ethnic, and age diversities, among others.
- Spaces defined at various dimensions and scales that, on one hand, allow for different activities and uses for diverse populations, and on the other, enhance multiple functions and possibilities of activities at different times of day, incorporating multiculturalism.

2.1.2 Inclusion and Diversity in Public Buildings, Free from Gender Stereotypes

As has already been noted, several international organizations emphasize that public infrastructure is not gender-neutral—that is, it does not always or necessarily benefit men and women equally (Novas, 2014), and it may present barriers to achieving equality for nonbinary people.

In line with this perspective, it is necessary to consider and assess the differentiated impact according to the target populations within gender diversity. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in exploring architectural proposals that seek to challenge gender stereotypes in the construction of buildings and public spaces, contributing to a vision that values diversity. In this regard, Jean Franco Díaz (2024) identifies several aspects that become significant when there is an absence of a gender perspective:

- **Lack of consideration for gender needs.** Diversity must be incorporated from the outset—examining how different groups of people may experience and use spaces—which challenges the homogenization and neutralization of social groups and actors.
- **Lack of safety for women.** Public spaces require transparency, adequate lighting, and secure locations, among other aspects. It is essential to promote equal access to these spaces. This refers to universal access, which includes designing public spaces that are easily accessible for people with disabilities.
- **Lack of representation of women in the practice of architecture and urban design.** Historically, this representation has been low. Although there are now many more

women in the field, their participation remains limited at the highest levels of decision-making. This situation may influence the lack of female perspectives in design, which in turn may contribute to a lack of inclusion and multicultural consideration.

- **Gender stereotypes in design.** At times, the design of spaces may be influenced by gender stereotypes, the assignment of stereotypical functions, or the idea that certain colors, shapes, or characteristics are more “masculine” or “feminine.” This can limit diversity and creativity in design, as well as perpetuate traditional gender roles.

Advancing toward architectural design with a gender and diversity perspective requires:

- Providing training and awareness on gender approaches for professionals in design and urban planning.
- Raising awareness among stakeholders, decision-makers, and the general community.
- Incorporating diversity from the very beginning. From the outset of the design process, it is essential to include a variety of voices and perspectives in the team, including women, LGBTQA+ people, and other marginalized groups. This can help ensure that the needs of all users are considered at all times.
- Considering how different groups of people may experience and use spaces. This involves taking into account factors such as safety, privacy, accessibility, and comfort for all individuals, regardless of gender.

2.2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSIVE ARCHITECTURE^A

In inclusive architecture, as stated in various documents,¹² the following principles should at least be taken into account.

2.2.1 Principles of Universal Design

Public buildings and public spaces with a gender perspective must adopt the principles of universal design, which promote, through design, the equitable use of such works by all people without distinction (Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, 1997). The seven guiding principles proposed are:

- **Equitable use:** Design that is useful and suitable for people with diverse abilities.
- **Flexibility in use:** Accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
- **Simple and intuitive use:** Easy to understand regardless of the user’s experience, knowledge, or skills.
- **Perceptible information:** Capable of communicating effectively through different means (graphic, verbal, or tactile).

¹² Some of the key documents developed in Chile on this subject include: Directorate of Architecture, Ministry of Public Works (MOP): Guide to Gender Mainstreaming in Public Building (2016); Risk Prevention Guidelines for MOP Construction Contracts with a Gender Perspective (2023); Ciudad Accesible Corporation: Manual of Universal Accessibility. Cities and Spaces for All (2010).

- Tolerance for error: Should minimize risks and adverse consequences of unintended or accidental actions.
- Low physical effort: Should be usable efficiently and with minimal effort.
- Adequate size and space for approach and use: Dimensions and spaces must be appropriate regardless of the user's size, position, or mobility.

In Chile, Supreme Decree No. 50 (2016) of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development establishes mandatory compliance criteria for accessibility and universal design in all buildings, urban developments, and public spaces, within the framework of Law No. 20.422 on equal opportunities and social inclusion for people with disabilities (MINVU, 2018). The Manual of Universal Accessibility (Ciudad Accesible Corporation / Mutual de Seguridad, 2010) provides specific design proposals and outlines the necessary dimensions to be considered to achieve universal accessibility in the use of spaces. Among other design proposals for public architecture buildings, it includes the design of access ramps and tactile, auditory, or visual signage for blind and/or deaf people.

Figura 22. Designs that incorporate universal accessibility in the use of public spaces



Source: Corporación Ciudad Accesible, Mutual de Accesibilidad Universal (2010), Ch. 3, p. 149. <https://bit.ly/3W7pz5C>

2.2.2 Principles of Sustainable Public Architecture

The Architecture Directorate of the Ministry of Public Works (MOP) has nearly 20 years of experience in developing and mandating—through public tenders—sustainability standards in its projects. In 2014, among other initiatives, this led to a formal agreement between the MOP, the Chilean Chamber of Construction, the Construction Institute, and the Association of Architects to implement the Sustainable Building Certification (CES). Technical units such as the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, the Ministry of Social Development and Family, and the Chilean Agency for Energy Efficiency, among others, joined this process.

The Sustainable Building Certification¹³ is voluntary. As of December 2024, there are reports of 322 pre-certified projects and 133 certified projects. Since 2017, the Hospital Certification program has also been developed, and certification for airports is currently underway.

In the 35 buildings constructed and certified by the Architecture Directorate up to

¹³ See CES, Sustainable Building Certification: <https://www.certificacionsustentable.cl/certificacion>

2024, emissions have been reduced by 4,423 tons of CO₂e, and energy consumption has been reduced by 8,254,117 kWh per year. In addition, three certified hospitals achieved reductions of 9,609 tons of CO₂e and 20,045,000 kWh per year (CES, 2024).

The CES initiative has been well received within the MOP, encouraging other directorates—such as the Airport and Concessions divisions—to develop suitable methodologies for applying this certification to their projects.

At the national level, the Architecture Directorate of the MOP contributes annually to the Ministry of Finance's Green Bonds Report¹⁴, which requires prior evaluation and validation of the Sustainable Building Certification by international expert institutions.

The main objective of the MOP Chile Sustainability Policy 2024–2030 is to promote the country's sustainable development through public works that are environmentally, socially, economically, and institutionally sustainable. The policy establishes four specific objectives according to the dimensions in which it operates:

- Environmental dimension, with emphasis on climate resilience: Promote public works that minimize environmental impacts, preserve biodiversity, and adapt to climate change.
- Social dimension: Ensure that the actions of the MOP promote social equity, inclusion, and the well-being of the population, with a gender perspective.
- Economic and financial dimension: Promote the economic viability of MOP services, ensuring sustainability throughout the life cycle of projects and the efficient use of resources.
- Institutional dimension: Strengthen interinstitutional coordination and MOP capacities to implement the policy, ensuring efficient use of resources based on data, efficiency, and innovation.

From a gender perspective, a sustainable public architecture policy must gather information that identifies gender-differentiated needs and enables inclusive responses that address the actual problems affecting cities and territories. Because women are most often the managers of everyday needs within households and communities—particularly in low-income sectors—they generally control energy use, water supply and consumption, and waste management.

In the face of risks and natural and/or climate-related disasters, gender gaps also exist. Women and children—especially those living in vulnerable territories—are more affected by environmental disasters than adult men. “According to a 2019 UNDP report, at least 60% of the deaths over the past 20 years caused by extreme weather events corresponded to women. Meanwhile, the OECD estimates that women and children are 14 times more likely to die in a disaster than men” (Escovar & Balduzzi [Blog], 2024).

14 Green bonds are debt instruments used to finance projects, companies, and economic activities with a positive environmental impact or that contribute to climate-change mitigation or adaptation. See glossary in EDUCA, the financial education portal: <https://www.cmfchile.cl/educa/621/w3-propertyvalue-45554.html>

2.2.3 Principle of Gender and Diversity Inclusion

The principle of gender and diversity inclusion in public architecture involves incorporating the diversity of gender needs from the outset of the project process, as well as the demands and perspectives of the political and technical teams themselves. It also involves including groups of women in their diversity—taking multiculturalism into account—as well as groups of LGBTQA+ people and any other groups in conditions of vulnerability.

- Adopting the principles of universal design involves promoting, through design, the equitable use of spaces by all people, regardless of physical condition or the condition of being companions or caregivers.
- Sustainable public architecture must identify gender-differentiated needs, since women are, in most cases, the primary managers of everyday life needs.
- The principle of gender inclusion challenges the neutrality of policies and highlights the needs arising from socially assigned roles and patterns for women and men in their diversities.

In summary, architectural design for inclusion and diversity requires an approach that integrates the gender perspective and social equity in a cross-cutting manner. In this regard, this section identifies key aspects of such a proposal, such as valuing spatial conditions without discrimination and promoting inclusion and diversity without reproducing gender stereotypes. These actions seek to ensure that public architecture responds to the needs of all people, fostering environments that are accessible and respectful of diverse identities.

In gender- and intersectionality-based public architectural design, the general principles of inclusive architecture are fundamental for guiding design and planning. Universal design stands as a pillar that ensures accessibility and usability of spaces for all social groups. Likewise, the principle of sustainable public architecture reinforces the importance of creating infrastructures that are environmentally responsible and functional in the long term. Finally, the inclusion of gender and diversity emerges as a transformative tool for revealing and addressing inequalities, promoting the creation of public spaces that are equitable and representative.

Inclusive architectural design is a tool whose principles must ensure respect for diversity and the elimination of physical, social, and cultural barriers. Adopting a gender and inclusion perspective in public architecture means moving toward environments that recognize the different realities of people and foster equitable and fair use of the built environment.

3. GENDER-SENSITIVE DESIGN

Gender-sensitive design identifies and incorporates into design decisions the needs and interests of women in their diversities, seeking to define keys to ensure more inclusive architectural environments and proposals free from sex-gender discrimination. It offers guidelines that allow for recognizing absences or highlighting those conditions or qualities that contribute to inclusive and diverse use.

3.1 GENDER-SENSITIVE ATTRIBUTES: GUIDELINES AND CHARACTERISTICS

To contribute to gender inclusion in the built environment, a set of attributes necessary to consider in the architectural design of public buildings is defined below.

Table 3. Gender-sensitive attributes: guidelines and characteristics

Attribute	Characteristics
a) Proximity: Location and accessibility	<p>Two vectors are relevant to the location of buildings and public spaces, with an impact on their accessibility: time and space. These two analytical vectors are linked to the concept of proximity, which proposes and seeks for facilities, infrastructures, and buildings to be located near the place of residence, within a time frame compatible with the demands of everyday life. It is also related to mobility—whether through transport, road networks, or alternative modes. Proximity is an urban concept that defines quality of life, the saving of travel time, the economic cost of travel, and the distances to public spaces as places of social interaction and components of urban sustainability (Miralles-Guasch & Marquet Sardá, 2013).</p> <p>Why is proximity key to incorporating the gender perspective?</p> <p>Proximity to public services is central to the lives of women. For them, time is a scarce resource due to the multiplicity of tasks they perform and the overload of reproductive and caregiving responsibilities they assume.</p>
b) Inclusive: Free from gender stereotypes	<p>In inclusive design, the goal is to avoid any kind of decision-making or use of elements that may reinforce gender stereotypes. For example: conceptions of space, colors, and furnishings traditionally associated with a particular gender. The lack of consideration for the specific needs of gender and diversities is longstanding; in general, designs and construction practices have been conceived from an androcentric perspective—that is, in terms of a young, white, productive, heterosexual man—which excludes not only many men but also women in their diversities. The experiences and demands of this range of subjects have not been sufficiently considered. For example, the lack of adequate public restrooms for women in crowded places may reflect this lack of consideration.</p> <p>Why propose architecture free from gender stereotypes?</p> <p>The omission of women and diversities in design expresses the supposed neutrality of an androcentric outlook. It is necessary to recognize differences and the distinct values and experiences—whether sex-gendered or intersecting with others such as class, age, ethnicity, disability, or sexual identity, among others.</p>
c) Safety: Spaces for gathering, free from gender-based violence	<p>In the planning and design of public buildings, it is essential to address violence and the subjective dimension of safety, which entail different risks and meanings depending on gender. For women, there is an additional threat: one that targets their bodies, carrying sexual implications that heighten fear.</p> <p>Various studies show that when women feel afraid, they “abandon public space, reduce their mobility radius, and change their routes: they redefine and restrict their time and space for exchange and circulation in the city” (Segovia, 2009, p. 150). “Women have had to learn to move through the city and claim it as their own” (Rainero, 2009, p. 168). In other cases, “a process of withdrawal from public space occurs, which is perceived as threatening, leading to personal and social impoverishment” (Falú, 2009, p. 23).</p> <p>Why conceive the design and architecture of public spaces and buildings in terms of freedom from gender-based violence?</p> <p>The design of spaces can foster a sense of ownership and belonging for diverse groups of people and reduce women’s fear and victimization through spatial and constructive elements that enhance visibility, orientation, and the intensity of community and social interactions.</p>

Attribute	Characteristics
d) Flexibility of uses and functions	<p>Designing spaces that can be used flexibly and adapted to different needs and preferences contributes to diverse use by people in various activities, without gender limitations.</p> <p>In this regard, it is worth proposing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration of interior and exterior spaces through transparency and functional adaptability. • Spaces that allow for private or semi-private use and can, at certain times, be used collectively. Places for groups of different sizes, ages, and genders. <p>Fernando Barrios (2014) recommends for flexible architecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the concept of open plans to promote adaptability and spatial flexibility. • Using standardized spaces and furnishings—whether with specific or customized dimensions—common to all future users. • Constructed spaces using mobile elements (walls, floors, and ceilings) that can adapt to user changes. <p>Why can flexibility of uses and functions contribute to gender-inclusive architecture?</p> <p>Because it avoids thinking exclusively from a masculine standpoint: flexible design, adaptable to different functions and uses, allows women and other social groups, in their various forms of association, to give meaning and use to these buildings.</p>
e) Mixture and intensity of uses	<p>The mixture and intensity of different uses is a central attribute of the vitality of built spaces. The combination of functions can foster interaction and sociability among different groups, facilitating perceptions of safety and belonging to place.</p> <p>Jane Jacobs, in her book <i>The Death and Life of Great American Cities</i> (1961), promoted the diversity and mixing of land uses and functions. These ideas have recently been revisited by feminist architects (Falú, Rainero, Segovia, Dalmazzo, Muxí, Sánchez de Madariaga, Col•lectiu Punt 6, among others; see Moisset & Arias Laurino, 2015).</p> <p>Why can the intensity of uses and functions contribute to gender-oriented architecture?</p> <p>If anything characterizes women's roles, it is the performance of concurrent functions that coexist within the same timeframe. In this sense, it is important to generate spaces that enable simultaneous activities and respond to the needs and interests of different people, ages, and demands.</p>

Source: Author's own elaboration, 2024.

3.2 PROPOSALS, PROJECTS, AND PROMISING PRACTICES

3.2.1 Proximity: Location and Accessibility

The concept of proximity refers to the distances between infrastructures, services, and facilities in relation to the places where people live. This particularly affects women, who—as already noted—use the city and neighborhoods differently from men. Their routes are more varied, responding to diverse needs linked to their role as those responsible for sustaining life and caregiving, and consequently consume more of their time.

From the perspective adopted here—namely, the influence of the gender factor on urban life—proximity or nearness is measured along the time vector: the time it takes a person to reach any given destination—on foot, in the best of cases, or by transport (public, private, or alternative). In this study, that destination is a public building. Also within this

perspective, studies on time use reveal asymmetries between men, women, and gender diversities, particularly in relation to reproductive or caregiving work. However, time is not the only variable that affects the quality of travel; the material quality of routes also has an impact.

To summarize, the two relevant vectors for defining location and accessibility—which together determine the value of proximity—are time and space. Distance entails a cost in time, and space is defined through routes and the material and situational conditions of the places through which people move; equally important are the economic costs when public transport is required (time and fares). Thus, accessibility conditions are linked to the physical extent of cities, and geographical distance not only results in higher costs of mobility itself but also in the costs associated with obtaining information about available services (Anderson & Van Wincoop, 2004; cited in Alba Blanco Martínez, 2021).

Jane Jacobs, in her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, was a pioneer in introducing the concept of proximity. This central design attribute had already been developed in earlier models such as the Garden City at the end of the nineteenth century, in the proposals of Howard (1898), or the Neighborhood Unit at the beginning of the twentieth century by Clarence Perry. However, it was Jacobs, in the mid-twentieth century, who established the concept. In her work—opposing the architecture and urban design of modernism—she defends social cohesion, everyday life, and the identity of urban spaces. She proposes the principle of proximity, with a focus on people and community, as opposed to the functional segregation of the modernist movement. In such a conception of the city, the proximity and location of public service buildings are central, with their placement in areas well connected to public transport and easily accessible on foot or by alternative means.

A location that facilitates and reduces the time consumption of women in particular is what feminist urbanism advocates, centering project decisions around the demands of daily life, rather than solely on the productive city.

Proximity is a concept related to location—that is, the relationship between one's place of residence and the closeness of services, facilities, and access to infrastructure, transport, and roads. These variables influence time, routes, and accessibility—decisive factors in the daily lives of women, who generally travel accompanied by their dependents, whether children, persons with disabilities, or elderly people (Falú, 2022b, Manual 1).

Some interesting proposals for urban interventions built around the notion of proximity are summarized below.

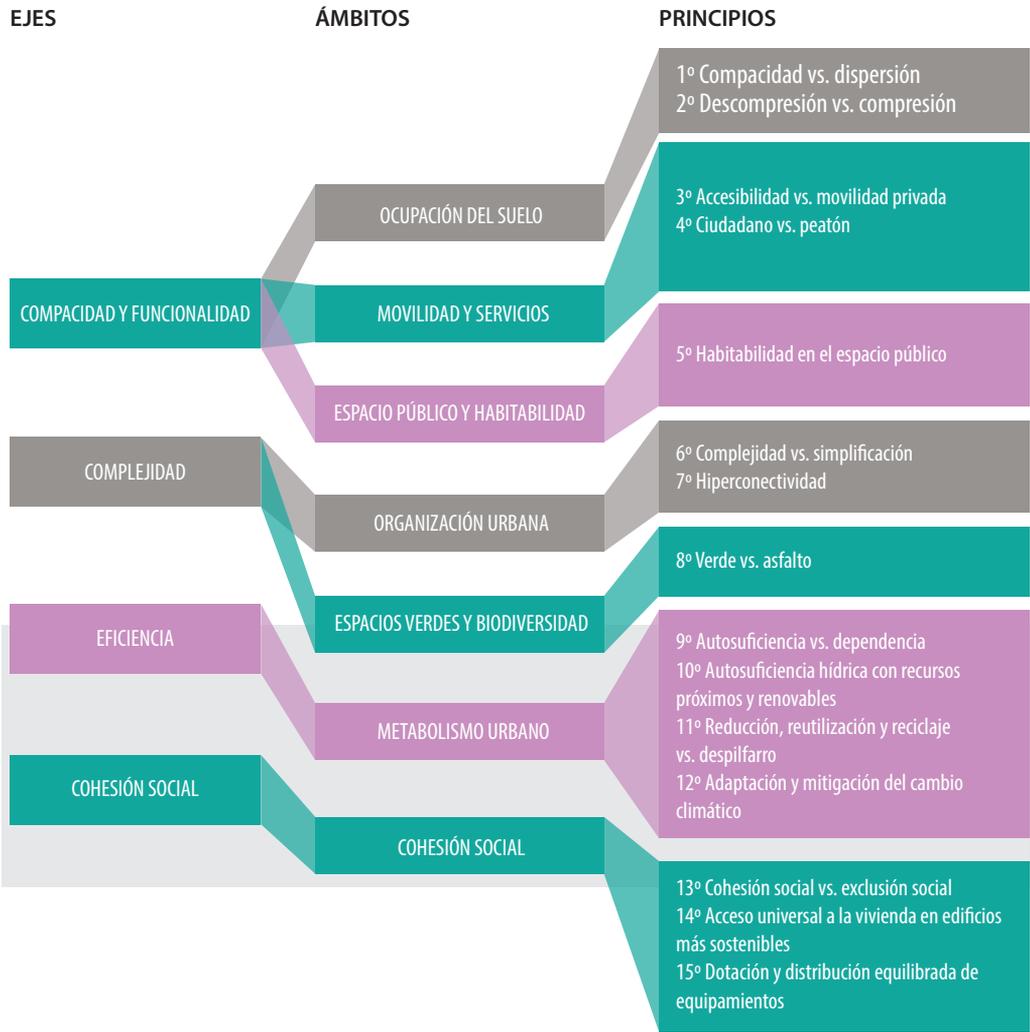
a) *Proximity: The 15-minute city proposal*

For decades, urban planners have been developing proposals to design systems whose urban conditions and characteristics allow for meeting the basic needs of the population as well as ensuring positive interaction between people and the elements that make up their urban environments (Herrero Barrientos & Velázquez Ruíz, 2024).

Facilities, economic activities, road networks, parks, and the distances between these and people’s places of residence are among the decisive elements for creating friendly urban dynamics. Thus, applying the concept of proximity to decisions on the location of public buildings is relevant not only to everyday life but also to environmental sustainability. Avoiding unnecessary travel contributes to reducing energy consumption and emissions.

A recent example in this area is the development of the conceptual map of ecosystemic urbanism, which defines land use as the primary consideration in building sustainable cities.

Figure 23. Conceptual map of ecosystemic urbanism. A more sustainable city model



Source: Fundación Ecología Urbana y Territorial, Urbanismo Ecosistémico..

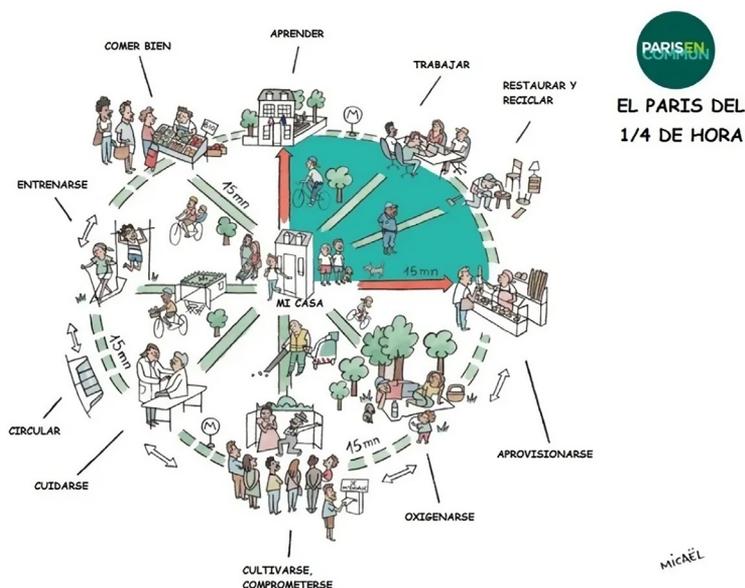
These ideas informed the policy promoted by Anne Hidalgo, Mayor of Paris, in proposing the 15-minute city, based on the work of architect Carlos Moreno (2023).

The 15-minute city aims to encourage the location of buildings providing services such as health, education, care, and public spaces, taking as a determining variable their proximity—on foot or by bicycle—to workplaces and housing.

Three main characteristics stand out in this proposal:

- The goal is to reduce private mobility.
- Every square meter must serve many different purposes (intensity of uses).
- Neighborhoods must be designed so that people can live, work, and thrive in them without constantly having to travel elsewhere.

Figure 24. The 15-minute city



Source: Le Paris du ¼ heure, <https://bit.ly/3Pv5sKt>

The 15-minute city is based on four key pillars relevant to the location of public buildings and public spaces:

- Ecology: a green and sustainable city.
- Proximity: nearness and the value of time and space usage.
- Solidarity: fosters connection and community.
- Participation of diverse people: involves citizens.

b) *Alto Hospicio Hospital*

The municipality of Alto Hospicio, in the Tarapacá Region, concentrates one of the country's largest numbers of informal settlements. Since its establishment as a municipality in 2004, Alto Hospicio has tripled its population, mostly composed of young people, low-wage workers, informal laborers, and both regular and irregular migrants. There is a notably high percentage of people belonging to Indigenous peoples, mainly Quechua and Aymara, reaching 30.6%. The number of migrants has steadily

increased in recent years—from 5,441 people in 2012 to 19,868 in 2021. This diversity forms the basis for the self-definition of the municipal administration as the Intercultural Municipality of Alto Hospicio (Rodríguez & Rodríguez Matta, 2024).

In this context, the construction of the Alto Hospicio Hospital highlights the value of proximity, particularly for settlements like the one described, which originated informally. This public work stands out as one of the largest hospital projects built in northern Chile, with high sustainability standards in its construction—resulting from a collaborative process. Beyond the central attribute of proximity to its beneficiary population, the hospital also stands out for its efficiency and user comfort. It ensures thermal and acoustic comfort and—crucially, particularly for women—visual control. These physical and architectural design features contribute to the well-being and health of patients, as well as of medical and administrative staff. In both recovery processes and daily work and care activities—and quite significantly—it meets the demanding conditions of its location in Chile’s northern coastal zone.¹⁵

With a capacity of 235 beds, it is a major contribution to the community. Its proximity to the population’s residential areas facilitates access to the health center—a value recognized by the public, as reflected in the hospital’s strong reputation for patient treatment. It ranked fifth in the 2024 User Care Ranking in the medium-complexity category.¹⁶

Figure 25. Alto Hospicio Hospital



Source: Photographic archive of the Sacyr Global Concessions and Infrastructure Development Group.

15 "Alto Hospicio Hospital Recognized with Fifth Place in User Care Ranking," VilasRadio, December 4, 2024: <https://vilasradio.cl/hospital-de-alto-hospicio-reconocido-con-el-quinto-lugar-en-el-ranking-de-trato-al-usuario/>

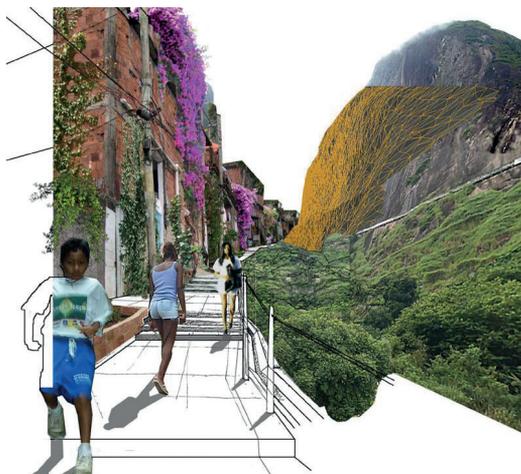
16 See "The Sustainability Pillars of the Alto Hospicio Hospital," CES (Sustainable Building Certification), May 26, 2021: <https://www.certificacionsustentable.cl/los-pilares-de-la-sustentabilidad-del-hospital-de-alto-hospicio/>

c) *Improving Accessibility in Favelas in Rio de Janeiro*

One of the material conditions of space that defines proximity is accessibility. Walking along paved streets with well-finished sidewalks, lighting, and trees is not the same as navigating hostile, degraded, and unsafe environments.

A highly interesting example of how public works can be directed toward consolidating and improving accessibility to the areas where people live is the work developed by architect Jorge Mario Jáuregui through the organization Viva Rio (<https://vivario.org.br/>) in the state of Rio de Janeiro. The proposal, implemented at the neighborhood and favela scale, seeks to resolve and improve—architecturally and spatially—the accessibility of vulnerable territories and social sectors, particularly in informal neighborhoods typically located on the complex topography of Rio de Janeiro’s hillsides. Jáuregui defines these urban interventions as the challenge of “building within conflict” and contributing to people’s quality of life. Improving accessibility particularly benefits women, as they are the ones who most frequently move around the neighborhood, facilitating the management of reproductive and caregiving tasks.

Figure 26. Favela route



Source: J. Jáuregui, Eco-limit project for Rocinha Favela (2004). In “Muros.” Interview with Página 12, Buenos Aires (2009). http://www.jauregui.arq.br/news_muros.html

Figura 27. Accessibility in favelas, Rio de Janeiro



Source: J. Jáuregui, *Accessibility in the Favelas of Rio de Janeiro*, Viva Rio (2005).

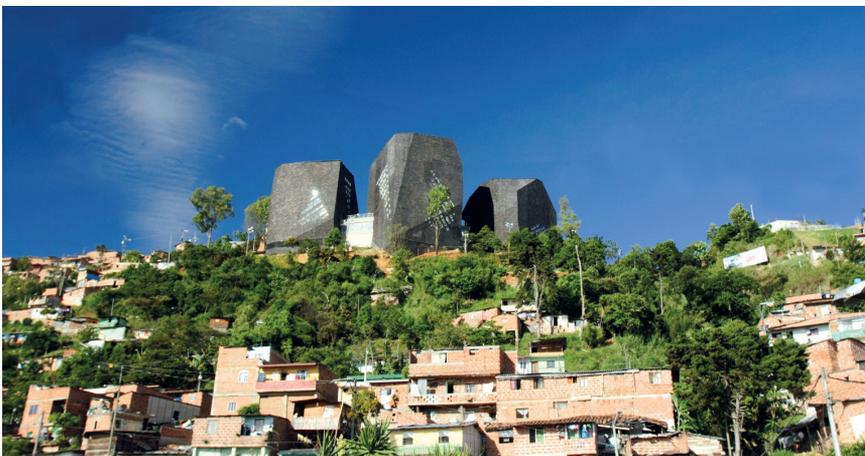
These types of solutions not only enhance the quality of life in the area but also foster a sense of confidence when moving through the neighborhood's public spaces—in this case, the access stairways.

d) *Accessibility, Public Space, and an Iconic Project: Parque Biblioteca Pública España, Medellín, Colombia*

This intervention connects the city with hillside neighborhoods of difficult access by developing a complex urban project centered on accessibility through aerial cable transport (cable car) and the construction of public buildings for education, recreation, and other uses. The project is located in Santo Domingo, one of the slopes most affected by the urban violence of the 1980s, linked to the city's drug trade, and is part of Medellín's broader social inclusion program.

This iconic intervention sought to add value and dignify sectors that had been heavily stigmatized by urban violence. The Parque Biblioteca Pública España is part of a network of urban and social projects aimed at Medellín's cultural and social transformation. It is visible from much of the city, allowing residents to identify with their area and develop a greater sense of belonging. Today, it is one of the region's tourist landmarks.

Figure 28. Parque Biblioteca Pública España, Medellín



Source: Parque Biblioteca Pública España, Medellín / Giancarlo Mazzanti. <https://bit.ly/4h6mkCY>

The project is organized around two structural elements: first, the landscape buildings (rocks); and second, the platform that integrates them, turning its roof into a viewing plaza overlooking the valley. The building reinforces the concept of a meeting place, multiplying spaces for connection and gathering, and becoming a point of reference for the city.

Public works located in visible areas help generate value for the entire population, promote more livable environments, and consider time and routes by incorporating urban transport connections through aerial systems. The design creates neighborhood-scale spaces, linking the cable car station with the Library Park complex. It is particularly interesting how spaces are generated for women and girls—open, welcoming places that promote not only proximity to services, transport, and connectivity, but also the vitality of the neighborhood.

e) *Major Urban Corridors: Accessibility and Public Space Improvement for Diversity*
— *Meridiana Avenue, Barcelona*

Among Jane Jacobs' (1961) ideas, one particularly stands out: that of “healthy and vibrant cities and neighborhoods,” in which she highlights that the vitality of streets and neighborhoods—with wide sidewalks and local businesses—fosters safety and community life. Among the values emphasized by Jacobs and recently revisited by feminist urbanism is pedestrianization. A project associated with this perspective at the city scale is the renewal of Meridiana Avenue in Barcelona.

The objectives of this intervention include transforming the avenue into a civic axis of reference for the city—a green avenue where vegetation, children's play areas, and urban furniture invite citizens to inhabit it—ensuring that this corridor is not experienced as a barrier dividing neighborhoods.

Which aspects of these guidelines and projects stand out to be incorporated into public building design?

- The attribute of proximity contributes to women's lives, given the persistent roles and responsibilities related to care and domestic life.
- The 15-minute city proposal enhances the quality of environments inhabited by working-class sectors, facilitating daily life and giving value to its dimensions.
- High-quality facilities encourage use by diverse groups, including women and girls, in neighborhood spaces.
- Projects that emphasize the value of accessibility and its materiality (passages, stairways, meeting spaces) improve neighborhoods and surroundings while promoting urban vitality and social interaction among diverse people.

Figure 29. Avenida Meridiana, Barcelona, antes y después de la intervención



Source: Barcelona City Council.

3.2.2 Inclusive Design: Free from Gender Stereotypes

The approach to inclusion and gender has seen significant advances in recent years. In highly competitive fields such as the digital market, inclusion and gender perspectives have become central concerns, and there is growing discussion of the advantages and challenges of what has been called “democratic design” (GammaUX, 2024). In this regard, it is noteworthy to observe the willingness to adapt to the demands of a society that increasingly recognizes diversity while becoming ever more globalized.

One factor that contributes to inclusion and diversity is the capacity to ensure that designs integrate the different perspectives, experiences, and needs of users. Although the design process can become more complex—and even slower—due to the need for active participation and listening to multiple stakeholders, and potential delays in decision-making, it is remarkable how such a process can improve responses and reduce the risk of omitting the needs of specific social groups.

a) *Design of Maternity Facilities, Madrid, Spain*

An example that draws from women's experiences of maternity is the work of Ángela Muller and Marta Parra¹⁷(Barreira Blanco, 2016), who develop architectural design proposals for birthing rooms that foster intimacy. Their work reflects on women's corporeality as an aspect traditionally forgotten and silenced in conventional maternity design. This proposal for birthing rooms aligns with the distinction made by Pérez Moreno (2021) in architectural design that, from a feminist perspective, recovers women's lived experiences.

Figure 30. Birthing room, design by Á. Muller and M. Parra



Source: Maternidad HM Hospitales, <https://bit.ly/3Pr7YBu>

The natural birth unit at HM Nuevo Belén University Hospital, winner of the First International Interior Design Award for Healthcare Infrastructure, features renovated birthing rooms adapted to create a space characterized by respect for women's intimacy and comfort.

b) *Universal, Accessible, and All-Gender Bathrooms — Universidad de Santiago de Chile*

Gender-neutral bathrooms—designed for use by any gender group—have faced resistance and heated debate. For transgender people, the decision to use the men's or women's bathroom can be difficult or even harmful.

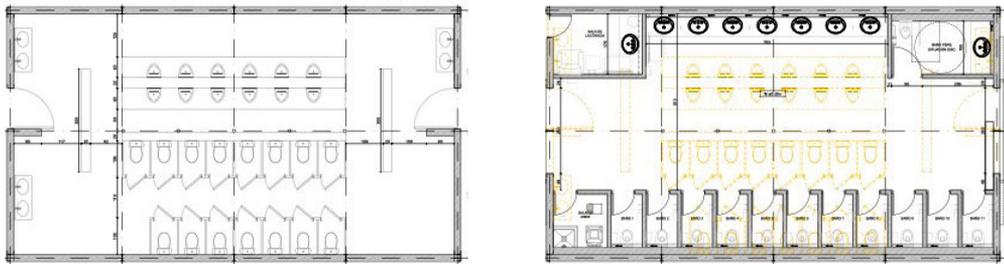
El objetivo principal de la experiencia de remodelación de los baños, desarrollada por la Mesa de Accesibilidad del Departamento de Inclusión y Derecho a la Diferencia de la Universidad, fue avanzar en materia de accesibilidad e infraestructura con perspectiva de género que favorezcan la implementación de una infraestructura incluyente y un campus que acoja la diversidad de las personas que integran la comunidad educativa.

¹⁷ Recognized by the Official College of Architects of Madrid with the 2018 Architect of the Year award for their hospital complexes, such as the birthing suites at HM Nuevo Belén Hospital (2013), Puerta del Sur Hospital (2014–15), and Getafe Hospital (2014).

The Accessibility Committee—composed of student representatives, students with disabilities, the Directorate of Gender, Diversity, and Equity, and the Directorate of Inclusion and the Right to Difference, together with the Design Unit of the Directorate of Planning and Territorial Development—defined key design aspects for the bathrooms, including:

- Spacious entrances that allow smooth circulation, especially for users with reduced mobility.
- Washbasins with wide access areas for greater comfort.
- Stalls designed to prioritize privacy.
- Strict compliance with Supreme Decree 50 on Universal Accessibility (March 2016), which includes exclusive washbasins.
- Use of durable materials to ensure long lifespan and easy maintenance.
- Inclusion of changing tables to promote use by mothers, fathers, and caregivers.
- A lactation room adjacent to the restroom with a separate entrance, providing a private and comfortable space.
- A bidet or handheld shower in at least one stall for the needs of menstruating people.
- Easy-to-open faucets for all users.
- Stall doors designed to ensure user privacy without neglecting safety considerations.
- Stall locks with indicators showing occupancy.

Figure 31. Gender-neutral bathrooms, Universidad de Santiago de Chile

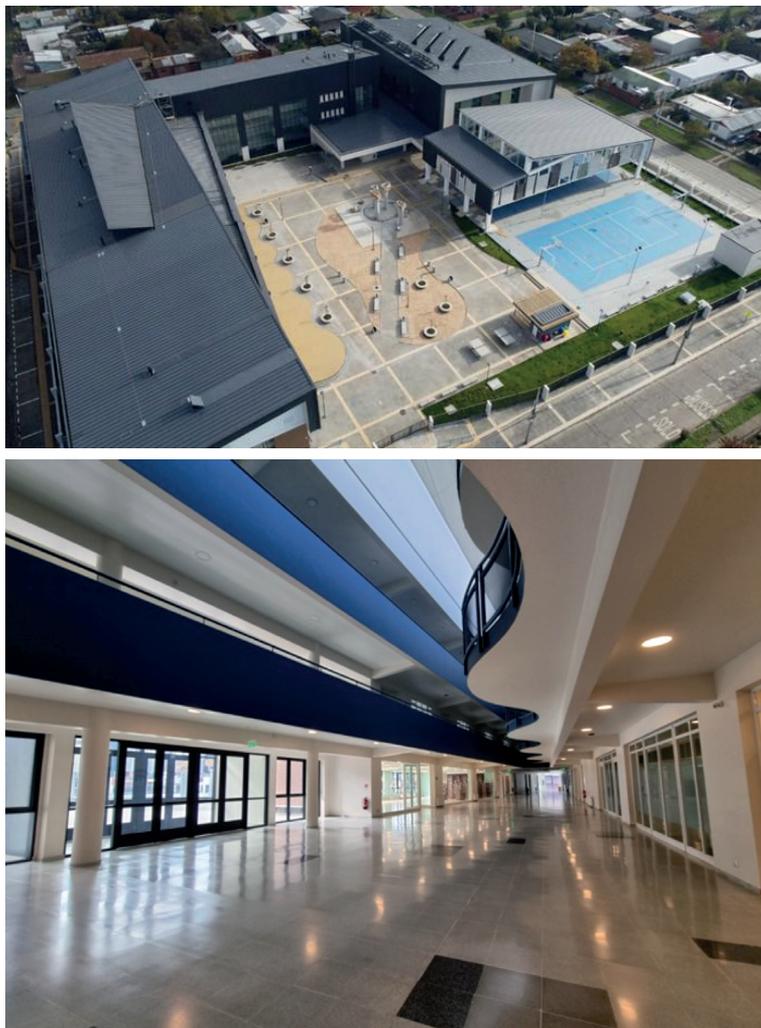


Source: Materials provided by the Design Unit, Directorate of Planning and Territorial Development, Universidad de Santiago de Chile.

c) *Jorge Teillier High School, Lautaro Municipality, Araucanía Region, Chile*

This project, developed by the Directorate of Architecture of the Ministry of Public Works using materials referencing the region, features a design with school courtyards, transition spaces, and corridors that combine various qualities—such as transparency and the relationship between exterior and interior—enhancing safety for girls and young women: a spatial layout that flows and facilitates seeing and being seen.

Figura 32. Liceo Jorge Teillier, comuna de Lautaro



Source: Directorate of Architecture, MOP Chile (2024).

The courtyard connects to the building, allowing its use during cold weather, while transparency contributes to a sense of spaciousness. These conditions create an environment that fosters calm and conducive school use. Circulation spaces are dimensioned to promote interaction. The open courtyard can be visually perceived from its entire surrounding perimeter. Its design breaks with the “playground” stereotype, enabling other functions and types of recreation.

What do these examples contribute to gender and diversity inclusion in design?

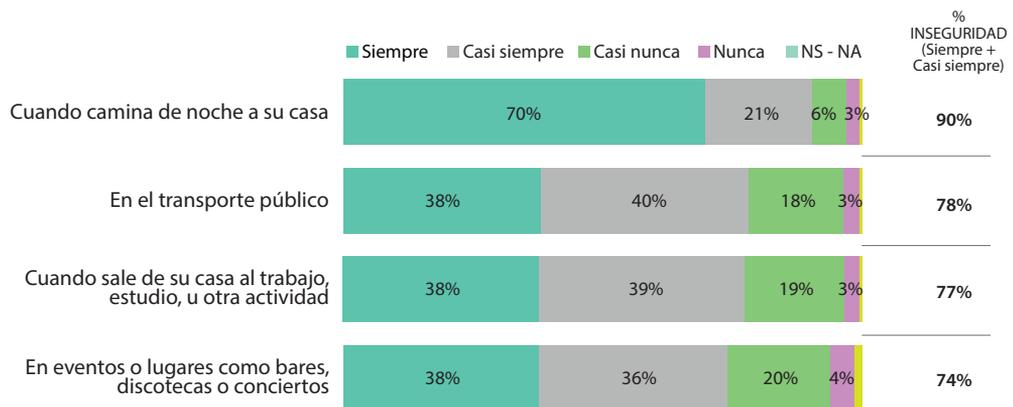
- A design free from stereotypes, expanding the understanding of diverse user needs, offers solutions adapted to different requirements and preferences.
- Specific designs—birthing rooms, gender-neutral bathrooms, inclusive school courtyards—creatively propose new approaches, offering safe experiences to diverse sexual identities and promoting new functions for new forms of gender relations and shared responsibility.
- Breaking with established and naturalized design stereotypes—those of “how things should be”—reduces the likelihood of omitting needs that public buildings must address

3.2.3 Safety: Spaces for Encounter, Free from Gender-Based Violence

The perception of insecurity and the abandonment of public space—in its physical, social, and symbolic dimensions—operate as a circular and cumulative process. However, one of the essential conditions for community development is the existence of a public space for encounter and coexistence. In this sense, the quality of public space can be evaluated above all by the intensity and quality of the social relationships it facilitates—its capacity to welcome and mix diverse groups and behaviors, to foster symbolic identification, expression, and cultural integration (Segovia & Oviedo, 2000, p. 52).

Nevertheless, as in other countries, in Chilean cities public spaces are potentially sources of insecurity for women. According to Ipsos surveys (March 2024), a high percentage of women report feeling always or almost always unsafe when walking home at night. Moreover, insecurity in public spaces is common among women regardless of their area of residence, age, or socioeconomic level.

Figure 33. Women’s perception of insecurity: frequency



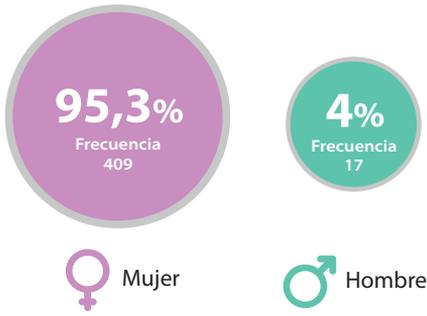
Source: Report No. 27, Claves Ipsos, March 2024, p. 8. <https://bit.ly/4gTFbBM>

Similarly, the likelihood of being a victim of sexual harassment is very high among women, especially in public spaces such as streets, bus stops, and corners.

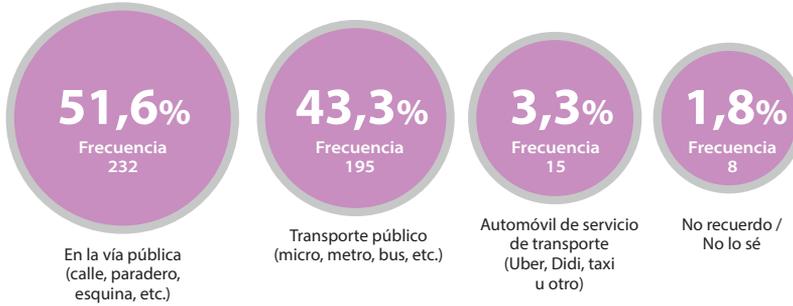
Contributing to coexistence in safety requires designing public spaces from a gender perspective—one that integrates the diversity of people and collective situations, accommodating solitude and encounter, intimacy and community (Segovia, 2009).

Figure 34. Likelihood of being a victim of sexual harassment among women

Declaran haber vivido experiencias de acoso sexual según sexo, en frecuencia y porcentajes



Lugar donde ocurrió la experiencia de acoso más significativa, en frecuencia y porcentajes



Source: M. Molina, “Permanent Danger.” In *¿A dónde vas tan sola? Acoso sexual en las calles* (p. 50).

a) *Guidelines for Safety and Enjoyment in Public Spaces: The Montreal Experience*

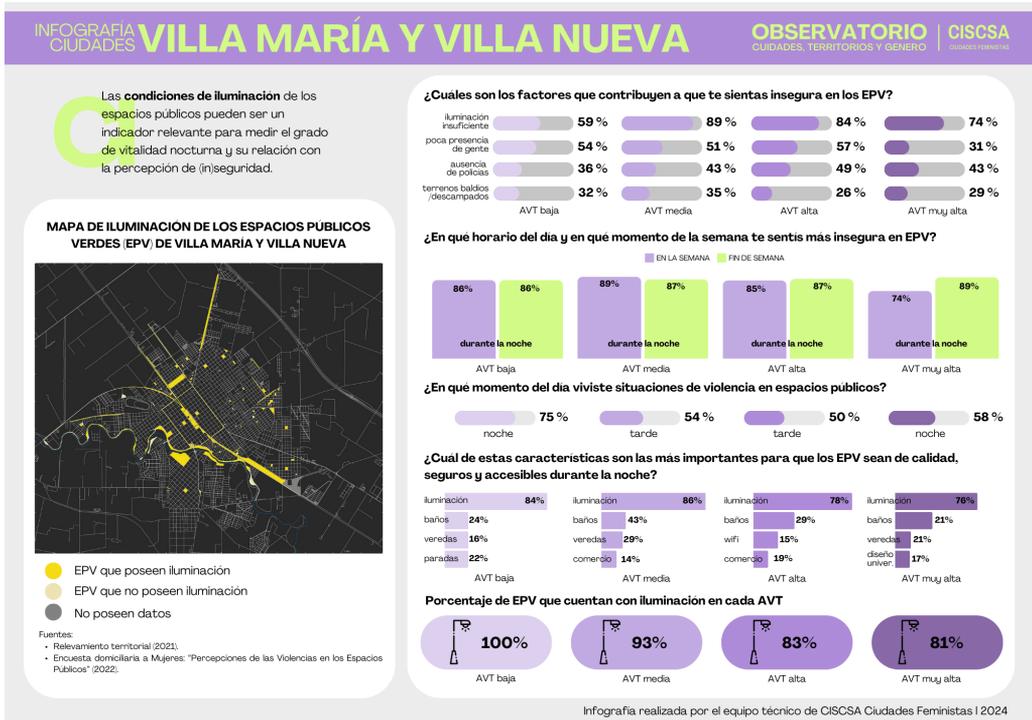
Anne Michaud (2002) developed six design principles to ensure the safety of women and girls, emphasizing that safe and welcoming spaces take into account specific safety concerns such as adequate lighting, visibility, and designs that deter harassment and gender-based violence.

Figure 35. The Six Principles of Anne Michaud for Urban Safety (2002)

1. Know where you are and where you are going. Signposting.
2. See and be seen. Visibility.
3. Hear and be heard.
4. Be able to escape and get help.
5. Live in a clean and friendly environment.
6. Community participation.

Source: CISCSA (2006).

Figure 36. Villa María and Villa Nueva



Source: CISCOSA, 2023.

A study carried out in the city of Villa María, Province of Córdoba, Argentina (CISCOSA, 2020–2023), demonstrates the importance of good lighting in women’s perception of safety and identifies the factors that contribute to their sense of insecurity—where and at what times these occur, particularly at night.

Methodologies such as these make it possible to understand the conditions of territories and the needs of women, thus contributing to the planning of public infrastructure and buildings.

The Safe Cities program has promoted and supported innovative proposals that improve women’s and girls’ use and enjoyment of urban spaces, strengthening their safety and empowerment (UN Women, 2020). These experiences show that:

- Public space is a place of encounter, particularly relevant to women’s lives and the expansion of their autonomy; its physical improvement and the provision of infrastructure contribute to greater appropriation and better use of public spaces by women and girls.
- The active participation of women and girls in urban planning proposals enhances the quality of design and improves the management of public and green spaces, contributing to their collective ownership and use.
- Cultural and symbolic interventions in public spaces, as well as in stations and transport systems, re-signify and valorize places and routes, contributing to the safety of women and girls in their everyday urban experience.

Jan Gehl and Brigitte Svarre (2013) propose criteria for incorporating quality into public

space design in cities. In this regard, they highlight the following attributes:

- Pedestrian circulation: spaces that remain active at different hours of the day and night, generating social control, with good lighting that eliminates potentially unsafe areas.
- Protection against unpleasant sensory experiences: shelter from wind, rain, and sun; green areas that reduce high temperatures, pollution, and noise.
- Spaces for staying: pleasant public places for rest and interaction, with façades and landscapes that are visually engaging. Include vegetation, shade, and shelter according to climatic conditions.
- Places for exercise: public facilities for sports, leisure, and street activities both day and night, in summer and winter—managed active spaces.
- Small-scale services: buildings and spaces designed to a human scale; the city viewed from the perspective of the human eye.
- Climate adaptation: places designed to make the most of each season, according to the climate and topography of the city.

b) *Montevideo Plan for Public Spaces Free from Sexual Harassment, Uruguay*

The Montevideo Plan for Public Spaces Free from Sexual Harassment (2018–2020) (Municipality of Montevideo, 2019) aimed to implement a comprehensive public policy to eradicate sexual harassment and violence and to democratize women’s and gender-diverse people’s right to the city. The Directorate of Urban Development led a project for the revitalization and maintenance of Rodó Park, a central location in the city (new pavement, equipment, lighting, restoration of spaces, and signage), incorporating the demands of women’s groups.

In the historic neighborhoods of Montevideo—Unión and Villa Española—which in recent decades have suffered significant deterioration in material conditions and quality of life, women’s proposals have been collected and integrated into the Renová program, an initiative of comprehensive action structured around three lines: creation and improvement of public spaces; improvement, maintenance, and expansion of the housing stock; community strengthening.¹⁸

Figure 37. Actions under the Renová Program, Montevideo



Source: Municipality of Montevideo (2019), p. 12 (left), p. 34 (right). <https://bit.ly/3WhR1x5>

¹⁸ The Renová Program is jointly implemented by the Municipality, the Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning and Environment, and the Inter-American Development Bank, in coordination with the D and E municipalities of Montevideo.

c) *Inclusive Design and Environmental Sustainability: Supermanzana, Barcelona, Spain*

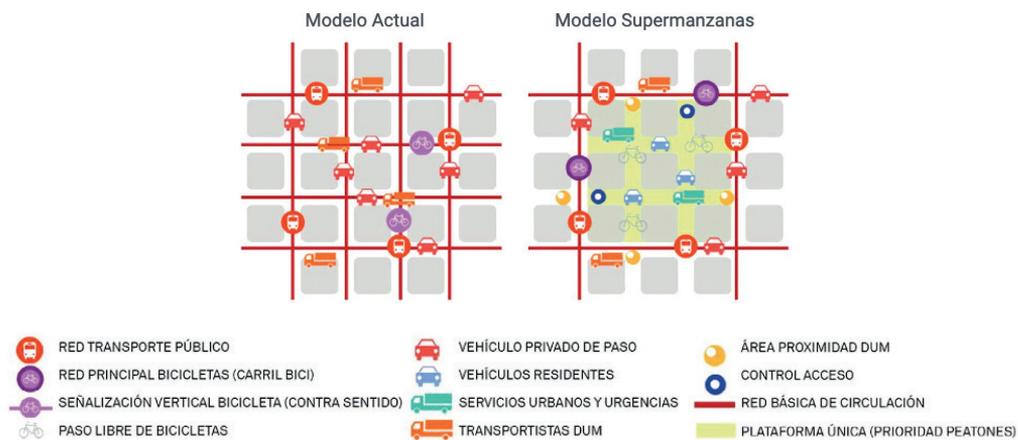
Among the actions of the Supermanzana (Superblock) plan, developed by the City Council of Barcelona, one of the most notable has been the transformation of public space: interventions in squares and parks, the expansion of green areas, improvement of the surroundings of educational facilities, and the creation of diverse infrastructures for better connectivity and care for the population.

A clear example is the redesign of public spaces at school entrances—flexible areas where vehicles are allowed under controlled conditions, while during daytime hours they function as public spaces for children and adolescents. In addition to the reduction of private vehicles and lower carbon emissions, these spaces provide opportunities for people to linger and interact, thanks to thoughtful design.

Figure 38. Supermanzana, Barcelona



(Continúa)



Sources: Supermanzana Plan Map, Barcelona City Council, Urban Mobility Plan. Photographs: Arch. Carlos Pérez Bidondo, Barcelona.

d) *Architecture for Protection and Shelter Against Violence Toward Women*

Casa Violeta Parra Competition — Temporary Shelter for People Experiencing Gender-Based Violence, Argentina.

An initiative that develops architectural criteria for a temporary refuge for people experiencing gender-based violence is the Casa Violeta Parra Competition, organized by Proyecto Habitar and the Aparecida En Red Ando 50 team, aimed at architecture students from universities across Argentina.

The winning project—built collaboratively with technical staff, professionals, social organizations, and prior community work—formulated a proposal designed to facilitate coexistence and respond to the needs of those who will use the house and its surroundings, both as residents and as workers.

Table 4 Notable gender criteria in the Casa Violeta Parra competition brief and the architectural project design

Gender criteria	Variables
Spatial qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design flexible, integrated spaces that allow alternating uses and foster socialization and collective care. • Address the management of sightlines in the spatial design, analyzing and proposing routes based on the configuration of spaces in order to promote a sense of safety.
Gradation of spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design sheltering, private spaces to generate a sense of safety and support, defining a gradual connection between collective and intimate spaces. • Create spatial sequences and intermediate transition situations between the private and the public, as well as between interior and exterior (e.g., garden, patio, gallery).
Relationship with the surroundings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate semi-public and public spaces and neighborhood-use programs within the building to promote connection and integration with the immediate context and with the outside.

Source: Prepared by the authors using information from Proyecto Habitar, 2019. In Concurso Casa Violeta Parra. Espacio Colectivo. Refugio transitorio para mujeres víctimas de violencia de género. Proyecto Habitar, 2019. https://issuu.com/proyectohabitar/docs/concurso_violeta_parra_revista

Figure 39. First-prize project in the “Casa Violeta Parra, collective space” competition, Argentina



Source: A. Falú (2024), *La perspectiva de género en las infraestructuras de cuidado en América Latina y el Caribe (2023–2024)*, p. 58.

e) *Women’s Center and Shelter in Punta Arenas*

The Women’s Center and Shelter in Punta Arenas aims to create a place of refuge for critical situations of violence, intended for women over 18, guaranteeing temporary residence that provides shelter, food, and security. Within this framework, a luminous building is proposed, with green areas and protection from the outside, allowing those who have suffered violence to regain a sense of calm. It is located on a site with a consolidated urban location, which guarantees women’s accessibility and safety to reach it, and features a controlled exterior with transparency and fluidity of spaces.

Figure 40. Women’s Center and Shelter, Punta Arenas



Source: Project by the Ministry of Public Works, Directorate of Architecture, Region of Magallanes and Chilean Antarctica, 2024. Images provided by the institution.

f) *Architecture for care and safety*

Community Centers for Care and Protection (Chile), Ministry of Housing and Urban Development

Progress in providing public services capable of generating changes in gender relations—particularly regarding unpaid domestic and care work—makes it possible to reaffirm public responsibility for care. In this context, care infrastructures—buildings with

requirements particular to each community and territory—take on great importance. As defined by MINVU, “Community Centers for Care and Protection aim to provide local communities with public spaces and infrastructure whose design and construction are guided by a rights-based, gender, care, disaster-risk-reduction, and community-management approach. In addition, they are designed to be used as operations centers in the event of emergencies, and therefore have autonomous operating systems.”¹⁹

Regarding safety and the use of exterior spaces at Community Centers, MINVU (2024) recommends:

- The presence of vegetation in outdoor areas, equipped with children’s play equipment and soft surfaces, and with shade.
- Seating in outdoor areas and other rest zones, enabling older persons and other protected groups to sit.

For interior spaces:

- Multi-purpose rooms in a central area and near the building entrance, as well as visual and direct connection to a patio or garden, to allow supervision of children and other care recipients.
- Design of rooms that facilitate visual permeability and eliminate hiding places and isolated areas.
- Inclusion of signage and a layout that facilitates understanding of spaces, wayfinding, and personal autonomy.
- Provision for installing surveillance devices or alarms in areas of greater vulnerability.

Community Center for Care and Protection, Portezuelo, Ñuble Region

The project is located 34 km from Chillán, in the Ñuble Region. The complex, totaling 176 m², has two blocks: one concentrates services and administration; the other houses programs related to personal care.

What stands out from these proposals and interventions as components to be incorporated into public buildings? The following aspects are important to keep in mind:

- Identifying women’s perceptions of safety and public space makes it possible to design specific responses: adequate lighting, elements that improve visibility, and design features that deter harassment and gender-based violence.
- The active participation of women and girls enhances design quality and improves the management of public spaces, contributing to their appropriation and collective use, particularly in areas facing vulnerability.
- Interventions in squares and parks, expansion of green areas, improvement of the surroundings of educational facilities, and infrastructures for diverse use with universal accessibility strengthen use and the social quality of life of the environment.
- Transparent elements that provide visibility and luminosity, as well as protection from climatic factors, contribute to good use by diverse groups of people.

¹⁹ See “MINVU Begins Construction of Community Care and Protection Center in San Gregorio” (MINVU News, October 26, 2023).

- Designing facilities that allow multiple activities for various groups at different times of day fosters extended occupation of places over time, encouraging interaction and enhancing the feeling of safety.
- Infrastructures that incorporate sheltering and private spaces, and semi-public areas that promote visibility and connection with the immediate surroundings, help prevent violence against women.
- Care infrastructures with equipment for children and older persons, and multi-purpose rooms, as well as visual and direct connection to a patio or garden, contribute to quality of use and safety.

Figure 41. Community Center for Care and Protection, Portezuelo, Ñuble Region



Source: Proyecto Centro Comunitario de Cuidados y Protección, Municipality of Portezuelo. Projects, Municipal Planning Secretariat (SECPLAN), Municipal Works Directorate (DOM). <http://bit.ly/3WcAsmb>

3.2.4 Flexibility of uses and spaces in architecture

From a gender perspective, creating spaces that can be used flexibly and adapt to different needs and preferences helps avoid imposing predefined gender roles—or even age- or culture-based roles. For example, common areas that can be used for various activities without gender limitations; adaptable spaces to meet people’s changing needs; multi-use rooms; lighting adjustments and even temperature settings according to required uses.

Flexibility includes integrating interior and exterior spaces, the possibility of expanding them, and—crucial for gender inclusion—transparency. Once again, an attribute such as flexibility and adaptability to different functions according to time and climatic conditions is linked to another related to safety, namely transparency: “seeing and being

seen” and “hearing and being heard,” with consequences for women’s perception of safety (Michaud, 2002). Flexibility is also tied to creating spaces that—when necessary—provide privacy, and at other times can accommodate collective uses. In public buildings—particularly schools—flexibility and transparency go hand in hand; for example, it is desirable for classroom doors to be transparent, if not fully, at least partially.

Flexibility also refers to the relationship among public, semi-public, semi-private, and private realms—gradients and characteristics of spaces that add nuance to the categories of public and private. A flexible proposal can also be related to the intensity of uses; for example, spaces that, on certain days and at certain times, can be intended for collective social use by the neighborhood.

a) *Summer Pavilion at the Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Gardens, London*

An example of flexible architectural design is the work of Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa (Pritzker Prize 2010, Architecture). Their architecture proposes horizontality, transparency, and flowing spaces. Influenced by traditional Japanese culture, it is an architecture of simple geometric elements. It features an interior that is fragmented into areas allowing uses of different kinds, and transparent volumes that benefit from natural light—spaces that can be shared and partially or totally enclosed, where the boundaries between indoors and outdoors seem to disappear. Continuous spatialities that can be made discontinuous; spatialities that allow transformations, varied uses, diverse functions.

Figure 42. The 2009 Summer Pavilion at the Serpentine Gallery in Kensington Gardens.



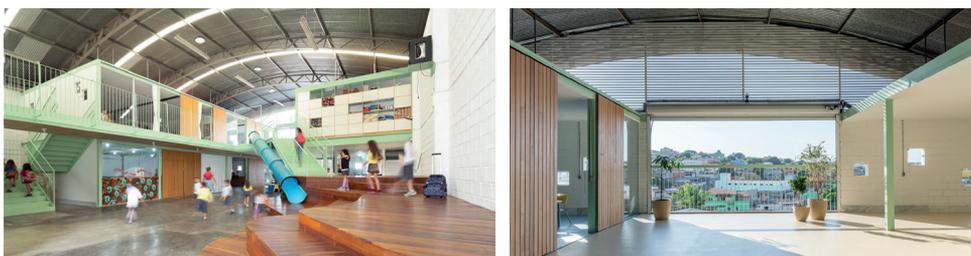
Source: The 2009 Summer Pavilion at the Serpentine Gallery in Kensington Gardens. Photographs by SANAA (Sejima + Nishizawa & Associates), Tokyo. <https://bit.ly/3PoT3rh>

b) *Flexibility and inclusion in educational spaces: Escola Casa Fundamental in Brazil*

New educational philosophies, technological advances, and social values prioritize sustainability and inclusion, reshaping design approaches in school projects that emphasize dynamic spaces connected with the surroundings and the community, with flexibility and multifunctionality as central characteristic.²⁰ An interesting example is the Escola Casa Fundamental project in Brazil—a preschool and primary school that provides flexibility for a teaching dynamic that changes throughout the year. Classrooms can be opened up into a large space that supports various configurations of spatial use.

²⁰ See global report “Future of the Classroom,” in Google for Education: <https://bit.ly/4gPmzCL>

Figure 43. Escola Casa Fundamental, Brazil



Source: Escola Casa Fundamental. ArchDaily. <https://bit.ly/3PmBSa2>

Integration with the Castelo neighborhood and the local community is one of the school's pillars; it incorporates the Manoel de Barros public square as a place for outdoor activities with students. Considered a continuation of the street, the interior square proposed in the project is the school's articulating space; it is the setting for collective living, socialization, games, and diverse events for the school community—students, parents, and educators—as well as local residents.

Drawing on attributes of flexibility, mixed uses, and diverse user groups, the Guide for the Design of Educational Infrastructures from an Intersectional Gender Perspective and Environmental Sustainability (Fainstain & CAF, 2023) proposes using non-androcentric language that equally recognizes everyone's contributions to culture and society; being mindful of the images used in signage; and avoiding advertising and types of site posters that victimize or sexualize women. In this regard, it proposes:

- Layouts that do not increase exclusion nor favor only certain uses (redressing the imbalance of sports and leisure areas in relation to gender, avoiding rules of use that segregate, facilitating active mobility such as walking or cycling).
- Spaces where identities can be developed and capacities strengthened without discrimination (activities that allow for calm and intimacy, movement and psychomotor skills, and experimentation with nature).
- Attention to accessibility that takes into account diversity and different levels of dependency and values all individual and community activities equally (addressing functional difficulties and features that construct disability, such as lack of continuous pavement that hinders moving in a wheelchair, with a cane, or on crutches; lack of routes where children can move autonomously; or attention to needs in flood-prone areas, among others).

c) *Modular solution and flexibility of functions: Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales (YPF), Argentina*

Flexibility—an attribute associated with the intensity of uses—can be defined as the capacity to modify a space in little time and with little effort and cost, and, along with this, to enable different functions and spatial sizes according to the demand for those functions. Thus, flexibility is recommended as a necessary property to consider at the very design stage of a public building, thereby generating potential for its use.

An example of flexibility of uses is the building typology designed for YPF, which allows variations in materials within the proposed floor plan.

Figure 44. Building typology designed by YPF



Source: F. F. Barrios (2014), *Espacios flexibles contemporáneos*, pp. 44 and 46. <https://bit.ly/4j8cKBg>

The attribute of flexibility in public buildings contributes to:

- Challenging predefined gender-, age-, or culture-based uses and proposing responses to the needs of different groups, sexes, and ages, including those that change over time.
- Proposing spatialities that favor the diverse set of demands for use—not only uses established from a masculine standpoint, but also from other spheres.
- Avoiding rules of use that segregate, facilitating alternative modalities.
- Managing and deciding on the interior and exterior space, their uses, transparencies that allow the outside and inside to be shared—and not only visually, but through diverse activities.
- Linking the exterior with the building’s interior: nature, neighborhood, light, or spaces that can be shared, generating continuous spatialities.
- Generating dynamic, multifunctional spaces connected with the surroundings and articulated with the community, which enhance socialization and diverse events: educational, cultural, community.

3.2.5 Mixture and intensity of uses

One of the most valued attributes, alongside proximity, is the mixture of uses in the place where a public building or space will be introduced. Mixture is an opportunity to concentrate dispersed activities that, in isolation, do not consolidate a neighborhood or city. It is, in some way, a challenge to the principle of functions that segregated women in “bedroom communities.” The value of time, which we refer to when we speak of proximity as a value, is linked to this attribute: the mix of functions that generates new centralities—cultural, economic, and activity hubs. Proximity generates urban vitality and, therefore, safety for women, children, adolescents, as well as for older persons and people of diverse identities.

The quality of mixture and intensity of uses in a building can occur at the scale of a street,

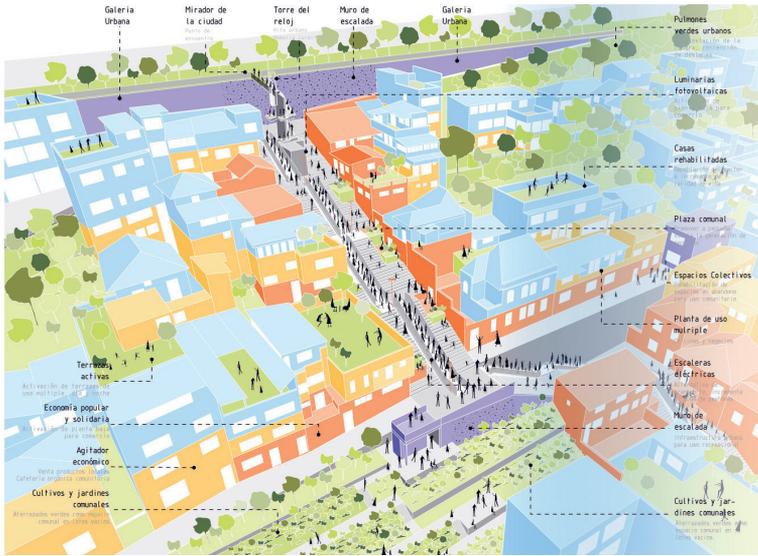
a neighborhood, a city, or the metropolitan level. It can host community programs, commercial, social, educational, health, office spaces, among others. The greater the mix of uses, the greater the urban vitality and the greater the safety.

a) *Stairways in Ambato, Ecuador*

At the neighborhood scale, an example of an urban intervention that fosters coexistence and a mix of uses is the project Escalinatas y el Tiempo, which involved the coordination of local actors—municipal government, private companies, academic and community actors, and residents of neighboring districts. Carried out by the architecture studio Rama in the city of Ambato, Ecuador, its main objective was to intervene on a steep hillside, creating a public stairway space to interconnect neighborhoods that had remained isolated from the city center, and to promote gathering, the extension of dwellings outward, rest, and recreation.

In coordination with community and cultural spaces and small local businesses, the aim was to rehabilitate adjacent buildings to host neighborhood activities and to promote commercial activities on the ground floors of homes. The proposal also recovers the place's collective memory by incorporating elements that allude to former practices in the area: among them, a siren at the beginning of the stairways that was removed 30 years ago, and a new iconic and tourist element—the clock tower, which forms an impressive lookout over the city. The place thus generates spaces for coexistence and quality public spaces.

Figure 45. Escalinatas y el Tiempo, project, Ambato, Ecuador

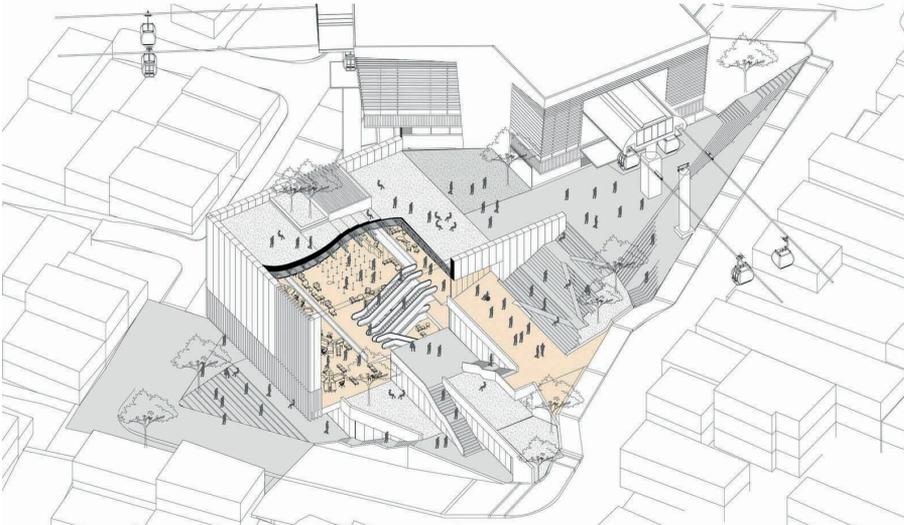


Source: "Escalinatas y el Tiempo / Rama Estudio," <https://bit.ly/4a9IHq1>

b) *Specialized District Care Center (CADE), Manitas, Bogotá, Colombia*

Located at the foot of the Manitas cable-car station, the Center is part of the comprehensive intervention in the TransMiCable urban transportation system. The complex covers almost 4,000 m² and includes the cable-car station, a community hall, a children's play area, offices for bill payment, services for people with disabilities, and services for older persons. The CADE is part of the Integrated Services System, where procedures are carried out and information is provided on district, national, and private entities that perform public functions, to ensure more effective, optimal, and timely service.

Figure 46. SuperCADE Manitas facility, Bogotá



Source: ArchDaily, Equipamiento SuperCADE Manitas / aRE – Arquitectura en Estudio. <https://bit.ly/4j8m6wU>

The building aims to be a symbol for the neighborhood and for community interaction, easily recognized, offering multiple uses of mixed spaces that allow them to become places for gathering, contemplation, and recreation.

c) *Community Social Services (SESC) Guarulhos, São Paulo, Brazil*

The SESC Guarulhos public building, in the city of São Paulo, Brazil, is an example of mixed uses. It includes sports areas, including an Olympic pool; an auditorium for the community; a library area; retail premises; multiuse spaces. The place is a factor of social congregation and a space for social and gender inclusion in all its diversity.

Figure 47. Community Social Services (SESC) Guarulhos, São Paulo



Source: ArchDaily, SESC Guarulhos / Dal Pian Arquitetos, <https://bit.ly/4glm3X5>

In the complex—favored by the site’s natural topography—are the aquatic complex (indoor and outdoor) and outdoor sports courts. A food court closes the Convivial Plaza and the pools with sunbathing areas, highlighting and offering users visual perspectives. Landscaped spaces, of different scales, generate distinct places for diverse uses.

The main entrance is transparent, and the central functions have a spatial fluidity that generates trust and safety. The entire operations and loading sector, with independent accesses, creates service flows that offer efficiency and do not intersect with the community-use areas.

The scale, complexity, and different services offered by very different clients—culture, education, sports, private commerce—create a plaza of conviviality that promotes participation by diverse groups.

The SESC organizes multiple functions in a single building shaped by transparent spaces and broad, open circulation. The location and multiplicity of functions of its facilities contribute to use by diverse groups and, in particular, by women, who demand spaces like this that can meet the requirements of daily life.

d) *Ministry of Justice project for the city of Mar del Plata, Argentina*

At the city scale, an example of a public building that promotes mixed uses and generates public space is the Ministry of Justice project for the city of Mar del Plata, Argentina. This project proposes a building with specific public functions and contributes to the transportation system. The train that “passes through” the building (or the building that envelops it) and the transport stops give meaning to and enhance the public space of the Justice Plaza. Proposals of this type—of complex mixtures—become the necessary new centralities in extensive urban systems.

Figure 48. Ministry of Justice project for the city of Mar del Plata, Argentina



Source: ArchDaily. Ciudad Judicial Mar del Plata, Primera Etapa / Primer Lugar Concurso Complejo Judicial de Mar del Plata, <https://bit.ly/3BXEGat>

What do these examples contribute to the attribute of mixture and intensity of uses from the standpoint of gender inclusion?:

- Rehabilitation of degraded areas and the generation of multiple private, public, and community activities.
- Improvement and densification of the urban sectors intervened in, as in the Ambato case, where the ground floors of homes were used for commercial activities.
- Promotion of synergies among public, private, commercial, educational functions, different clients, and connections to transport and mobility.
- Generation of highly vibrant public spaces—plazas, stairways and their landings—that enable encounter.
- Strengthening the use of public spaces and their linkage with buildings, and inclusion of groups of diverse genders, ages, and social conditions.

In conclusion:

- Gender-sensitive design is a key tool for creating public spaces that promote equity and respond to people's differentiated needs. In this sense, this chapter identifies fundamental attributes and guidelines that enable public architecture to be more inclusive and fair, considering diverse experiences and seeking to eliminate physical, social, and symbolic barriers.
- The proposals and practices analyzed highlight essential criteria for transformative design; among them, proximity and accessibility, which ensure the strategic location of public spaces for the benefit of daily life. Likewise, a gender-stereotype-free inclusive design is promoted, guaranteeing equitable participation in and enjoyment of space.
- Another central axis is safety, understood as the creation of spaces for encounter that are free of gender-based violence and that strengthen the sense of well-being. In addition, flexibility of uses and the mixture and intensity of activities allow spaces to be adaptable, diverse, and dynamic, responding to people's multiple needs in their day-to-day lives.

4. HOW TO MONITOR AND EVALUATE PROJECT DESIGN FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE?

Monitoring and establishing evaluation criteria for public buildings and public spaces from a gender perspective requires, on the one hand, having guidelines and indicators that make it possible to generate and offer an unbiased information base from which to formulate plans and policies; and, in addition, to follow up, evaluate, and exercise institutional oversight of the effects of the policies, projects, and measures implemented (ECLAC, 2010).

It is important to establish frameworks that provide guidelines for monitoring and evaluating infrastructure projects that promote gender equity, to ensure that objectives are met. A good practice is to have performance indicators and targets throughout the different stages of the project life cycle.

Likewise, the National Women's Service (SERNAMEC, 2010) proposes a Project Evaluation Checklist which, among other questions, asks:

- Has the project benefited both men and women?
- ¿Were the project's effects/results analyzed in terms of differing needs and priorities of women and men?
- Do evaluators disaggregate data by sex?

For its part, the MOP Ministerial Policy on Gender and Diversity upholds as one of its principles, on the one hand, the evaluation of results to promote evidence-based decision-making, strengthening the collection and analysis of data disaggregated by sex and gender identity; and on the other, the design, implementation, evaluation, and potential replication of measures. Among its actions, it considers the "evaluation of results with a gender perspective of the execution of MOP's external strategic works and services. This means determining whether the proposed objectives have been achieved and establishing whether the measures taken have responded to the differentiated needs of men, women,

and sex-gender diversities.”²¹

Similarly, it is important to highlight that the inclusion of a gender perspective in State modernization projects is part of the strategy to build more equitable public policies and improve their targeting. In this regard, the “Guide for the development of modernization projects with a gender perspective” (Secretariat of State Modernization, 2024) presents—by way of a checklist—some actions and questions to review how a gender perspective has been incorporated transversally and in the monitoring and evaluation stages (pp. 25–29).

Transversally:

- The products stemming from the project do not reinforce gender stereotypes.
- Throughout the process there is balanced participation of men and women in the various work and decision-making bodies.
- The project uses sex-disaggregated data.
- The project uses inclusive, non-sexist language.

In the monitoring and evaluation stage:

- The monitoring indicators incorporate gender criteria.
- The indicators facilitate obtaining information on the differentiated impacts between men and women.
- Do the monitoring indicators allow for follow-up on the solution in a way that is disaggregated by sex and/or gender?
- In what way does the project contribute to closing gender gaps?

4.1 INDICATORS ASSOCIATED WITH GENDER-SENSITIVE DESIGN ATTRIBUTES

4.1.1 Proximity: Location and accessibility

Objective: Assess whether the location and the connection among the building or public space, facilities, infrastructure, transportation, and roadways are close to where people live, and at a time consistent with the demands of the daily lives of most users.

Indicators:

- Walking distance to the service or public space from users’ homes.
- Design conditions for accessibility: spatial and material quality in buildings, streets, and avenues.
- Provision of pedestrian routes and bike lanes.
- Distance to public transport: condition of stops, type and schedule of routes.

4.1.2 Inclusive design: Without gender stereotypes

Objective: Identify the use of elements that do not reinforce gender stereotypes linked to a particular gender, and evaluate proposals that incorporate the values of people in their diversity: age, ethnicity, disability status, sexual identity, among others.

Indicators:

21 Ministerial Policy on Gender and Diversity, Ministry of Public Works, 2024–2030: <https://www.mop.gob.cl/politica-de-genero-mop/>

- Discriminatory or non-discriminatory messages or images based on gender, sex, age, and origin.
- Valuation of elements that acknowledge the diversity of users of buildings and public spaces: ages, ethnicities, among others. Questioning neutrality and androcentrism.
- Spaces without hierarchization, that do not discriminate.
- Attention to the needs of diverse women.
- Inclusion of the multicultural dimension of the user population.

4.1.3 Safety: Spaces free of gender-based violence

Objective: Evaluate whether the building and public spaces generate a perception of safety and foster confidence and a sense of ownership among diverse users.

Indicators for public-service buildings:

- Clearly defined entries with easy accessibility and transparency that allow seeing and being seen.
- Guaranteed universal access.
- Simple, intuitive use: easy to understand.
- No creation of corners or hidden spaces, inside or toward the public realm, that foster a sense of insecurity.
- Spatial proportions that foster safety.
- Building surroundings with continuous pedestrian lighting.
- Appropriate dimensions per standards for passageways, stairs, and open spaces.

Indicators for public spaces:

- Signage: Knowing where one is and where one is going. Comprehensible information.
- Visibility: See and be seen.
- Vitality of spaces at different hours, both day and night; presence of diverse people.
- Hear and be heard.
- Formal surveillance and access to help: being able to escape and obtain aid.
- Planned and well-maintained spaces: clean and welcoming.
- Good lighting that eliminates areas of potential insecurity.
- Spaces of different dimensions, scales, and sizes that foster different uses.
- Protection against unpleasant sensory experiences: shelter from wind, rain, and sun; green areas that mitigate high temperatures, pollution, and noise.

4.1.4 Flexibility of uses and functions

Objective: Evaluate the capacity of spaces to be used flexibly and their ability to adapt to different needs and demands over time.

Indicators:

- Spaces that allow private use and that foster collective uses.

- Adaptation to different usage demands: by different groups, functions, and numbers of users.
- Common spaces with the possibility of being integrated or divided.
- Spaces built from movable elements (walls, floors, and ceilings) that can adapt to the need for changes.
- Transparent spaces or those that can integrate the “outside” and the “inside.”

4.1.5 Mixture and intensity of uses

Objective: Evaluate the vitality of buildings and public spaces, particularly their capacity for a mixture and intensity of different uses and their contribution to sociability and to a sense of safety and belonging to places.

Indicators:

- They enable simultaneous activities.
- They do not segregate functions as a result of design or the location of buildings; they foster adaptability.
- Building designs that densify functions: intensity of uses.
- Building designs that generate vitality through a variety of uses and functions in their areas of influence.

4.1.6 Environmental sustainability

Objective: Better integrate environmental concerns into sectoral policies. Promote specific measures that help understand how natural resources and pollutant emissions are managed, providing valuable information for strategic decision-making and promoting responsible, sustainable practices.

Indicators:

- Resource consumption: Amount of natural resources used, such as water, energy, and raw materials. This helps identify opportunities to improve efficiency and reduce environmental footprint.
- Waste management: Amount and composition of waste generated and waste-management practices, such as reuse and recycling. This contributes to minimizing waste generation and promoting responsible management.
- Energy efficiency: Amount of energy consumed per unit of output or the implementation of renewable-energy technologies.

4.2 EVALUATION AND TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR ARCHITECTURAL PROJECT DESIGN

As stated by the MOP Ministerial Policy on Gender and Diversity, it is important to incorporate a gender perspective into bidding bases and to evaluate its implementation and compliance, so that the contracted companies—and their subcontractors—ensure measures for gender equality.

In the evaluation of company proposals, it is important to:

- Make the Ministerial Gender Policy known to consulting firms.

- Consider gender-balanced composition of the Evaluation Committee.
- Prioritize consulting teams formed on a parity basis and with professionals experienced in gender issues.
- Incorporate considerations on gender equality in the Terms of Reference for architectural design project tenders.

Among other requirements:

- Identification of the problem to be addressed and the project objective in relation to which women's rights and diversities it seeks to support. (For example: contributing to coexistence and safety in public spaces and/or to the care of persons in situations of dependency.)
- Clear, explicit identification both of existing gender-inequality factors in the target population and of the needs of different genders related to the project's approach.
- Project relevance in relation to the needs and priorities established by beneficiaries in prior participatory diagnoses.
- Availability of analysis and disaggregated data (e.g., by sex, class, or ethnic group) on gender equality and/or human rights, and attention to them in determining the project design. If disaggregated information is not available to consider in the design and implementation of the project, additional data must be identified and collected to assess the dimensions of gender equality and human rights.
- Identification of how the project proposal intends to help address the needs identified as specific to women and diversities in the diagnosis stage and in participatory processes.

Monitoring and evaluating project design from a gender perspective is thus a fundamental tool to ensure that public infrastructure responds to the needs of equity and inclusion in urban and territorial public policies. Building indicators associated with gender-sensitive design attributes makes it possible to measure key aspects such as proximity, inclusive design free of stereotypes, safety, flexibility of uses, the mixture of activities, and environmental sustainability.

The requirement of concrete measures—such as hiring companies with gender-equality accreditations and forming gender-balanced evaluation and consulting teams—ensures more equitable implementation with specialized knowledge in the field. Furthermore, the explicit identification of existing gender inequalities and of the project's objectives in relation to the rights of women and diversities provides a basis for addressing specific issues such as safety, coexistence, and care in public spaces.

Establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms from a gender perspective is an essential step to ensure that architectural design projects not only meet technical criteria, but also promote gender equality and social inclusion in all their stages of development.

CHAPTER

3

CITIZEN
PARTICIPATION AND
DIALOGUE TOOLS
WITH A GENDER
PERSPECTIVE

Citizen participation is recognized as a right held by every person to become actively involved in matters of interest and/or that affect their quality of life in any sphere—not only with regard to political suffrage, but also by taking part in public diagnosis and decision-making processes at various scales—national, regional, municipal, territorial, and neighborhood—thus promoting transparency, effectiveness, and shared social responsibility.

Acknowledging that gender gaps persist in our society, it is essential that participation be carried out with a gender perspective so that the voices of different age groups, organizations, leaderships, Indigenous peoples, migrants, among others, ensure the inclusion of women's contributions and those of gender-diverse people.

This chapter highlights citizen participation as a key tool for understanding the characteristics of the diverse users of public services, with special attention to the needs of groups that are often made invisible—particularly due to gender. The user community is an essential component of an inclusive decision-making process for any project to be implemented, and it helps to build agency within the citizenry.

1. LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND GENDER CHALLENGES

Since 2011, Chile has had Law No. 20,500, grounded in freedom of association and the participatory principle. The law regulates Associations and Citizen Participation in Public Management, providing a legal framework for real and effective citizen participation. Among other applications, State administrations must prepare and implement general rules for citizen participation.

For Indigenous peoples, ILO Convention 169²² protects “the rights of Indigenous peoples to maintain and strengthen their own cultures, ways of life and institutions, and their right to participate effectively in decisions that affect them. These premises constitute the basis on which the provisions of the Convention must be interpreted” (ILO, 2014, p. 8).

The current standard of the Ministry of Public Works states: “Citizen Participation shall be understood as a process of cooperation through which the Ministry and the public jointly identify, collaborate, and deliberate on the provision and management of works and infrastructure services for connectivity; territorial and personal protection; public buildings; and the optimal use of water resources and related solutions—using methodologies and tools that foster spaces for reflection and permanent collective dialogue, aimed at the active presence of the citizenry.”²³ The same document highlights

²² ILO Convention No. 169, enacted by Decree No. 263 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile in 2008.

²³ Article 2, General Regulation on Citizen Participation of the MOP (Exempt Resolution No. 139, May 9, 2023).

that one objective of participation is to apply a rights-based, cross-cutting, and non-discriminatory approach that respects and integrates the social and cultural diversity of the territory and its inhabitants. Notably, alongside the 2018 Guide for Managing Citizen Participation published by the Ministry, the institutional digital platform SIGESPAC (Citizen Participation Management System) was created to systematize and monitor all participation processes carried out by the Ministry in connection with investment initiatives.

Within this framework, this section explores mechanisms of participation beyond the regulated ones²⁴, focusing especially on participatory design for public building or public space investment projects from a broadened perspective of rights, gender, and diversities.

Participatory projects that incorporate a gender perspective benefit the entire community (Comunidad Mujer, 2018) and are more sustainable over time. In this line, such projects:

- Ensure identification of a real and relevant problem for the community, differentiating the needs and interests of women and men in their diversity.
- Facilitate a diagnosis that reflects the community's own perspective—how users, particularly women and gender-diverse people, view the project—acknowledging that the problem affects women and men differently and enabling responses tailored to citizens' needs.
- Enable ownership of the initiative by both women and men, by existing organizations and the community, leading to better care of infrastructures.
- Contribute to greater empowerment of women and local organizations in planning, design, and execution of the project, amplifying its impact in the community and over time, and strengthening the agency of these actors.

2. LIFE CYCLE OF A PUBLIC INVESTMENT PROJECT

To understand gender-sensitive citizen participation throughout the formulation and implementation process, this section presents the path followed by a project within the National Investment System (SNI), through sequential stages as the evaluating institution—the Ministry of Social Development and Family—issues a favorable recommendation for each stage.

Once the proposing institution obtains admissibility of the initiative in the SNI's²⁵ Integrated Project Bank, a project's life cycle comprises three phases: pre-investment, investment, and operation (Ministry of Social Development and Family, 2024). (Ministerio de Desarrollo Social y Familia, 2024).

24 The participation mechanisms mentioned in the MOP Regulation are: Citizen Participation Processes in Policies, Plans, Programs, and Projects; Systems for Access to Relevant Information; Participatory Public Accounts; Citizen Consultations; and Civil Society Councils.

25 The National Investment System (SNI) is composed of four subsystems jointly administered by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Social Development and Family, which define the stages of the public investment process (www.sni.cl).

Figure 49. Life Cycle of a Public Investment Project



Source: Own elaboration, 2024.



Table 5. Life Cycle of a Public Investment Project

Phases	Stages	Descriptions
PRE-INVESTMENT: Preparation of the studies and analyses needed to formulate and evaluate the investment initiative intended to solve the problem, address the need, or seize the opportunity that motivated it. The result is the decision to carry out or not a public investment project.	Idea	First approach to the problem, need, or opportunity and its resolution. Usually developed with informal documentary inputs and starts the project-development process. At this stage, it is essential to consider information required to apply design attributes that promote gender inclusion.
	Profile	Diagnostic study that defines possible solution alternatives, based primarily on secondary sources, which should include sex- and gender-disaggregated information. The output rules out infeasible alternatives, selects possibly feasible ones, and moves to the next stage.
	Pre-feasibility	Complementation and deepening of the alternatives identified in the previous stage, in technical and economic terms. The output rules out infeasible alternatives, selects the best technical-economic alternative, and justifies moving to feasibility. The selected alternative should include gender-inclusion checks.
	Feasibility	Refines and specifies the best alternative identified at pre-feasibility; requires primary information collected specifically for the project. Architectural and design proposals that enable gender inclusion may be incorporated and should be properly quantified. The output allows the project to advance to the design stage of the investment phase.
INVESTMENT: Development of the design and execution of works (in specific cases, design costs may be charged to the execution stage).	Design	Preparation of all technical information to size, cost, and subsequently execute civil works; acquire equipment; contract consultancies; and manage land acquisition or expropriation. Among the consultancies, a gender-and-design specialist may be included to inform and monitor decisions. Location and proximity for users are significant for women and diverse groups (see Ch. 2). Designs must comply with current regulations (e.g., the General Urbanism and Construction Ordinance, OGUC).
	Execution	Implementation of civil works; acquisition of equipment, land (or its expropriation), and vehicles when these give functionality to the works for the delivery of goods and/or services, forming part of the investment project. Completion leads to the Operation phase.
Phases	Stages	Descriptions
OPERATION	Commissioning	Commissioning, maintenance, and steady-state operation of the investment initiative, delivering the goods and/or services to achieve the net benefits estimated during pre-investment
	Maintenance	
	Steady state operation	

Source: Own elaboration based on Ministry of Social Development and Family (2024).

The SNI has issued “Information Requirements for Submitting Investment Initiatives. Guidance for Incorporating a Gender Perspective in Public Investment Projects” (2020), which should be consulted by institutions formulating investment initiatives in this line. These projects aim to provide social protection to vulnerable people or groups—women

should not be treated as vulnerable by nature, but rather according to the circumstances of their lives—and to achieve fair outcomes for women and men in their diversity. The SNI offers an analytical framework aligned with the national strategy for mainstreaming gender, applicable to the formulation and social evaluation of public infrastructure projects.

In over 80% of cases, the Directorate of Architecture (DA) of the Ministry of Public Works acts as the technical unit for initiatives whose pre-investment stage is developed by public institutions external to the Ministry—such as municipalities, Regional Governments, or other ministries. Those mandating institutions then commission the DA to act as technical unit during the project’s Design and/or Execution. Consequently, the DA receives pre-investment definitions—problem identification, approved solution alternative, proposed architectural program—as boundary conditions for design. Ensuring that this 80% of DA-mandated projects incorporate a gender perspective in decision-making requires that such definitions be established as general requirements, supported by intersectoral agreements and articulated with the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity.

For the remaining 20%, other DA operating modalities exist (e.g., conservation projects with sectoral funds, execution contracts paid upon acceptance, or cases where DA leads pre-investment). The next section therefore focuses on citizen participation (PAC) in DA-mandated projects for the design stage.

3. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION TOOLS WITH A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE DESIGN STAGE OF A PROJECT

Having presented the project life cycle—and before reflecting on the importance of gender-sensitive participation in early pre-investment—this section deepens the opportunities for citizen participation during the design stage, even when diagnosis, problem definition, selected solution, site location, and program are already set.

The Directorate develops designs through external²⁶ consulting contracts awarded via public tenders²⁷, within which participation activities may be held. The Terms of Reference for Environmental, Territorial, and Citizen Participation Studies for Design Consultancies (Directorate of Architecture, MOP, 2018) suggest at least three participation instances: at design start, at preliminary design, and at final design. In addition, public building initiatives seeking public funding at the design or execution stages must conduct formal consultations with stakeholders per the Ministry of Social Development and Family’s “Requirements for Consultation with Stakeholders, Investment Projects – Public Buildings” (2024b). This means that the initiatives must be reported to and submitted for consideration by the users and direct beneficiaries of the investment and/or those directly affected.

In the following diagram of the life cycle of a public investment project, the red circles indicate the participation-related requirements that currently exist for a public building project, as established in the “Consultation Requirements for Stakeholders in Investment Projects – Public Buildings” (Ministry of Social Development and Family [MDSF],

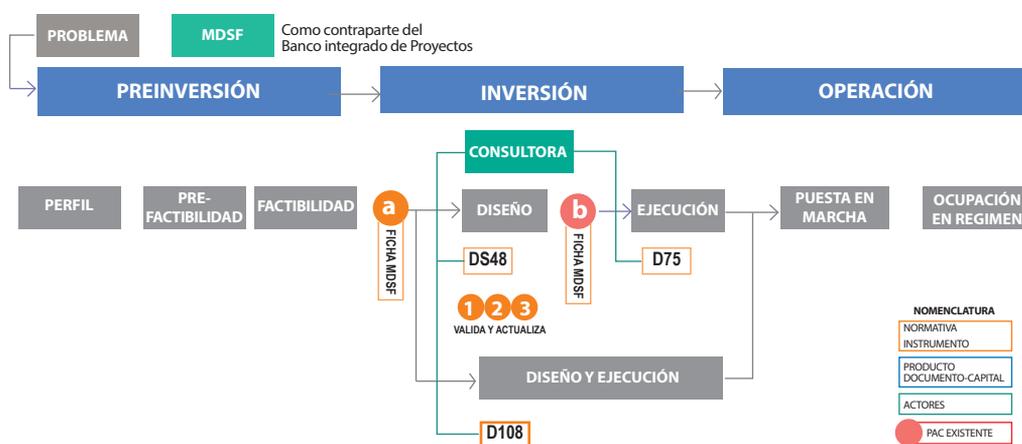
26 Architectural and Specialties Consulting Services, governed by MOP Supreme Decree No. 48 of 1994.

27 Architectural and Specialized Consultancy, governed by MOP Supreme Decree No. 48 of 1994.

2024b), which apply to the design or implementation stage; and in the “Terms of Reference for Environmental, Territorial, and Citizen Participation Studies for Design Consultancies” (Directorate of Architecture, Ministry of Public Works, 2018), which call for at least one round of participation during the design stage.

Citizen participation offers horizontal workspaces for dialogue between those who will use the spaces and those who design the building under specialized standards. Two user groups are identified: service staff and the community that requires or coexists with these public services. Public architecture should meet service needs while shaping experiences and perceptions according to user characteristics and the sociocultural and environmental context—hence the importance of inclusive gender-sensitive design attributes (see Chapter 2, Section 3.1).

Figure 50. Citizen Participation Instances Proposed in the Life Cycle of a Project, According to Development Stages



Source: Own elaboration based on Directorate of Architecture, MOP (2024).

Understanding the specific context requires attention to groups commonly made invisible or marginalized—by gender or other discrimination. Women, as primary managers of everyday life and care, are the ones who most frequently use public buildings, often with dependents; participatory methods make these dynamics visible.

3.1 PAC 1: TERRITORIAL AND COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

Objective PAC1: Identifying key stakeholders from a gender and intersectionality perspective will be essential to define the necessary representativeness in participatory processes and outreach strategies. Moreover, it will make it possible to create a working group—such as a Citizen Technical Roundtable—responsible for overseeing the functioning of key milestones in the participatory process and for coordinating subsequent calls.

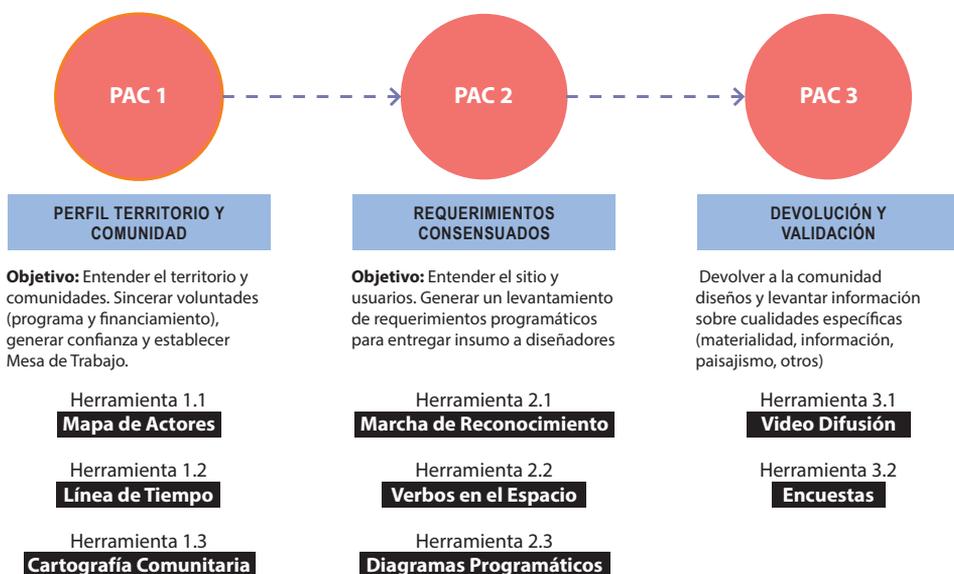
To ensure comprehensive participation in this working group, it is proposed to develop a “stakeholder map” based on the project profile and its management model, as submitted to the Ministry of Social Development and Family, along with consultations with the project client and the local municipality. It is crucial to identify and invite to the participatory process both formal and informal key leaders, as well as representatives

of the project's interest groups and local territory: women's organizations, groups representing gender diversity, care networks, among others.

The working meeting aims, together with the invited stakeholders, to understand the territory, the groups of users, and the needs associated with the problem that the project seeks to address.

Using urban plans that include a polygon of walkable distance from the project site — the radius depending on the project's scale—, the objective is to gather new qualitative information. By visualizing this information, community members contribute to the diagnosis through their stories, experiences, perceptions, and other insights that enrich participatory design.

Figure 51. Citizen Participation (PAC) Instances Proposed in the Life Cycle of a Project, According to Objectives



Source: Own elaboration (2024).

The working meeting aims, together with the invited stakeholders, to understand the territory, the groups of users, and the needs associated with the problem that the project seeks to address.

Using urban plans that include a polygon of walkable distance from the project site — the radius depending on the project's scale—, the objective is to gather new qualitative information. By visualizing this information, community members contribute to the diagnosis through their stories, experiences, perceptions, and other insights that enrich participatory design.

¿Who is involved?

- Representatives of the client institution, including professionals and administrative staff who will operate in the building.
- Community organizations and key local figures residing in the area, as well as representatives of the project's beneficiary groups —including typically invisible

groups, particularly women's groups, whether formally organized or not. Depending on the project's function, special attention should be paid to children and youth.

What does this meeting entail? What are its contents?

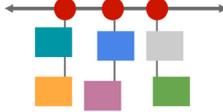
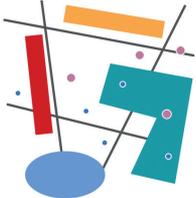
- Presentation of the project and its baseline conditions. It is recommended to use as reference the information included in the IDI Sheet (Investment Initiatives, which contains budgetary items for Projects, Programs, and Studies).
- Validation of the "stakeholder map." A preliminary version will be presented, to which participants may add key organizations and individuals, including natural leaders and women's organizations.
- Conducting a Community Mapping exercise (the creation of maps by the community reflecting their reality, experiences, and local knowledge).

What should be the outcomes of this meeting?

- A validated stakeholder map and the designation of community representatives responsible for supporting future calls and communicating the process to their respective groups (thus forming the Citizen Technical Roundtable).
- A graphic output: a map containing information on the territorial dynamics and the immediate environment of the project site (inputs to be systematized for the start of the design phase).

Table 6. Tools 1–3 for Citizen Participation (PAC)

Note: More detailed information about the tools listed in the following table can be found at the following link: <https://arquitectura.mop.gob.cl/arquitectura-publica-con-enfoque-de-genero/>

<p>Tool 1 Stakeholder Map</p> 	<p>The “stakeholder map” (or “actor map”) is a tool used to identify, classify, and characterize the people, organizations, and institutions that are, in one way or another, connected to the project, as well as the relationships between them. It also serves to promote measures that encourage the participation of women’s and men’s organizations in all their diversity.</p> <p>Through this instrument, it becomes possible to recognize alliances, potential conflicts, and group spokespersons, facilitating dialogue and coordination aimed at fulfilling the objectives of the ongoing projects. Depending on the function and intended use of the project, those included in the stakeholder map should reflect balanced representation in terms of gender, age, and Indigenous cultures, among others.</p>
<p>Tool 2 Timeline</p> 	<p>The “timeline” allows for a graphic visualization and understanding of the site’s history from multiple perspectives —both personal and collective.</p>
<p>Tool 3 Community Mapping</p> 	<p>The “participatory diagnosis” serves to gather perceptions of the immediate surroundings of the site where the building will be located: patterns of street use during day and night, perceptions of safety, identity elements, experiences, and references to the natural and urban environment, as well as the values associated with the service provided. It may also include aspirations and commitments regarding the project’s future. At the same time, it can help identify conflict areas, histories, and opportunities for improvement, contributing to how the new construction will interact with and enhance the urban environment.</p>

Source: Own elaboration based on Directorate of Architecture, MOP (2024).

3.2 PAC 2: AGREED REQUIREMENTS OF DESIGN

Objective PAC 2: In this form of citizen participation, the analysis of the project’s constraints and opportunities is expected to focus on the site where the building will be located and on its architectural program. From the perspective of user diversity, the process gathers perceptions regarding experiences of circulating through the area by day, at night, and at different times, especially around adjacent public streets that define the site’s boundaries. It also considers pedestrian, vehicular, and public transport dynamics and mobility, in order to strengthen the definition of the building’s public access and help designers identify opportunities to create an architecture that contributes to an active urban environment. The suggested methodological tool for this phase is the “recognition walk.”

Regarding the building’s interior, the architectural program and proposed zoning (key functional areas) will be presented. Participants will discuss these and collaboratively build programmatic diagrams to provide the design team with information about the functional relationships that people of different genders, ages, and identities can contribute based

on their experiences. This creates the opportunity to reorient functional relationships to better respond to the collective’s needs.

During these discussions, it is valuable to gather freely associated concepts that participants express regarding specific spaces —such as entrances, circulation areas, offices, restrooms, green spaces, and others— in order to understand subjective and qualitative perceptions beyond their formal functions. For this purpose, the “Verbs of Space” methodological tool (presented in a later table) is suggested.

Who is involved?

- The Citizen Technical Roundtable.
- Representatives of community groups and organizations identified in the stakeholder map.
- Public service staff who will operate in the building, where applicable.

What does the meeting (or meetings) entail? What topics should be addressed?

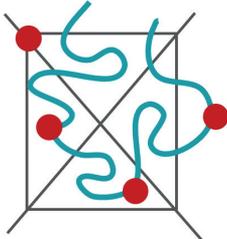
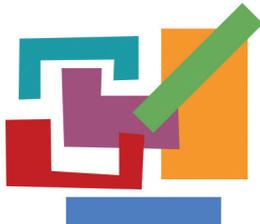
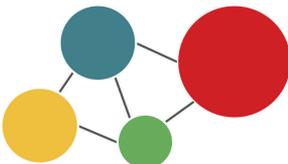
- Report on PAC 1 (Citizen Participation Process 1). It is suggested to use the Intentions Sheet as a reference.
- Analyze the project site and its relationship to the surroundings, paying particular attention to pedestrian dynamics.
- Analyze, from the users’ perspective, the uses, hierarchies, and relationships of the architectural program.
- Identify gender-specific aspects and other relevant intersectional considerations.

What should be the outcomes of this meeting?

- An agreement on the main conclusions regarding the qualities of the site, its relationship with the immediate surroundings, and the uses, hierarchies, and relationships of the program’s main zones (e.g., which areas should be adjacent, have access points, or be connected by circulation routes). It is important to highlight diverse needs and perceptions.
- The setting of a date for the next meeting.

Table 7. Tools 4–6 for Citizen Participation (PAC)

Note: More detailed information about the tools listed in the following table can be found at the following link:

<p>Tool 4 Recognition Walk</p> 	<p>As its name suggests, this tool refers to an on-site meeting in which participants walk through the area where the project will be located, gathering opinions, feelings, desires, constraints, and expectations regarding the space. It can be complemented with survey-style booklets (walking logs), allowing participants to record their observations as they move through the site.</p> <p>[See “Materials and Tools with a Gender Perspective,” Red Mujer y Hábitat de América Latina et al. (2008). https://bit.ly/3DRHvKT]</p>
<p>Tool 5 Space Verbs</p> 	<p>This exercise makes it possible to capture the community’s aspirations for what could be realized in a given space. It invites responses to the question, “What would you like to do in this place?”—yielding verbs linked to potential projects or activities in the area.</p>
<p>Tool 6 Programmatic Diagrams</p> 	<p>Participatory design can take many forms; in general, it refers to methodologies that identify uses, hierarchies, and relationships among programs in order to address the users’ needs while incorporating gender-specific perspectives. It is recommended to employ the tool of programmatic diagrams, which provide guidance to the design team regarding the spatial relationships between areas—which spaces should be adjacent, what access points they require, and how circulation should be organized, among other aspects.</p>

Source: Own elaboration based on Directorate of Architecture, MOP (2024).

3.3 PAC 3: DESIGN FEEDBACK AND VALIDATION

Objective PAC 3: At this stage, it is proposed to: i) Present the conclusions from Workshops 1 and 2; ii) Present design progress; and iii) Work with the community to identify proposals for minor design adjustments.

If broader dissemination of the results is considered necessary, it is recommended to produce a short video (no longer than three minutes) illustrating the process, agreements, and design outcomes. This audiovisual material can be accompanied by a brief digital survey (for example, via SurveyMonkey) to collect feedback on the level of acceptance of the design.

Who is involved?

- The Citizen Technical Roundtable.

- Representatives of community groups and organizations identified in the stakeholder map.

What does the meeting involve? What topics should be addressed?

- Presentation of the project.

What should be the outcome of this meeting?

- Validation: Agreements regarding the design, including any observations or adjustments to be incorporated, if necessary.

Table 8. Tools 7, 8, 9 for Citizen Participation (PAC)

Note: More detailed information about the tools listed in the following table can be found at the following link: <https://arquitectura.mop.gob.cl/arquitectura-publica-con-enfoque-de-genero/>

Tool 7 Project Dissemination Video	The PowerPoint tool allows the creation of a video from the slides, which can be enhanced with an audio narration.
Tool 8 Surveys and Focus Groups	Surveys can be a valuable tool for reaching a broader audience than that gathered in face-to-face meetings. They can be used to resolve design details—such as materials—or to address fundamental aspects of the project’s identity, such as choosing the facility’s name.
Facilitation	General considerations for facilitation in citizen participation.

Source: Own elaboration based on Directorate of Architecture, MOP (2024).

4. REFLECTIONS ON CITIZEN PARTICIPATION THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT LIFE CYCLE

To date, the three instances of citizen participation suggested for design consultancies — pre-investment, investment, and operation — are carried out according to the criteria of each responsible team. This results in disparities in the effectiveness of participation, ranging from purely informative activities to more binding ones. It is important to note that the responsible teams are not required to have training or specialization in participation with a gender-sensitive approach, which is an important issue to address. The structure of the different citizen participation stages must take this into account.

When a group of national inspectors from the Directorate of Architecture was asked what they believe to be the main objective of the participatory activities they carry out, 74% responded that the goal of the PACs (Citizen Participation Processes) is merely informative. However, most agreed that these instances should change — taking place during the pre-investment and formulation stages — to ensure that the information gathered reflects community needs before the project design begins.²⁸

Respondents also indicated that implementing designs that already include pre-defined elements (set by project sponsors) creates several challenges. For example, they cannot

²⁸ The survey referred to was conducted among fiscal inspectors of the MOP’s Architecture Directorate between August 7 and 30, 2024, regarding citizen participation processes. The survey link was distributed to 106 fiscal inspectors throughout the country, and 27 anonymous responses were received.

modify programs already approved by the Ministry of Social Development and Family (MDSF), nor can they meet expectations raised during participation processes. This means that the opinions of participants often have little real impact on design decisions, and that community aspirations not reflected in or relevant to the approved MDSF version cannot be incorporated.

According to those on the front line, the participation of citizens and public-service staff should be included from the pre-investment stage. This means involving the future building's staff and service users in the project, ensuring that the diversity and intersectionality of the target population are considered. In this way, design will foster identification and a sense of ownership among users regarding the use, operation, and maintenance of the projected facility — enhancing pride, identity, and care for it.

As an example, the following proposal suggests replicating the objectives of PAC 1, 2, and 3 during the pre-investment phase: During the user profile stage, PAC 1 could involve territorial actors who are potential future users. Its goal would be to understand the territory from an identity-based and demographic perspective, identifying underserved groups and the needs associated with the problem the project aims to solve.

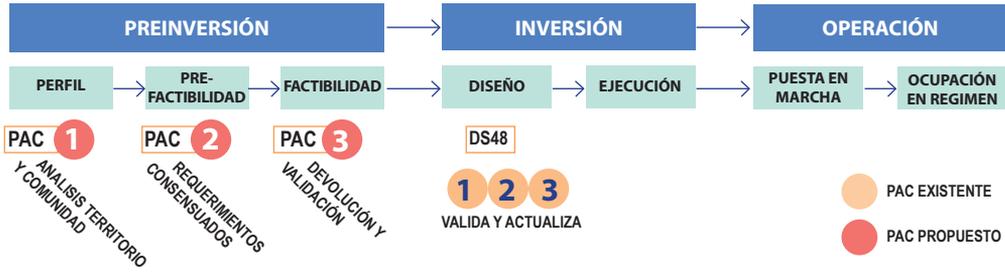
Then, in the pre-feasibility stage, PAC 2 could include a participatory analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of different potential sites for the project, as well as the characterization of both public-service staff and users. It is crucial to consider their sociocultural dynamics, listening to representatives of diverse groups. This input should complement and enrich the formal programmatic requirements, which often become a major point of tension during the design stage.

Finally, in the feasibility stage, PAC 3 would aim to validate the pre-investment initiative.

It should also be noted that the time between pre-investment and investment is indefinite, depending on numerous variables — often stretching over several years. Therefore, this proposal recommends replicating the three participation instances during the design phase, as a way to validate and update decisions made during pre-investment.

The following figure illustrates this process:

Figure 52. Participation Instances Throughout a Public Investment Project



Source: Own elaboration (2024).

Citizen participation in public building projects is key to generating spaces for dialogue among the diverse people who will use the facility and the technical teams involved.

An exchange that integrates diverse interests makes it possible to broaden perspectives on the design of public architecture, offering viewpoints that go beyond gender stereotypes and androcentric criteria.

Likewise, proactive community participation that incorporates a gender perspective allows the technical team to gather qualitative elements about the territory, the sociocultural environment, and the everyday lives of users who understand and value their own diversity.

CHAPTER

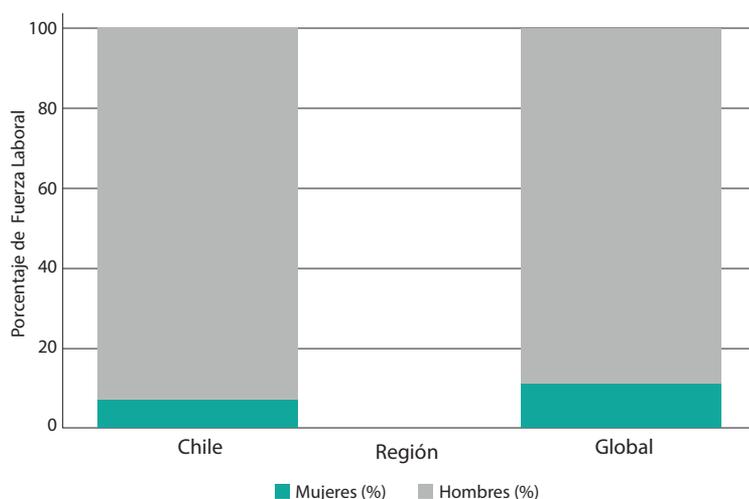
4

WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

1. CURRENT OVERVIEW OF WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN CONSTRUCTION

In Chile, according to data from the National Institute of Statistics (INE, 2023), women represent only 8.36% of the construction workforce. This makes construction the sector with the lowest female participation in the productive sphere (Bahamondes et al., 2024). This figure is even lower than that recorded in mining, where—according to the same source—women account for 12.7% of the workforce. Globally, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the figure rises slightly to 10%. These numbers reveal a significant gender gap in the construction sector both nationally and internationally.

Figure 53. Comparative diagram of men’s and women’s participation in the construction labor force, Chile and global.



Source: Own elaboration based on data from the National Institute of Statistics (2023) and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

This low participation is mainly due to barriers such as gender discrimination, lack of training opportunities, and a predominantly male work environment, among other factors (Construye2025, 2023; Portal CDT, 2024).

1.1 ANALYSIS OF THE GENDER GAP IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

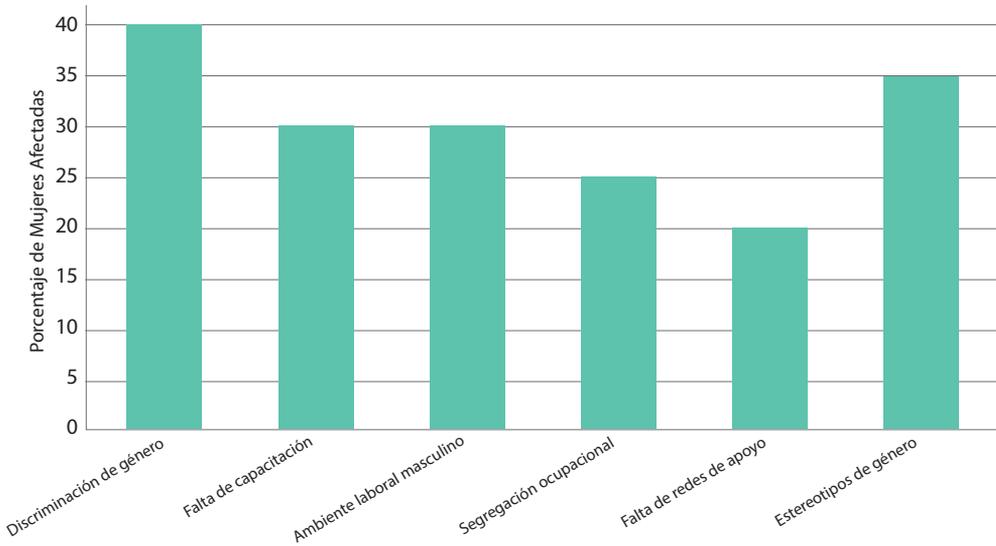
The predominantly male work environment creates an organizational culture that is often non-inclusive and hostile to women, expressed in behaviors of exclusion, harassment, or lack of workplace support. Occupational segregation also plays a major role, relegating women to specific, less valued roles than men’s within the industry. Finally, the absence of mentoring and support networks limits women’s opportunities for career advancement,

while persistent gender stereotypes continue to frame certain tasks as inherently male, discouraging new female entrants to the sector.

In summary, the main barriers to women’s participation in the construction sector are:

- Gender discrimination: Prejudices that limit women’s inclusion in key sector roles.
- Lack of training: Few opportunities for women to access specialized technical education.
- Male-dominated work environment: A culture that often excludes or marginalizes women.
- Occupational segregation: Women confined to specific, lower-status positions.
- Lack of support networks: Absence of mentorship systems promoting women’s professional growth.
- Gender stereotypes: Beliefs that associate certain jobs exclusively with men, discouraging female participation.

Figure 54. Percentages associated with the main barriers to women’s participation in the construction sector

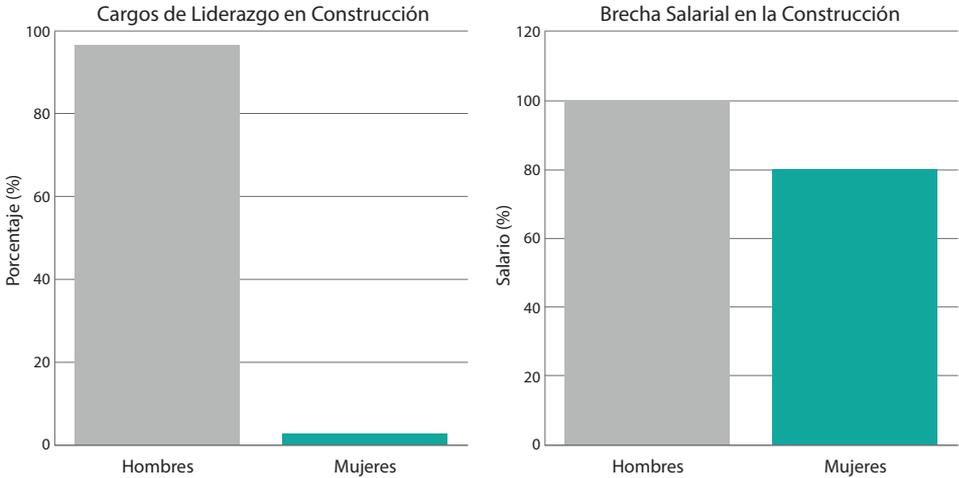


Source: Own elaboration based on the Construye2025 program, <https://bit.ly/4jcTjHJ>

Data show that, in Chile, less than 8% of leadership positions in the construction industry are held by women (Page, n.d.). In addition, there is a significant wage gap: on average, women earn 20% less than men in equivalent roles within the sector (Chilean Chamber of Construction, 2022b). This inequality is present both in terms of participation in managerial positions and in the remuneration received, reflecting persistent structural barriers in the labor sphere.

These figures are consistent with recent studies (PricewaterhouseCoopers – PwC Chile, 2024), which highlight gender disparities across various sectors, such as construction and mining, where female representation remains limited and wages show an unfavorable gap for women (Araya Castillo, 2024). According to PwC’s Women in Work Index report (2024), overall progress toward gender equity in Chile remains slow, with a considerable gap in labor participation and pay.

Figure 55. Comparative charts showing, from left to right, the percentage of men in leadership positions and the gender pay gap in the construction sector

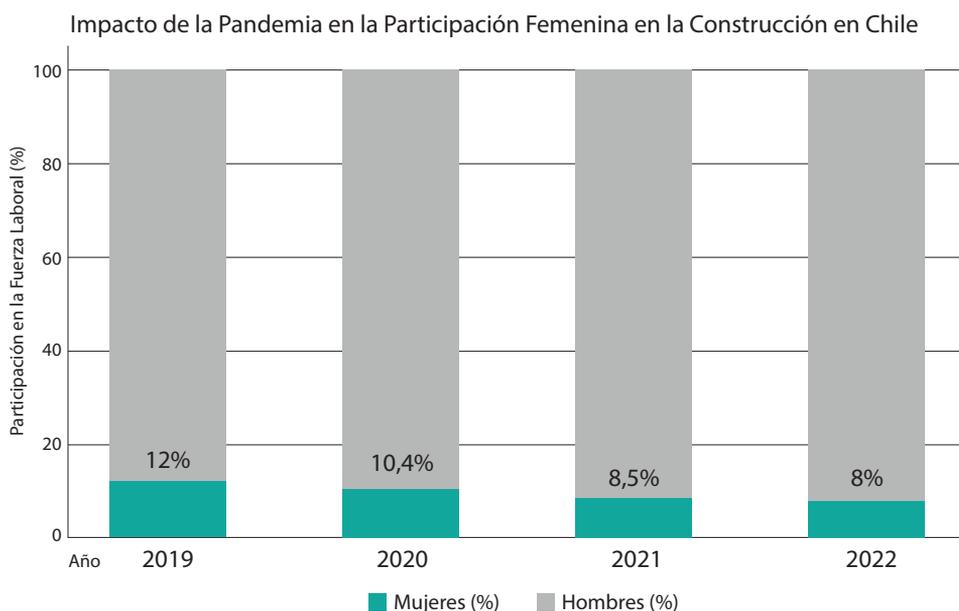


Source: Own elaboration based on the study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (2024).

1.2 IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN CONSTRUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on women’s participation in the construction industry in Chile. In 2019, women represented 12% of the workforce. The health crisis caused a steady decline: in 2020, participation dropped to 10.4% (Technological Development Corporation, n.d.), then to 8.5% in 2021, and by 2023 stood at 8%. This decline was largely due to the disproportionate caregiving responsibilities borne by women, as well as job losses that further reduced women’s opportunities in construction (Chilean Chamber of Construction, 2022a).

Figure 56. Diagram showing female participation in construction by year



Source: Own elaboration based on information from the Technological Development Corporation (n.d.).

2. STRATEGIES FOR GENDER EQUITY IN CONSTRUCTION

2.1 REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE: EXPERIENCES IN LATIN AMERICA

The inclusion of women in the construction sector and in public infrastructure projects is not a challenge unique to Chile but a regional issue being addressed across Latin America. Government institutions, international organizations, and the private sector are promoting policies, programs, and projects to reduce gender gaps in a traditionally male-dominated field.

These efforts reflect a collective commitment to promoting gender equity in a sector that is strategic for economic and social development. The initiatives range from the technical training of women to perform operational roles, to the inclusion of gender clauses in public tenders, and the design of inclusive, discrimination-free work environments.

2.2 GOOD PRACTICES IN WOMEN'S INCLUSION

This chapter presents outstanding examples of initiatives in countries such as Argentina, Brazil, and Costa Rica, which have not only enabled women to enter the construction labor market but have also made visible their technical and professional contributions to infrastructure projects. These actions demonstrate that gender equity in construction is not only possible but also generates positive impacts on communities and strengthens the quality of projects.

The following sections will review strategies and initiatives developed by institutions in the aforementioned countries, along with concrete examples of projects in which women have played a fundamental role.

2.2.1 The Case of Argentina: The Constructoras Program

The Constructoras Program is a joint initiative of Argentina's Ministry of Women²⁹, Genders, and Diversity, the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security, and the Ministry of Public Works. Its objective is to promote equal opportunities in access to the labor market, especially in the construction sector, which has traditionally been male-dominated. The program seeks to recognize the potential of women and LGBTIQ+ individuals in tasks that have been culturally denied to them, encouraging their participation in the construction industry.

Components:

- Technical and professional training: The program offers free training in areas such as masonry, carpentry, and electrical installations, with official certification.
- Incentives for construction companies: Companies participating in the program receive benefits and government recognition for meeting female hiring quotas.
- Work–family balance: Policies are developed to facilitate the participation of women with caregiving responsibilities, such as flexible schedules and access to childcare facilities at construction sites.³⁰

The program already has more than a thousand graduates³¹, who are working on various social housing construction projects in Argentina and have taken on technical roles in foundation laying, cladding, and quality supervision. These initiatives, in addition to improving housing infrastructure, promote women's labor inclusion in the sector and represent an effort by the Argentine government to reduce the gender gap in construction. By providing training and promoting the hiring of women, the program challenges gender stereotypes and fosters a more inclusive work environment.

Figure 57. Women and LGBTIQ+ community members during the Constructoras certification ceremony



Source: Página 12 (2024, August 10), <https://bit.ly/3DJ7Lal>

2.2.2 The Case of Brazil: Mulheres na Construção

In Brazil, institutions such as the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Mulher em Construção and the Civil Society Organization (CSO) Mulher em Construção

²⁹ UOCRA Mujeres (March 8, 2024). "The 'Constructoras' Program Was Launched." <https://bit.ly/3C74jWg>

³⁰ Página 12 (August 10, 2024). "In Two Years, 900 Women and Gender-Diverse People Have Been Trained in Construction." <https://bit.ly/3DJ7Lal>

³¹ Página 12 (October 15, 2024). "The Fifth Cohort of the 'Constructoras' Program Has Begun." <https://bit.ly/40lrw0e>

lead efforts to promote the inclusion of women in the construction sector. Since their creation in 2006, these initiatives have trained more than 7,000 women, providing them with technical and practical tools that allow them to access a labor market historically dominated by men. Approximately 40% of participants find employment before completing their training, which reflects the direct impact of these organizations on women's employability³².

In addition to technical training, the programs incorporate components such as the development of transversal skills and emotional support, strengthening women's self-esteem and fostering their economic independence. This independence has helped reduce their vulnerability to situations of domestic violence, highlighting the broader social impact of these initiatives.

Components:

- **Technical training:** The programs cover areas such as painting, plumbing and electrical installations, structural assembly, and technical supervision. The courses, designed to meet the needs of the labor market, include practical and theoretical modules tailored to the construction sector.
- **Job placement:** The institutions work in collaboration with companies in the sector, facilitating the hiring of trained women. This approach ensures that the learning process translates into concrete employment opportunities in both public and private projects.
- **Comprehensive support:** Through workshops and mentoring, women receive emotional support and training in labor rights, mental health, and violence prevention, preparing them to effectively integrate into the sector.

Regenera emerged in response to the collapse of the Brumadinho dam in Minas Gerais, Brazil, in 2019. This environmental and social disaster motivated the NGO Mulher em Construção to create a project that would not only contribute to the rehabilitation of affected spaces but also train and employ women in the construction sector. Through partnerships with public and private institutions, Regenera combines sustainability with women's labor inclusion, helping rebuild communities while promoting gender equality in the construction industry.³³

Figure 58. Members of the Regenera group during training and fieldwork



Fuente: Mulher em Construção, <https://bit.ly/3C25XIN>

32 "Inclusion of Vulnerable Women in the Labor Market." Instituto Mulher em Construção. <https://bit.ly/4fHPBCY>

33 "About Regenera RS." <https://bit.ly/3C25XIN>

2.2.3 The Case of Costa Rica: Women's Inclusion Strategy in Public Infrastructure through UNOPS

In Costa Rica, women's participation in the construction sector has been systematically promoted by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). This institution has designed and implemented policies that address the structural and cultural barriers that have historically limited women's access to the sector. Its strategy combines the adoption of mandatory quotas for female hiring, training on gender issues, and the transformation of workplace dynamics to ensure equitable and safe environments.

The UNOPS approach stands out for integrating a gender perspective from the design phase through to project implementation, which facilitates women's participation in technical and operational roles while contributing to cultural change within the sector. These measures reflect a commitment to balancing employment opportunities and transforming the construction sector into a more inclusive space.

Components:

- Female participation quotas: UNOPS requires that at least 10% of the people hired in its construction projects be women, ensuring their inclusion in technical and operational roles.
- Gender equality training: More than 400 workers have been trained in the prevention of sexual harassment and assault, while 200 collaborators have participated in workshops on sisterhood and inclusive workplace relationships .
- Cultural transformation: Twenty-two workshops on positive masculinities have been held, reaching 90% of staff in key projects, fostering respect and collaboration in work environments.³⁴

The Circunvalación Norte Project, one of Costa Rica's most important road works, not only aims to improve connectivity in the Greater Metropolitan Area through the construction of overpasses, tunnels, and highways, but has also incorporated an innovative gender inclusion approach led by UNOPS.

Through mandatory quotas ensuring that at least 10% of hired personnel are women, along with awareness workshops on harassment prevention and positive masculinities, this project has integrated women into key technical and operational roles such as site supervision, machinery operation, and quality control. These measures have not only created safer and more inclusive workplaces but have also demonstrated that female inclusion brings tangible benefits to the quality and sustainability of infrastructure projects.

Figure 59. Women at work on the North Ring Road Project



Source: Mujeres en Construcción (2021), "Cuando construir obras significa también construir igualdad", <https://bit.ly/3PruxpF>

34 Construyendo igualdad (2022, marzo 3), <https://bit.ly/4a6y5qM>

3. NATIONAL APPROACH: INITIATIVES IN CHILE

In Chile, as in the rest of Latin America, the incorporation of a gender perspective in public works has emerged as a key issue addressed from multiple fronts. During the administration of President Gabriel Boric Font, this approach has been consolidated as a cross-cutting strategy, integrated into the policies and programs of all ministries, thereby reflecting a governmental commitment to promote gender equality in the development of public infrastructure.

In addition to initiatives driven by the public sector, Chile also highlights efforts led by the private sector and public–private partnerships that seek to create more inclusive and equitable environments. These actions range from the implementation of inclusive labor policies in construction companies to the execution of projects that prioritize women’s participation in technical and leadership roles, marking progress toward transforming labor dynamics in a sector historically dominated by men.

Below, we will review some initiatives in Chile that have incorporated the gender perspective in the field of public works, highlighting efforts from both the public and private sectors, as well as from public–private partnerships.

3.1 WOMEN AND CONSTRUCTION ROUNDTABLE AND PUBLIC–PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

The Women and Construction Roundtable, launched in 2020 through an agreement between the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity and the Chilean Chamber of Construction, is a multisectoral initiative designed to promote gender equity in Chile’s construction sector. This initiative brings together key stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, including the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity, the Ministry of Public Works, the Ministry of Labor, the National Training and Employment Service (SENCE), and the Chilean Chamber of Construction. The main goal of the roundtable is to address the structural barriers that have historically excluded women from the construction field, promoting their labor integration through inclusive policies, training programs, and awareness campaigns.³⁵

Components:

- Inclusive policies; incentives for female hiring: Strategies have been developed to encourage the inclusion of women in technical and operational roles within construction, motivating companies to diversify their teams. These measures aim to directly impact the composition of the workforce, promoting greater gender equity in the sector.
- Training and certification: The National Training and Employment Service (SENCE) leads technical training programs in areas such as carpentry, masonry, electricity, and site supervision. It also promotes the certification of labor competencies, enabling women workers to access qualified jobs and remain competitive in the market.³⁶

35 Ministry of Women and Gender Equity. “Undersecretariat for Women and CChC Launch the ‘Women and Construction Roundtable’ to Coordinate Female Labor Reintegration in the Industry’s Reactivation.” (July 20, 2020). <https://bit.ly/4gW2eeU>

36 “Women and Construction Roundtable: Efforts to Increase the 7% Female Participation in the Construction Sector.” *Semanario Tiempo* (June 15, 2021). <https://bit.ly/3DKqdzf> *Semanario Tiempo* (2021, junio 15), <https://bit.ly/3DKqdzf>

- Women at Work Platform: This digital tool connects women workers with job opportunities, training programs, and certification processes, strengthening their employability and facilitating their integration into the construction industry.
- Awareness and cultural change; public campaigns: Initiatives such as “In Construction, There Are Women—And We Want More” challenge gender stereotypes by showcasing women’s contributions to the sector. These campaigns feature success stories, worker testimonials, and statistics that demonstrate the benefits of diversity for organizational performance. They also aim to raise awareness among companies and the public about the importance of promoting gender equity in construction.³⁷

Figure 60. Meeting of the Women and Construction Roundtable



Source: “Mesa Mujer y Construcción: Buscan reactivar la economía, aumentando la participación femenina en esta Industria” (2021, Jan 25), <https://bit.ly/403LgnL>

Figure 61. Seminar “Reconciling Work and Family Life”



Source: Ministry of Women and Gender Equality (2024, May 14), <https://bit.ly/423tXpG>

3.2 WOMEN BUILD AWARD

The Women Build Award, organized by the Chilean Chamber of Construction (CChC) in collaboration with Fundación Ronda, seeks to highlight the contributions of women in the construction sector and to recognize organizational best practices in gender equity.

³⁷ Mujeres en Obra platform. <https://bit.ly/4h8fc9n>

Its objectives align with those of the Women and Construction Roundtable, promoting women's inclusion and encouraging equitable labor practices in an industry traditionally dominated by men.

This recognition values both the individual efforts of women workers and the corporate initiatives advancing gender equality in the sector³⁸. The award includes several categories designed to honor both the work of women and the initiatives of organizations:

- **Women On Site:** Recognizes women workers directly involved in construction projects, highlighting their effort, perseverance, and contribution to the sector. Winners are selected from three regions of the country: North, Central, and South.
- **Outstanding Practice:** Awards companies that implement innovative gender-focused policies, taking into account the nature of the practice, its duration, scope, and organizational impact. Through this recognition—directed at both women on site and companies with outstanding gender practices—it becomes evident how such initiatives directly contribute to the objectives of gender equity within the construction sector.
- **Women Build Award:** Not only celebrates the individual achievements of women workers who have challenged cultural and structural barriers in the industry, but also highlights initiatives that transform workplace dynamics toward more diverse and inclusive environments. These actions strengthen the commitment to building a more equitable industry where women play leading roles at every stage and level of the construction process.

3.3 SUCCESS STORIES OF CHILEAN CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES BASED ON THE WOMEN BUILD AWARD

The following section reviews the initiatives recognized during the 2023 and 2024 editions of this award, analyzing how they have contributed to promoting the active presence and participation of women in the construction sector.

3.3.1 Echeverría Izquierdo Montajes Industriales (EIMISA)

Echeverría Izquierdo Montajes Industriales (EIMISA) received the Women Build Award 2024 in the “Outstanding Practice” category for its Women’s Training and Hiring Program, an initiative that comprehensively addresses the gender gap in the construction industry. Implemented in 2022, this program is designed to train women in critical technical areas such as welding, scaffolding assembly, electrical work, and engineering roles, paving the way for their integration into an industry historically marked by limited female representation in these fields.

The program not only focuses on developing specific technical skills but also includes strategies to enhance participants’ employability, facilitating their direct integration into the company’s projects. This approach, in addition to diversifying EIMISA’s workforce, consolidates an inclusion model that reinforces its commitment to gender equity and the sustainable development of the sector.

38 Premio Mujer Construye, Cámara Chilena de la Construcción, “Contigo queremos construir”, <https://premiomujerconstruye.cl/>

Figure 62. Women trained by EIMISA



Source: EIMISA website: https://ei.cl/unidades_de_negocio/montajes-industriales/

3.3.2 Ecomac Empresas

Ecomac Empresas was recognized with the Women Build Award 2023 in the “Outstanding Practice” category for its Social Reintegration Program for Incarcerated Women, developed in collaboration with Chile’s National Prison Service (Gendarmería de Chile) and Siges Chile S.A. at the Huachalalume Penitentiary Center in the Coquimbo Region.

This initiative enables participants to learn and develop a trade related to construction, with the aim of facilitating their reintegration into the workforce, promoting their economic autonomy, and improving the quality of life for themselves and their families.

The program’s approach combines technical training with personal development, providing practical tools that allow participants to access employment opportunities within the construction sector. Ecomac has incorporated participants into its own projects as a tangible demonstration of its commitment to the social and professional inclusion of women in vulnerable situations. This approach not only promotes gender equity in the sector but also establishes a replicable model for other companies seeking to generate positive social impact through their operations in the construction industry.

Figure 63. The initiative in the Coquimbo Region seeks to enable effective reintegration for women at the Huachalalume Penitentiary



Sources: Ecomac social media (<https://bit.ly/4a7fOcR>) and El Mostrador (2023/06/03)

3.3.3 Grupo ACCIONA

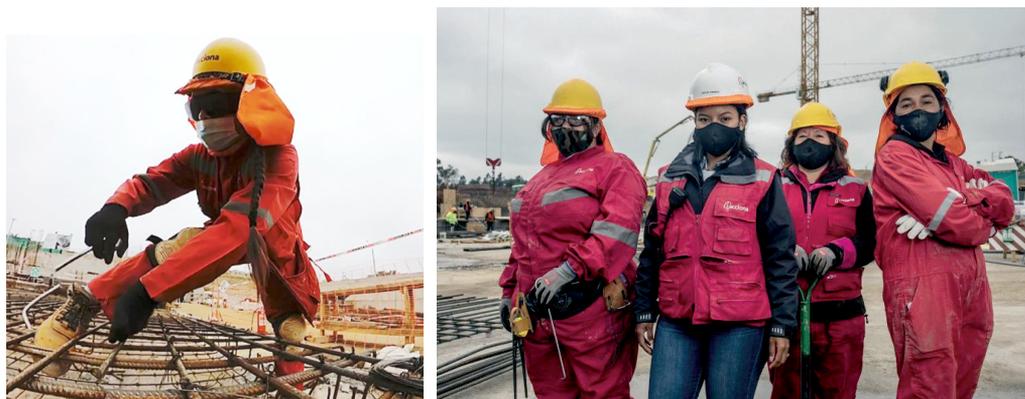
ACCIONA was recognized in 2021 with the Women Build Award in the “Outstanding

Practice” category for its initiative in constructing the daycare center (sala cuna) at the Marga Marga Hospital, located in the commune of Villa Alemana, Valparaíso Region. This project was a milestone, as it was carried out entirely by a team of 35 women—becoming the first public infrastructure project in Chile executed with a gender perspective.

During construction, the women workers took on various technical and operational roles, such as masonry, carpentry, electrical installations, finishing, and structural assembly. They also participated in supervision and quality control tasks, demonstrating their ability to perform key functions in a complex project. The daycare center was conceived as a safe and functional space to support the hospital’s female staff and their families, integrating a design that responds to work–life balance needs.

The recognition granted by the Chilean Chamber of Construction highlights this initiative as an example of labor inclusion that challenges gender stereotypes in the industry. It also underscores women’s capacity to lead construction processes and establishes a replicable model that promotes gender equity in the sector. This project reinforces the industry’s commitment to creating inclusive and sustainable work environments, fostering a cultural shift that drives diversity and equality in construction.

Figure 64. ACCIONA has reportedly certified around 120 women in various construction techniques



Source: Diario Sustentable (2021, Mar 8) and ACCIONA, <https://bit.ly/429GmIN>

4. THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS (MOP) AND THE PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUITY IN CONSTRUCTION

In recent years, the integration of a gender perspective into public policy has taken on a central role in Chile’s governmental strategy. This priority is reflected in the growing efforts to address inequalities in sectors such as construction, traditionally characterized by low female participation.

In this context, the Ministry of Public Works (MOP) has taken a significant step forward with the development of the “Occupational Risk Prevention Framework for MOP Construction Contracts with a Gender Perspective” (2023). This initiative arose from diagnostic studies identifying specific risks and barriers faced by women workers, leading the Ministry to establish a regulatory framework aimed at protecting the integrity of all workers and fostering inclusive and respectful work environments

4.1 FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

The Occupational Risk Prevention Framework for MOP Construction Contracts with a Gender Perspective promotes a series of fundamental principles to be implemented by all contracting companies, including:

- **Equity and Equal Opportunity:** Promoting equal treatment in access and professional development for all workers, regardless of gender.
- **Universality and Inclusion:** Creating a respectful work environment free of discrimination or harassment that values diversity and ensures the full inclusion of all workers.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Establishing an ongoing review process to optimize occupational safety and health policies, always with an approach that considers the needs of all employees.

4.2 REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTRACTING COMPANIES

Companies participating in MOP projects must meet multiple requirements to guarantee a safe and equitable work environment. Among them:

- **Risk Prevention Plans:** Plans must be designed with an approach that considers the specific conditions of all workers, ensuring a healthy environment and preventing occupational risks—particularly those that affect women.
- **Training and Awareness:** Companies must provide training on issues such as gender-based violence and workplace harassment. All training must be accessible to every worker, and the use of sexist language is prohibited in all training activities.
- **Infrastructure and Equipment:** Facilities must meet gender-specific requirements, including the provision of personal protective equipment adapted to the needs of both men and women.
- **Equitable Participation:** Women are encouraged to participate actively in joint hygiene and safety committees, ensuring proportional representation based on their presence in the project.

4.3 MONITORING AND SANCTIONS

Compliance with these requirements is supervised by the MOP's Fiscal Inspection Division, responsible for verifying adherence to established regulations. Companies that fail to comply face sanctions including fines, suspension of works, or exclusion of subcontractors that do not respect occupational safety and health standards.

4.4 EXPECTED IMPACT

Through the implementation of the Risk Prevention Framework with a Gender Perspective, the MOP aims to do more than simply meet regulatory standards—it seeks to catalyze structural change in the construction sector, historically lagging in inclusion and equity. These guidelines not only provide a regulatory basis for addressing inequalities but also outline a cultural transformation model that can serve as a reference for other productive sectors in the country.

The MOP expects these measures to promote a work environment where women find real opportunities for professional development—under equitable conditions and within a system that values their technical and operational contributions. By ensuring workplaces free from harassment, discrimination, and gender-based risks, the goal is to increase female participation at all stages of construction projects—from operational roles to strategic decision-making.

At the organizational level, these guidelines are designed to foster a corporate culture that integrates the gender perspective across all operations, generating a positive impact on both productivity and internal cohesion among contractors. By including requirements such as gender-sensitive infrastructure, training, and inclusive risk prevention plans, the MOP promotes a shift in traditional practices that can lead to more efficient and sustainable projects.

From a strategic standpoint, these guidelines also position the public sector as a leader in promoting gender equity in construction, encouraging the private sector to adopt similar measures and creating a multiplier effect. This is particularly relevant in a context where labor market modernization demands greater diversity and resilience in response to social and economic changes.

In the long term, the MOP hopes these actions will help close gender gaps, increase women's participation in the sector, and foster a fairer work environment for all. Furthermore, by demonstrating the tangible value of incorporating a gender perspective into its policies and projects, the Ministry opens the possibility of expanding these initiatives to other ministries and industries—consolidating a comprehensive approach to equal opportunity nationwide.

In summary, with these guidelines, the MOP not only sets a technical standard for its contracts but also proposes a vision for the future of construction in Chile: an inclusive, safe, and efficient industry where men and women can fully develop their potential under equal conditions. This commitment reaffirms the Ministry's leadership in creating innovative public policies oriented toward social justice, setting a precedent that extends beyond construction and into the sustainable development of the country.

5 THE ROLE OF THE ARCHITECTURE DIRECTORATE AND THE SCOPE OF THE MODIFICATION TO SUPREME DECREE MOP N°75

Among other institutional actions, one of the most significant in 2024 was the modification of Supreme Decree MOP N°75 through Decree N°156,3838, which establishes as a requirement in public works contracts a declaration of intent from contractors that at least 10% of the personnel employed in the works—or the percentage defined in the bidding documents—be women. This group includes professional, technical, and non-specialized workers, marking a significant step forward in integrating gender considerations into the planning and execution of public infrastructure.

The inclusion of women in the construction sector represents one of the most relevant challenges for advancing toward a more equitable and sustainable industry. It entails a structural transformation combining effective public policies, strong corporate commitments, and deep cultural change within the sector.

Gender gaps in this field are reflected not only in women's low labor participation but also in the barriers they face in accessing technical, operational, and leadership roles—perpetuating inequalities that affect both their professional development and the industry's competitiveness. Regional experiences across Latin America have shown that public policies coordinated with private and social actors can be key tools to achieve meaningful change, dismantle gender stereotypes, and create real opportunities for women. These lessons underscore the importance of designing inclusive strategies tailored to each context to maximize impact and sustainability.

The inclusion of women in construction, as examined throughout this chapter, responds not only to a principle of social justice but also contributes to innovation and the sector's strengthening through diverse perspectives and skills. However, the policy faces challenges beyond regulation: addressing cultural resistance, ensuring adequate working conditions, and guaranteeing that women's participation is not merely symbolic but real and substantive.

The regulatory modification represents a tangible effort to transform the construction sector by encouraging more inclusive hiring practices that foster diversity at all project levels. While establishing a declaration of intent as a requirement does not automatically ensure structural change, it is a crucial first step in raising awareness and mobilizing companies toward more equitable practices. Nevertheless, the success of this measure will depend on effective oversight and on cultural shifts within the sector, accompanied by incentives and resources to ensure the long-term sustainability of these policies.

In Chile, significant progress has been made in this direction through initiatives such as the Women and Construction Roundtable and efforts by companies committed to gender equity, which have demonstrated the transformative potential of public–private collaboration. Within this framework, the Ministry of Public Works has implemented the Risk Prevention Framework with a Gender Perspective for MOP construction contracts, establishing guidelines to foster safer and more inclusive workplaces. In the same spirit, through the Architecture Directorate, the Ministry has developed gender-sensitive infrastructure guides and promoted the aforementioned modification of Supreme Decree N°75, advancing toward the goal that at least 10% of public project personnel be women. These actions represent substantial progress, though their effectiveness will depend on concrete implementation and enforcement mechanisms.

The push for women's inclusion in construction must go beyond compliance with formal regulations—it must become a driver of change for the sector's labor and cultural dynamics. Integrating diversity into teams not only enhances innovation and project quality but also strengthens organizational sustainability and contributes to building a more resilient industry. To achieve these goals, public policies must evolve toward comprehensive models that address structural and cultural barriers, promote continuous training, and ensure that women access professional development opportunities at all levels.

In this context, gender equity in the construction sector should be understood not only as a strategic axis for sustainable and competitive development but also as an ethical commitment to social justice. Transforming this industry into an inclusive model requires

coordinated action among all stakeholders and a shared vision that values women's contributions as fundamental agents of change. This approach benefits not only women workers but also strengthens the sector as a whole, contributing to the development of a fairer, more equitable society prepared to meet future challenges.

In summary, this initiative, led by the Architecture Directorate of the MOP, not only establishes a precedent for inclusive public policy formulation but also creates a framework that could inspire change across other sectors. The challenge lies in moving from intention to effective action—consolidating a model that ensures equal opportunities and contributes to the country's sustainable development.

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GLOSSARY

Accessibility (Accesibilidad): The condition by which spaces, buildings, and services can be used safely and autonomously by all people, regardless of age, gender, or ability.

Architectural Program (Programa Arquitectónico): The list and organization of functions, spaces, and areas that define the requirements of a public building according to its use and users.

ACCIONA Gender-Inclusive Site (Obra Marga Marga): Pioneering public-infrastructure project built entirely by women, exemplifying gender inclusion in construction processes.

Base for Risk Prevention with a Gender Perspective (Bases de Prevención de Riesgos con Perspectiva de Género): Regulatory framework of the Ministry of Public Works (MOP) that requires contractors to integrate gender equality, anti-harassment measures, and inclusive infrastructure into public works projects.

Care Economy (Economía del Cuidado): The set of paid and unpaid activities related to caregiving, household management, and the reproduction of daily life.

Bases for Risk Prevention in MOP Contracts with a Gender Perspective: Framework developed by Chile's Ministry of Public Works (MOP) requiring contractors to implement gender-sensitive safety, inclusion, and anti-harassment measures.

Citizen Participation (Participación Ciudadana, PAC): A structured process through which users and communities take part in defining, validating, and evaluating public projects.

Citizen Technical Roundtable (Mesa Técnica Ciudadana): Group formed within PAC processes to ensure representation, follow-up, and communication between the project team and the community.

Community Mapping (Cartografía Comunitaria): Participatory activity where community members draw and describe their environment to share knowledge, experiences, and priorities for the design project.

Consultancy Terms of Reference (Términos de Referencia de Consultorías): Official document specifying technical, environmental, territorial, and participatory requirements for public design contracts.

Constructoras Program (Programa Constructoras): Argentine initiative encouraging the inclusion of women and LGBTIQ+ persons in the construction sector through training programs, job placement, and gender-equity policies in both public and private projects.

Cultural and Gender Diversity (Diversidad Cultural y de Género): Recognition of differences in identity, origin, and social experience that affect the way people use and perceive built spaces.

Declaration of Intent (Declaración de Intención): Contractor's written statement committing to ensure that at least 10% of workers employed in public works are women, as required by Supreme Decree No. 75 (2024 mod.).

Design Attributes or Characteristics (Atributos de Diseño): Qualitative and quantitative characteristics that define how a project addresses inclusivity, accessibility, sustainability, and gender equity.

Design Phase (Etapa de Diseño): Stage in which the technical and architectural development of a project takes place, including drawings, specifications, and user validation.

Directorate of Architecture (Dirección de Arquitectura, DA): Unit of the Chilean Ministry of Public Works responsible for planning, designing, and supervising public buildings and infrastructure.

Diverse Identities (Identidades Diversas): Acknowledgment of gender expressions and sexual orientations that differ from binary conceptions, ensuring their inclusion in the design and use of public spaces.

Ecomac Reintegration Program (Programa de Reinserción Social Ecomac): Collaboration between Ecomac Empresas and Chile's Gendarmería enabling women deprived of liberty to gain construction skills and employment.

EIMISA Program (Programa de Formación y Contratación de Mujeres): Training and hiring initiative by Echeverría Izquierdo Montajes Industriales to close gender gaps in technical and engineering roles.

Environmental and Territorial Studies (Estudios Ambientales y Territoriales): Analyses required for public projects to understand environmental impact and spatial context prior to design or execution.

Equality and Gender Diversity Policy (Política Ministerial de Género y Diversidad): Institutional policy of the MOP that establishes procedures for inclusion, prevention of harassment, and use of social names.

Feasibility Study (Estudio de Factibilidad): The pre-investment stage that defines the most viable technical and economic solution for a project, including design alternatives with gender considerations.

Gender Mainstreaming (Transversalización de Género): Integration of the gender perspective into all stages of policy, planning, design, and evaluation.

Gender Perspective (Perspectiva de Género): Analytical and methodological approach that identifies and addresses inequalities derived from gender roles, aiming to ensure equitable outcomes in design and policy.

Inclusive Architecture (Arquitectura Inclusiva): Architectural design that consciously incorporates gender, age, ability, and cultural diversity, ensuring that all people can use and enjoy public spaces equally.

Gender Quota in Public Works (Cuota de Participación Femenina): Policy measure requiring a minimum percentage of female workers in public construction contracts.

Infrastructure for Everyday Life (Infraestructura para la Vida Cotidiana): Concept that links public buildings and spaces to daily routines of care, work, mobility, and social interaction.

Interculturality (Interculturalidad): Recognition of coexistence among different cultural groups and the need for public architecture to reflect and respect that diversity.

Interinstitutional Agreements (Acuerdos Intersectoriales): Collaborative arrangements between ministries or agencies to coordinate gender inclusion in public investment and design processes.

Intersectionality (Interseccionalidad): Framework acknowledging that gender inequalities are compounded by other factors such as class, ethnicity, disability, and age.

Investment Cycle (Ciclo de Vida del Proyecto de Inversión Pública): The three phases (pre-investment, investment, operation) through which a public project is planned, designed, executed, and maintained.

Investment Initiative (Iniciativa de Inversión): Proposal submitted to the National Investment System (SNI) for evaluation, including socioeconomic and gender impact criteria.

Investment Project Bank (Banco Integrado de Proyectos): Central registry of the SNI where all public investment initiatives are filed and tracked.

Line of Time or Timeline (Línea de Tiempo): Participatory tool used to visualize the historical and social evolution of a site, integrating local knowledge into design.

Map of Stakeholders (Mapa de Actores): Diagram identifying people, institutions, and organizations linked to a project and their relationships, influence, and level of participation.

Ministry of Housing and Urbanism (Ministerio de Vivienda y Urbanismo, MINVU): Government body responsible for housing, urban planning, and territorial equity in Chile.

Ministry of Public Works (Ministerio de Obras Públicas, MOP): Chilean state institution in charge of planning, constructing, and maintaining public infrastructure and services.

Mulheres na Construção (Women in Construction, Brazil): Brazilian non-governmental program promoting the inclusion and training of women in construction trades, emphasizing technical skills, fair employment, and social empowerment.

National Architecture Directorate (Dirección Nacional de Arquitectura, DA): The national-level leadership of the DA, responsible for guiding architectural policies, standards, and public design practices.

National Investment System (Sistema Nacional de Inversiones, SNI): Framework managed by the Ministry of Social Development and Family to evaluate, approve, and monitor public investment projects.

PAC 1: Territorial and Community Analysis (Análisis del Territorio y de la Comunidad): First participation stage; identifies key actors and community needs from a gender and intersectional perspective.

PAC 2: Design Requirements (Requerimientos Consensuados del Diseño): Second participation stage; gathers user input on programmatic and spatial relations within the proposed design.

PAC 3: Design Validation (Devolución y Validación del Diseño): Third participation stage; presents project results and collects community feedback for adjustments and final validation.

Pre-Investment Phase (Fase de Preinversión): Sequence of studies (idea, profile, prefeasibility, feasibility) leading to the decision of whether to execute a public investment project.

Public Architecture (Arquitectura Pública): Architecture designed, built, and maintained by the state for public use and benefit, ensuring access, equity, and representation.

Public Investment (Inversión Pública): Allocation of state resources for infrastructure and services that address collective needs and social equity.

Recommendation Satisfactory (Recomendación Satisfactoria, RS): Official approval issued by the Ministry of Social Development and Family allowing a project to advance to the next investment stage.

SENCE (Servicio Nacional de Capacitación y Empleo): Chilean National Training and Employment Service, responsible for providing professional training programs.

Regenera RS: Brazilian program by NGO Mulher em Construção combining post-disaster reconstruction with women's employment and environmental restoration.

Social Evaluation (Evaluación Social): Analytical process within the SNI that assesses the socioeconomic feasibility and public benefit of investment projects.

Stakeholder Engagement (Consulta a Involucrados): Required process to inform and consult with users and affected parties during the design and execution of public works.

Supreme Decree No. 75 (MOD 2024): Amendment establishing gender-participation targets in MOP contracts, promoting inclusive hiring across technical and operational levels.

Sustainability (Sostenibilidad): Design principle ensuring that public architecture contributes to environmental, social, and economic balance over time.

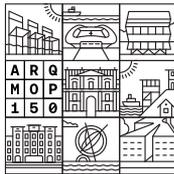
UNOPS (United Nations Office for Project Services): UN agency that manages infrastructure, procurement, and project implementation with emphasis on equity and sustainability.

Urban Compactness (Compacidad Urbana): Urban design principle promoting proximity and accessibility to services within shorter distances, improving quality of life.

Verbs of Space (Verbos del Espacio): Participatory design exercise in which users express desired activities in a space ('to rest,' 'to gather,' 'to play') to inspire architectural decisions.

Women and Construction Roundtable (Mesa Mujer y Construcción): Multisectoral working group led by the Ministry of Women and Gender Equity and the Chilean Chamber of Construction to promote gender equality through training, hiring incentives, and awareness campaigns.

Women Build Award (Premio Mujer Construye): Annual award by the Chilean Chamber of Construction recognizing female workers and companies with outstanding gender-equity practices.



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