



## Ten ways local government can advance gender equity

# Key concepts and definitions

**The fact sheets, *Ten ways local government can advance gender equity*, are part of a resource package designed to build the capacity for local governments to consider gender equity in their planning, policy and service delivery.**

Local government plays an important role in creating and supporting environments that enable community to achieve optimal health and wellbeing. Reducing gender inequity for women is a key strategy in achieving this goal, as it allows for a more just, inclusive and fair society for both women and men. The fact sheets include practical information and practice examples of ways local government can advance gender equity for women. The ten fact sheets are:

1. Why gender matters
2. Gender analysis
3. Infrastructure
4. Land use planning and design
5. Promoting women in leadership
6. Workplaces
7. Sports and recreation
8. Access to services
9. Key concepts and definitions
10. Further resources

**In order to undertake a gendered approach, it is important to understand the following key concepts and terms.**

### Gender

The term 'gender' refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours and attributes that society considers appropriate for women and men. Unlike the biological characteristics and differences between women and men known as sex, gender roles are socially learnt, differ among cultures and change over time.

### Gender equity

Gender equity is an important social justice goal. The concept recognises that within all communities, women and men have different benefits, access to power, resources and responsibilities.<sup>1</sup> Gender equity is the process of being fair to women and men by recognising diversity and disadvantage and directing resources and services towards those most in need to ensure equal outcomes for all. A gender equity approach therefore acknowledges that it is often necessary to have different strategies for women and men.

## Gender equality

Gender equality means equal participation of women and men in all spheres of public and private life. Gender equality is about society giving equal value to the similarities and differences between women and men, and the varying roles they play. The experience of inequality is by no means confined to women. Differences occur between both sexes on questions of race, sexuality, class, age, disability and geography. But on key questions of economic security, health, wellbeing and political participation – within and across cultures – women more commonly experience greater disadvantage and discrimination relative to men.

## Gender analysis

Gender analysis is a method of assessing difference in the lives of women and men and the impacts that policies, programs and services may have. Implementing gender analysis therefore provides more equitable access for both groups, by also taking into account variables such as socio-economic status, age, family structure, ability and cultural and linguistic background.

## Gender sensitive

A policy, program or service that recognises that women and men are constrained in different and often unequal ways as potential participants and beneficiaries.

## Gender blind

A policy, program, project or service that ignores gender and therefore incorporates biases that may be in favour of existing unequal relations.

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organisation, *Mainstreaming gender equity in health: the need to move forward*, WHO regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/gendermainstreaming.htm>



## Gender mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming is a process that ensures:

*... that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities – policy development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes and projects.<sup>2</sup>*

## Sex disaggregated data

Information that is cross-classified by sex, presenting information separately for females and males, girls and boys in order to identify, understand and respond to issues as experienced by both sexes.

