

# GENDER APPROACH

*in* **Municipal Spatial  
Planning Programme**



This paper was prepared by Civil Society and Gender unit of the Sida - sponsored Municipal Spatial Planning Support Programme implemented by UN-HABITAT

Despite the growing awareness among development experts of the importance of adopting gender sensitive approach to development planning, when it comes to professionals and technical staff dealing with spatial and urban planning issues the answer usually is: “we plan for people.” This is intended to mean that spatial planning is gender-neutral. However, in reality this only reflects the fact, that current planning doesn’t distinguish between the different needs of women and men and - often - neglects the specific needs of women. Therefore understanding basic gender concepts and their reference to local development planning, also in its spatial aspect, is essential for the incorporation of gender approach both at the organisational and programmatic level.

### CONCEPTS

#### Gender

■ **Gender refers to the economic, social and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being female or male.**

As such, gender is a concept that is rooted in the social dynamics between people in any given society. The different ways that men and women are perceived in a society will impact the roles, responsibilities, opportunities and access they have as a result.

■ **Gender is not simply about biological sex.**

The concept of gender arose from the need to develop an understanding of the social roots beyond the biological distinctions between men and women.

■ **Ideas about men and women are not universal.**

This concept of the roles and responsibilities ascribed by society on men and women as a result of their gender has led to a very clear understanding that there is no universal vision of the roles of a woman or a man. Therefore, the concept of gender will play out very differently in different societies.

■ **Gender does not only involve women.**

The concept of gender was in fact developed to ensure that there was a greater level of understanding of the social relationships between men and women and the inequalities that arise as a result.

#### Gender Equality and Gender Equity

**Gender equality refers to the equal roles, responsibilities, access and opportunities of men and women, boys and girls in all aspects of society.**

This is the goal of all gender-focused work – to promote gender equality in all societies for all members of the society. This can be achieved through **equity programmes** which **favour treating women and men differently** in order to achieve the equal status of women and men.

The overall goal of equality between women and men can be achieved through addressing practical and strategic needs. The distinction between these two is important because an effective gender mainstreaming strategy must address both.

Practical gender needs focus on the immediate needs of men and women in a given situation – for example the need of women to have equal access to transport systems, or to educational services.

Strategic gender needs refer to the longer term social evolution towards a belief in the inherent equality of women and men. Activities addressing practical gender needs should do so with a view to the longer term strategic needs for gender equality.

## Gender Mainstreaming

The idea of mainstreaming gender stems from the recognition that the differences and disparities between women and men are associated with, and have an impact on, all aspects of society. Therefore **a gender perspective must be integrated at all levels and in all facets of urban and spatial planning and management.**

**There is no single approach to achieving gender mainstreaming.** Instead it is a conceptual approach, which will be implemented according to the particular institutional, social and cultural context within which the programme operates. Gender mainstreaming implies that a gendered perspective be integrated in every activity that is undertaken and informs decisions at both policy and operational levels. This is incredibly important as this differs from much of the focus on separate, women centred projects. It is also important to clarify that **gender mainstreaming is not a goal in itself. Instead, it is a way of working towards the goal of gender equality.**

### GENDER AND UN-HABITAT'S DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PERSPECTIVE

As gender equality is a central principle at all levels of UN-HABITAT's work, integrating a gender perspective in field level activities is the ultimate practical application of this principle.

Inclusive urban planning seeks to address the various needs of all members of a community in the most equitable way possible. As such, understanding the gender dimensions in the society will highlight the different needs and views of men and women in terms of the settlements in which they live. A gender perspective will give insight into the power disparities in a society, and prepare the programme to better address issues of in-

equality and marginalisation, both in terms of the planning itself, as well as the participation of the community in needs assessments and consultations. Using a gendered approach in planning will also improve the level of commitment from the stakeholders, thus improving the overall success of the process.

In a society where women and men have different roles and responsibilities, there is no gender-neutral perspective on urban and spatial planning. All too often it is observed that the seemingly "general" view is the one of the male professional. Women and their life-situations, their needs and interests are often not recognised sufficiently, and so the discrimination of women is reinforced in their access to services, jobs, and leisure. Therefore gender mainstreaming integrates a gender-sensitive perspective in all areas of development planning, implementation, and evaluation of the undertaken measures.

The process of determining which services will be prioritised in a settlement will have different impacts on men and women, who will have different perspectives and priorities about these services. Men and women will often have very different opinions regarding which services should be a priority, as well as how those services can best be provided. Timing of services, especially water and electricity provision will have a much greater impact on the daily lives of women and it is important that their views be taken into account when planning such services.

The built-up and physical environment has a profound impact on the way men and women live, how they interact, and how they are able to access the services and resources in their communities. Men and women will use their built-up and spatial environments very differently, based on their roles and responsibilities, and will therefore have unique views on how that space should be planned, developed and managed.

Land use planning is of particular importance, as the distances between various services will often have a greater impact on women than men. For example, the distance to markets, health centres and schools can create an additional burden on women as the main caregivers for children, the elderly and the sick. Taking these issues into consideration when developing a settlements plan can improve the accessibility of these services to women, and reduce their daily workload if they are readily accessible. Women's access to leisure is equally important but often lost in the men-dominated planning vision. Zoning regulations will also have different impacts on men and women in a community. Women are more likely to engage in informal, or home-based, economic activities. As such, zoning regulations and provision of necessary services can impact the access of women to income. Gender perspectives provide valuable insight into the needs and views of all members of a community on the way they want to be governed, how they interact with their built-up and spatial environment and ultimately how they want their settlements to develop.

## **GENDER AND URBAN ENVIRONMENT IN KOSOVO**

The urban planning and management is part of the broader framework of urban governance and impacts areas of social life. Therefore, it is important to ensure that programmes, policies and projects help in development processes and positively influence and reinforce gender equality.

Rapid development of urban/rural areas and different needs of men and women related to this process led to the incorporation of gender aspect in development planning and inclusion of man and women in decision-making processes.

The objective of gender-sensitive approach is to ensure that men and women will have equal roles, responsibilities, access and opportunities in the strategic urban planning development processes, both at the central and local level, and will be able to benefit equally from development interventions. This means, that different situations and conditions of women and men are always considered consciously and all projects are designed in a way, so that they contribute to the fostering of equality.

Land-use planning and zoning, already mentioned above as important local development pre-requisites, determine how lengthy and difficult a woman's working day is going to be. Women are typically in charge of children, the elderly, food, shopping, washing, cooking, cleaning, nursing, caring, etc.

They usually must perform all these activities every single day.

During the course of a day, a woman will typically need to travel from her home in the morning, to school and/or a child care centre to drop off the children, to a work place, back to school, shop for food and then head home to prepare the evening meal and ensure that the husband, children and other family members are fed and that the school homework is done. Kosovo cities, apart from Pristina, lack the public transport network and most of the in-city travel is done on foot or by car. Most of the car drivers are men and even with some shared responsibilities taking children to and from school, women are those who have to rely on finding their way from place to place during the day. With most of the road investments done before the 1970-80, roads are too narrow for the current intensity of car traffic. The lack of experience in traffic planning and optimisation of the existing road network to ensure smooth movement through the city leads to traffic jams and blocking of interjections.

Another serious consequence is the lack of allocated parking places. Therefore, a common picture in Kosovo cities is cars parked on the pavement, and pedestrians, including school children, the elderly, mothers with prams and small children walking on the street. This last issue is one of the most important safety considerations.

Women's safety and security is compromised when urban infrastructure and facilities feature inadequate lighting, unsafe building design, poorly lit transportation points and lack of sanitation facilities.

Poor road surface, lack of paved sidewalks, uncovered man-holes and unprotected construction sites are not uncommon in Kosovo cities. Making cities safer for women also makes them safer for children, men, the elderly, people with disabilities and communities who fear racially, ethnically, or religiously motivated assault. Roads and transportation infrastructure are important municipal responsibilities that can make a very tangible difference to the quality of life of local residents. To make cities safer and address the issues of insecurity and violence against women, cities must engage women and girls in decision-making and bring a **gender analysis** to spatial and urban planning. Local governments have a vital role and responsibility in engaging women and men as equals in municipal decision-making. Working with a gender and social equity perspective provides new opportunities for democratising municipal governance and reducing poverty through provision of quality, relevant, and effective services and opportunities for women as well as men. One of the ways of getting women's perspective on safe urban environment is through Women's Safety Audits. One of the features of Kosovo cities are "informal settlements" which have their most recent roots

in massive migration after the military conflict in 1999 and intervention of NATO forces in Kosovo. The vacuum in the urban planning and plan implementation processes and the rejection of the earlier planning practices attributed to the Serbian regime, which was regarded discriminatory vis-à-vis Albanian population, led to the emergence of new informal settlements on the outskirts of the "official" city.

Although informal settlements in Kosovo are not exclusively the settlements of the poor or of ethnic minorities, their inhabitants are excluded from the access to urban technical and social infrastructure. In many of them this means the lack of access roads, water and sewage systems, health centres, education outlets, hazardous natural environment close of landfills. Living conditions already poor in physical terms are further aggravated by insecurity of tenure and shelter, as well as potential threat of demolition.

Living in such settlements puts a further strain on women as care givers and workers. The number of population living in informal settlements in Kosovo is not known and therefore it is difficult to make assessment of the segment of women affected by these conditions. There is no one universal experience of women in cities. In urban areas, lives are much more difficult for poor women than for those who are better-off.

The lack of population census and the general lack of data make it difficult to firmly state that the number of women-headed households living in poor conditions has grown over years, but there are strong reasons for accept the fact of the "feminisation of poverty" as the result of the 1999 military conflict, loss of male family members, the traditional bread-earners in the Balkans, the loss of homes and property, current 60 per cent unemployment rate among women, drop in remittances from relatives from abroad and very low social security payments.

## GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN UN-HABITAT'S OFFICE AND PROGRAMME IN KOSOVO

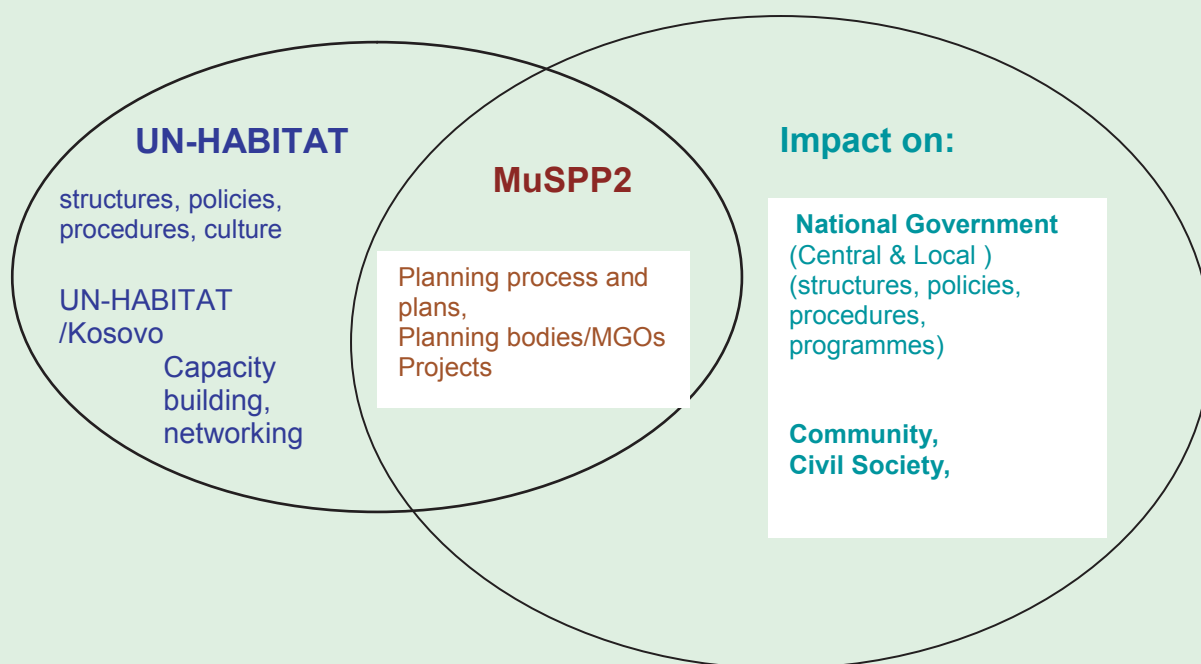
It is impossible to effectively incorporate a gender perspective in programme operations without clear policy, objectives, time-frame and resources. While this paper aims to address these issues in the context of MuSPP2 and its programmatic objectives, reference will also be made to earlier experiences of gender mainstreaming and lessons learned from them. A key conclusion, supported

also by research papers on gender mainstreaming, is that gender mainstreaming has to be seen as relevant in three linked arenas or spheres: (i) in organisational structures, policies, procedures and its culture, (ii) in the substantive activity that it undertakes, i.e. its programme, (iii) in the impact of this work on increased gender equality in the broader community.

fig 1

### Spheres of Gender Mainstreaming

(see the graph below illustrating this way of thinking)



It is useful to think of these spheres as the “level” that a unified organisational gender mainstreaming strategy must encompass. (...) the three levels are distinct with the need for networking, planning and capacity development

– at the organisational level; socio-economic gender analysis and consultation – at the programme level; various forms of monitoring and information sharing – at the level of impact. In this sense, gender mainstreaming **is about**

**advocacy, networking and knowledge management as much as it is about trainings and analysis.** It is about policy influence as much as it is about project and programme design.

### Organisational structures, policies, procedures and culture, Kosovo Office

According to UN-HABITAT's flagship document, the Habitat Agenda and Gender Policy, the overall objectives of promoting gender equality should guide UN-HABITAT's structures, procedures and culture. The gender sensitive approach has to be used by all professional staff and management in their daily work referring to planning, decision making and implementation of interventions.

In order for this to happen in MuSPP2, the UN-HABITAT's Kosovo office must have its own strategy for strengthening gender focus within its staff and ensure that internal policies and decisions are gender-sensitive. Although there is a real commitment within the senior and middle management to implementing it, an important challenge is to ensure that the internal policies and decisions are reflected in the practical implementation of the Programme as such.

**A time-bound** strategy is needed to ensure that staff understands the policy and its implications for their daily work, and have the competencies and resources to implement it effectively. The role of UN-HABITAT office in Kosovo is strictly related to the implementation of MuSPP2 and this fact has a major impact on its organisational structure, which also includes the gender and civil society unit. The task of the unit is to promote a gender perspective both within the MuSPP2 organisational structures as well as in the direct work with municipal planners. Maintaining this function is important as UN-HABITAT office in Kosovo, when address-

ing gender issues, must lead by example and be able to provide clear guidance on gender mainstreaming in the areas of its expertise. Therefore, it is important that all UN-HABITAT staff are trained in gender concepts and in gender and urban planning. This will provide a greater institutional capacity to act as an effective resource on gender and urban planning issues at the municipal, ministerial and UN levels. It is also very important that the gender training be used as a mechanism to increase the awareness of staff of what is happening within municipalities and civil society from a gender perspective in Kosovo. As such, a portion of the training could be contracted to a local organisation to provide gender training from a community. Cooperation with other UN agencies and local partners on gender issues is essential not only from the point of view of strengthening the ability to respond to challenges of gender equality in the areas of UN-HABITAT/MuSPP primary field of expertise, but also in looking for synergies with other projects.

*In order to achieve the above, the project team will work towards the following gender mainstreaming objectives (GMOs):*

*GMO 1: Streamline capacities of UN-HABITAT Kosovo Office/MuSPP2 staff to incorporate gender perspective in daily operations of the office and the Programme*

*GMO 2: Support effective partnerships and inter-agency coordination for gender mainstreaming*

### Things to do:

- Provide adequate resources to be spent on gender mainstreaming in the form of capacity building through trainings, workshops, manuals, guidelines



- Disseminate important gender-relevant materials through internal and external communication channels
- Take into consideration relevant national policies based upon International Conventions Declarations and refer to them to promote gender equality and women's rights
- Analyse the importance of urbanisation on gender roles, as well as identify emerging opportunities for women, vis-à-vis, the changing cultural context.
- Participate in the activities of other organisations focused on building internal and external capacities for gender mainstreaming

### Gender in Programme Activities

Incorporating gender perspective in the Programme activities is particularly important considering that MuSPP has moved to its second phase 2 and will modify its cooperation with partner municipalities. The MuSPP 2 gender-sensitive approach is built into its programme objectives and is a cross cutting issue. It focuses on such issues as gender equal participation in the planning process, gender sensitive contents of urban development plans, including gender disaggregated data, and development of projects which address the needs of men and women.

Although gender mainstreaming involves far more than project and programme design and implementation, the programme of the organisation is the "heart" of gender mainstreaming. It is the arena in which commitment to gender equality -takes concrete form in the community served by the organisation. The gender mainstreaming at the programme level includes at least the following programme elements:

■ **Participation and systematic on-going consultations:** Public participation has been one of the main pillars of MuSPP and as an important tool of good urban governance is essential for sustainable development. This is reflected in the dialogue between civil society and the authorities considered necessary to formulate policies. A participatory approach combined with gender mainstreaming can strengthen the participation of women and men in public life, grounding the understanding of gender issues in the realities of people's lives, and making participation more effective channel for expression of the marginalised people's demands.

There is a need for systematic consultations with both women and men in order to identify their own priorities, successful stories, lessons learned, tools and other mechanisms. It is of critical importance, because the ultimate impact will be watered down if the project strays from community concerns, or does not adjust to any changes in these concerns.

All stakeholders, men and women, engaged in the urban development planning and project implementation under MuSPP2, will be involved through:

- Workshops, orientation meetings, roundtable debates ,
- Projects, with the focus on how women and men contribute to and gain from development planning
- Support to institutional set up promoting equal representation of men and women in various working groups, planning bodies and other governmental and non-governmental structures.

The most important aim within this process will be to optimise the use of the above

mechanisms to identify priorities, collect lessons learned and streamline existing tools to better suit the actual Kosovo context.

■ **Commitment of Programme implementation team to incorporate gender in daily work and operations.** MuSPP2 team must be aware of the implications of gender differences for specific outcomes of the programme including the planning process, policies, and projects. Outlining gender linkages within the programme, will strengthen the understanding of why promoting gender equality is important for sustainable development. With the focus changed from the activity-based to project-based approach, gender perspective will be more directly related to concrete result-oriented projects rather than broadly defined development issues. Building gender component into the projects at the stage of their development will be helpful for the teams to ensure that interests and needs of men and women are addressed as the projects are implemented.

As such, project plans that are currently drafted, will be reviewed for a number of possible gender aspects: (i) their engagement of civil society, and effort to ensure proper representation of women, while giving consideration to adequate communication channels, meeting places and hours, (ii) using gender disaggregated data as basis of their analysis, (iii) demonstrating understanding how potential projects, policies or practices affect men and women, boys and girls. Depending on the nature of the project prepared by the team, there may be different aspects of the review.

■ **Monitoring and reporting mechanisms.** Internal monitoring mechanism, such as the Baseline Survey can help to assess how activities and projects conducted under MuSPP2 have contributed to greater gender equality.

This requires that suitable gender-sensitive indicators are developed which reflect both the qualitative and quantitative impact of projects or programmes on men and women.

■ **Gender analysis and gender impact assessment.** Gender analysis and gender impact assessment, particularly in its socio-economic and cultural aspect, will be used to assess local development initiatives, projects and policies to assess how they may affect women and men. Understanding the implications of such initiatives is essential to ensure that they are beneficial for both men and women.

*In order to achieve above, the project team will work towards the following gender mainstreaming objectives:*

*GMO 3: Promote gender perspective in the MuSPP projects, policies and practices related to urban and spatial planning and management*

*GMO 4: Promote equal participation of women and men in activities and events organised under MuSPP2 and create conditions for men and women to contribute equally*

*GMO 5: Promote link between local governments, civil society and community through gender mainstreaming*

#### **Things to do:**

- Ensure that effort is made to mainstream programme-wide guidelines and policy documents to acknowledge and ensure that a gender perspective is a formal part of planning and decision making within the Programme's activities;\
- Collect and analyse relevant data on stakeholders (including target groups) for all activities and ensure that the outcome of these -

analyses is actively used in programme/project implementation.

- o Ensure that men and women are active participants in UN-HABITAT's programmes and projects, and that they are always equal partners and stakeholders at decision-making forums

### MONITORING OF IMPACT OF MUSPP INTERVENTIONS

The outcomes and impact on effective gender mainstreaming activity at the organisational and programme level should lead to measurable improvement in addressing women's rights, meeting women's practical needs and strategic interests, and greater gender equality (both formal and substantive) in the partner municipalities and communities served. It is important to show that substantive activity has not simply reached a certain number of women, but that it has improved equality between women and men in the areas of MuSPP2 interventions.

The measurement of impact remains the most difficult part of gender mainstreaming activity, particularly when the programmes address women's strategic needs, such as the change of policies, laws, etc. With MuSPP2 and its focus on the inclusion of women in the decision making processes both at the strategic and practical level, emphasis will be put on closer engagement with Kosovan NGOs and communities to assess the impact of projects and activities on the living environment of men and women.

*In order to achieve above, the project team will work towards the following gender mainstreaming objective:*

*GMO 6: Involve partners and communities in monitoring UN-HABITAT/MuSPP2 activities fo-*

*cusced on the consolidation of urban and municipal development planning and capital works projects and their impact on men and women.*

#### Things to do:

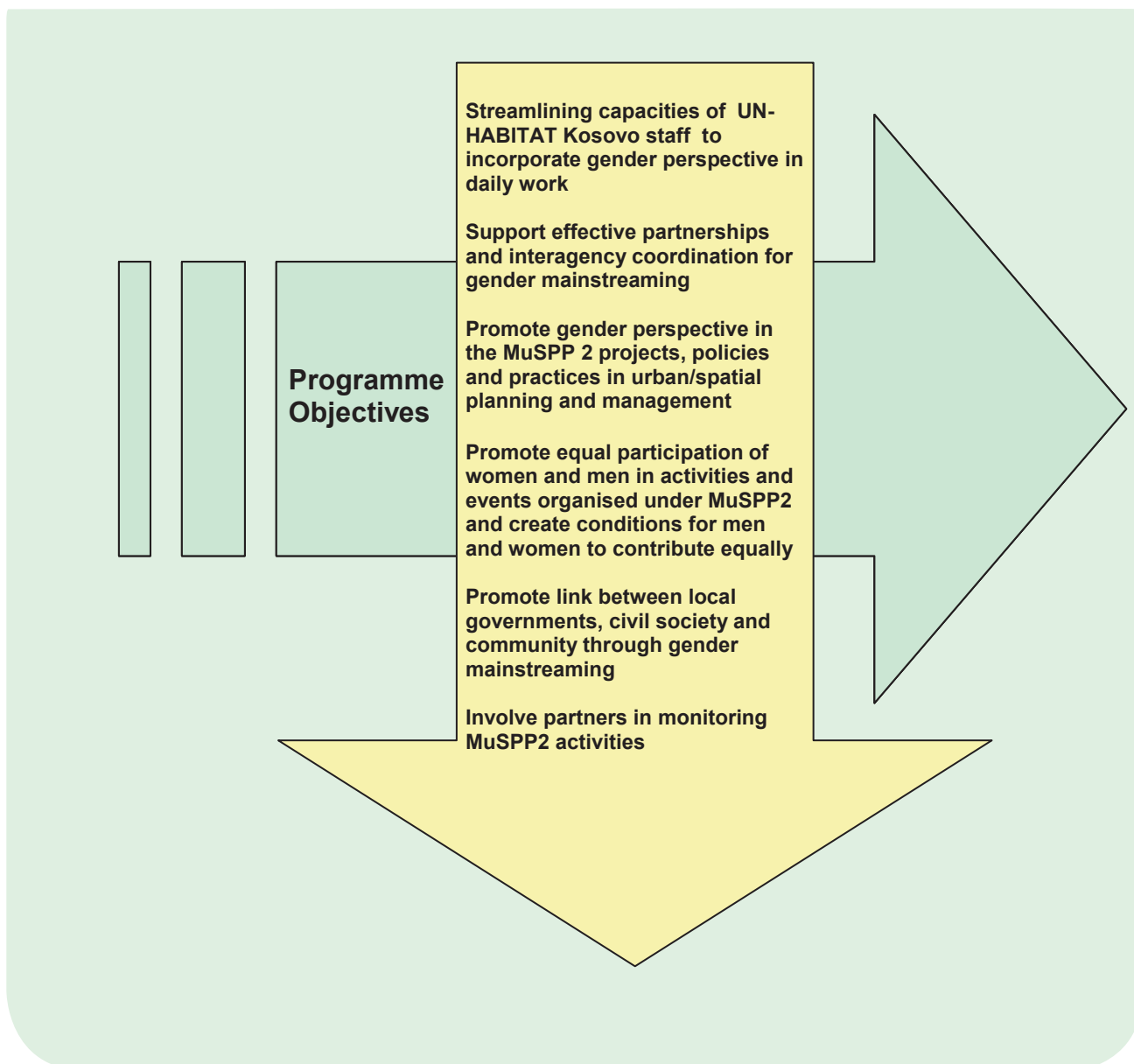
- o Ensure gender components in all collaboration with partners and other agencies are in place.
- o Acknowledge and cooperate with already active bodies, central and local level institutions, NGOs, civil society groups and individuals in the field of interest and make use of their knowledge and capacities, as well as strengthen them in their work
- o Outline how women and men contribute to and gain from the planning development differently;
- o Understand and acknowledge how the planning development has different impacts on women and men in all interventions;

Based on the earlier experience, it is evident that gender aspect in local development planning, including its spatial and urban aspect needs further consolidation through a number of different interventions. Strengthening capacities of the UN-HABITAT/MuSPP2 professionals to understand and apply gender sensitive tools is as important as engaging in capital works projects which address specific priorities of men and women. This is equally important in the relations with partners and cooperation with municipal professionals. Therefore, the paper looks at gender mainstreaming in a holistic way and sets for the UN-HABITAT Kosovo Office and MuSPP2 specific objectives which will help mainstream gender at various levels.

*Note: For the correlation and synergy between gender mainstreaming objectives and fields of MuSPP2 operations see the graph below.*

fig 2

## Correlation and synergy between gender mainstreaming objectives and fields of MuSPP2 operations




### Areas of MuSPP2 interventions:

- Planning process
- Advisory notes and policy guidelines
- Capital works projects
- Mobility
- Disaster Risk Management
- Informal Settlements
- Information Exchange
- Partnership and Networking

## References:

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- Toolkit for Mainstraming Gender in UN-HABITAT Field Programmes, UN-HABITAT publication [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)
- Gender in Local Government, A sourcebook for trainers, UN-HABITAT publication, [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org)



UN-HABITAT has been actively assisting Kosovo institutions in the field of governance, spatial planning and municipal administration since 1999. At present, it implements the 2nd phase of Municipal Spatial Planning Support Programme (MuSPP2) funded by the Government of Sweden through Sida. MuSPP2, under its 3-year activity schedule, will continue to support municipalities in the con-

solidation of participatory urban and spatial planning, implementation of capital projects, and will strengthen their capacities for regional and cross-boarder cooperation.

“Making Better Cities Together”, as the motto of the Programme, puts an emphasis on the participatory and inclusive local development planning, to which men and women contribute equally.