



Promoting gender equality in public social housing



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Introduction

Equal access to adequate housing and a supportive community environment are key in ensuring equal opportunities for everyone. A lack of equal access is a barrier to people striving to overcome inequality.

This report showcases an ambitious project by Valencia, Spain, to make its social housing more gender inclusive, as well as **best practices from other EU cities that have sought to combat housing inequality**. Cities like Vienna, Paris, Brussels and Barcelona, are leading the way in inclusive public social housing policy that prioritises good design and acknowledges gender mainstreaming as a measure of (e)quality in architecture.

Understanding local housing policies in the European Union is crucial. Housing policy is unharmonised, with each country or region determining how it integrates its own gender considerations into the built environment. Housing policies are implemented differently by national government agencies, housing providers and civil society organisations for residents. Local policy knowledge is needed to effectively address issues around gender and integrate gender-mainstreaming principles, which ensure that such issues are considered systematically.

One barrier to creating effective gender housing policy is the **underrepresentation of women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) professions and architecture**. In 2021, women made up only 32.8% of employees in high-tech, knowledge-intensive services and manufacturing in the European Union.¹ This limits women's authority to shape housing objectives and measures and prevents their inclusion as professionals and decision-makers in fields that influence the housing sector, such as transport, communication and infrastructure development. To overcome this barrier, women professionals in these fields should be proactively included in influential processes like housing tendering. This is essential to change the status quo and achieve efficient gender mainstreaming in housing, with a diverse range of perspectives and expertise.

Another barrier is gender-washing (also known as pinkwashing), where companies make hollow or exaggerated claims about supporting gender equality and pursue these objectives only superficially. This occurs when companies fail to use disaggregated data by gender, age group and socioeconomic status, and/or specific methodology for gender analysis and inequality remediation. These shortcomings must be identified, measured and addressed to effectively gender mainstream and create meaningful change.

Beyond equality and social justice, **gender mainstreaming also lends an alternative economic perspective**. A gender lens lets developers explore new market opportunities and assess existing markets more accurately.

This report also highlights the **broad importance of inclusive care and the care economy**, which calls for investments in services and facilities like those for early childcare and long-term elderly care. Public social housing is one such investment that should apply gender mainstreaming, especially because women outnumber men in older age groups. **Bringing a gender perspective into public social housing is thus a matter of equality**.

A gender focus also highlights the connection between climate change, health and well-being. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, around 80% of people displaced by climate change are women.² A study conducted in Barcelona in 2016³ also showed that women received 70% of social service subsidies to combat energy poverty, highlighting its disproportionate, gendered impact. From this perspective, making housing thermally efficient and reducing energy costs can benefit women and men alike and promote equality. Recognising this intersectionality is essential for developing housing solutions that sustainably address different groups' needs.

Sound housing policy frameworks can impactfully promote equality and enshrine housing as a fundamental human right. **Gender mainstreaming in architecture and urban planning, particularly in public and social housing policies, is crucial to achieving this over time**. This involves exposing and analysing unequal power relations in housing and urban spaces, addressing the care work needed across all ages and life circumstances, understanding the role of the housing sector in dealing with climate change, and recognising the sector's contribution to personal autonomy.

¹ [Which EU regions employ more women in high-tech? - Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&plugin=1).

² [Climate change exacerbates violence against women and girls | OHCHR](https://www.ohchr.org/en/news-events/news/2021/04/climate-change-exacerbates-violence-against-women-and-girls).

³ [Women in energy poverty | European Economic and Social Committee \(europa.eu\)](https://ec.europa.eu/economic-social-committee/en/women-in-energy-poverty).

1 About this report

Incorporating a gender perspective into new public housing shows a commitment by government and industry to righting the inequality caused by using gender and biological sex to presume behaviours, expectations and abilities. It is a commitment to weakening the influence of culturally enforced gender norms, which are also reflected in how we design and perceive built environments. It also aligns with the [European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan](#), which recognises gender equality, equal opportunities, work-life balance and access to basic services as four of the 20 foundational pillars of social rights.

In late 2021, the municipal housing company of Valencia, Spain ([AUMSA](#), Actuaciones Urbanas de Valencia) requested a review of its social housing plan, including gender-related criteria, from the EIB advisory services: [EIB Advisory](#), funded by the European Investment Advisory Hub (a joint initiative of the European Commission and the EIB).

The investment project entailed the construction of 323 social, affordable rental housing units — 233 of which would apply gender criteria and 63 of which would be in nearly zero-energy buildings — and the refurbishment of four existing social, affordable housing units in Valencia.

By that time, AUMSA had already acknowledged the significance of energy efficiency, and had incorporated Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Methodology (BREEAM) certification into its housing strategy. This inherently worked in favour of a gender approach, as women are more affected by energy poverty. The EIB also proposed that AUMSA apply gender mainstreaming to address environmental concerns while promoting inclusion and equality. To that end, Universitat Politècnica de València ([UPV](#)) was selected to help AUMSA set social and architectural objectives to improve its housing policy framework.

This technical assistance sought to define parameters and indicators to effectively incorporate a gender perspective into AUMSA's 2022 social housing strategy, and to monitor the success of this work through design and implementation.

AUMSA's 2022 strategy also aimed to increase equality by bringing a gender perspective to procurement and housing allocation, with units going to those most in need.

This report is based on the experience gathered in developing that strategy. The recommendations presented here draw from best practices for equality in gender-sensitive housing development, tendering processes for architectural and construction companies, and housing allocation.

The gender-mainstreaming principles and lessons learned from developing the strategy can be used by other social housing providers in Spain and elsewhere to increase the positive impact on gender equality of related public investments.

This report is primarily addressed to:

- **policymakers**, who determine housing development policies to prevent inequality and create equal opportunities;
- **architects and urban planners**, who shape housing, buildings and neighbourhoods;
- **supervisors** overseeing the development of housing projects, buildings and districts;
- **procurement professionals**, who engage experts to design and construct homes, buildings and neighbourhoods;
- **decision-makers**, who set criteria for contracting construction companies;
- **housing companies**, which allocate housing units and need criteria for reducing inequality, especially for families with dependent children or elderly adults.

The report does not provide static solutions, but rather a methodology for addressing recurring challenges that may take different forms in different contexts.

2 Background

2.1 Policy framework on gender equality

The EU policy on gender equality (one of the 20 pillars of the [EU Social Rights Action Plan](#)) considers housing from a gender perspective to ensure equal access to housing, address climate change and the effect of energy poverty on women, and promote autonomy for all individuals. This approach recognises diverse housing needs, safety concerns, affordability and accessibility.

As part of its [Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025](#), the European Union delivers an [annual report on gender equality](#). The 2023 report set goals for closing economic gaps and achieving a gender-equal economy.

There is also a broad international strategic framework beyond the European Union focusing on gender, with initiatives like the UN [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), which promotes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 5 on gender equality, and the [New Urban Agenda](#), adopted at the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in 2016.

2.2 EU policy framework on public social housing

The **European Union has no direct legislative competence in national housing policy, nor is there any direct EU funding for housing**. However, there are many EU regulations⁴ that can influence Member States' housing policies and/or systems (Max-Christopher et al., 2020). The right to housing assistance is also mentioned in the [EU Charter of Fundamental Rights](#) (2000/C 364/01) and the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#).

The European Union has largely employed a “soft power” approach to policymaking on affordable housing and housing rights, with non-binding instruments like administrative measures, recommendations, general principles and guidelines for national and local policymakers. It funds these housing affordability policies through the [European Social Fund](#) and the [European Regional Development Fund](#) (Dovydas et al., 2020).

The [Partnership on Housing of the Urban Agenda for the European Union](#) (now closed) was established at the end of 2015. Its objective was “to have affordable housing of good quality,” with a focus on “affordable public housing, state aid rules and general housing policy.” Over a three-year period starting in December 2015, the partnership analysed the housing situation in the European Union. It found that over 220 million households and 82 million people were overburdened by housing costs, and even risked eviction. It also concluded that EU cities, urban areas, regions and countries needed a stable framework of conditions to enable their residents to access affordable housing (Szolgayová & Kauer, 2018). The resulting [Housing Partnership Action Plan \(December 2018\)](#) proposed 12 actions to improve regulation at all levels, enhance knowledge and governance, and better fund affordable housing at the EU level.

2.3 EIB policy framework

Gender equality is a founding value of the European Union and a key objective of the UN SDGs. The [EIB is committed to gender equality](#), in alignment with these values. In its operations, the EIB Group seeks to ensure that gender inequalities are neither overlooked nor reinforced, and that all people can equally access and use the assets, services, benefits and opportunities generated by its work. To that end, the EIB Group has adopted a [Strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment](#) and a Gender Action Plan. The Bank is embedding gender equality and women's economic empowerment in its business model and its lending, blending and advisory in the European Union and beyond.

As part of this commitment to supporting women's empowerment, the EIB invests in key projects worldwide. It has adopted the [2X Challenge criteria](#)⁵ and helped create [2X Global](#), an organisation that promotes gender equality in emerging economies by connecting investors and intermediaries. In 2022, the EIB Group financed 63

⁴ For example, the [Energy Performance of Buildings Directive](#) 2010/31/EU, last amended by [Directive 2018/844/EU](#); and anti-discrimination regulations like [Council Directive 2000/43/EC](#).

⁵ Launched at the G7 Summit 2018 as a commitment by Development Financial Institutions to collectively mobilise \$3 billion in private sector investments in developing country markets over three years.

projects around the world that significantly contributed to gender equality and women's economic empowerment, providing €5.2 billion in investment.

2.4 AUMSA and the Valencia framework

[AUMSA](#) is the public limited company for urban development in Valencia, Spain that manages municipal projects (infrastructure works, landscaping, urban plans, housing construction, public buildings, ornamental fountains, management and monitoring of large projects, and archaeology). It also manages land and develops housing projects and car parks.

In its 2018-2021 social housing strategy, AUMSA moved to integrate sustainability and gender considerations into its housing projects, which encompassed around 300 new subsidised dwellings in the city. The strategic decision was aligned with Spain's legal framework around improving gender equality, in particular [Organic Law 3/2007 of 22 March for the Effective Equality of Women and Men](#). This and other laws and regulations⁶ brought a surge in the regional promotion of gender mainstreaming.

Through work funded by the EIB, AUMSA's 2018-2021 social housing strategy was reviewed to further emphasise the objective of integrating a gender perspective into its housing portfolio. Its 2022 strategy contains specific criteria, recommendations and indicators for gender mainstreaming at various levels: city, neighbourhood, building, and even individual housing units (see Annex 1). It also prioritises criteria for the equitable allocation of housing units, and for the makeup of technical teams and companies bidding on construction and maintenance contracts, all with the aim of promoting gender equality. The strategy seeks to provide high-quality housing, promote social inclusion and enhance the overall quality of life of Valencia's residents.

2.5 How can public social housing improve gender equality?

2.5.1 Gender equality and social housing as a human right

The [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), adopted by the UN General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948, asserts that "everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of oneself and of one's family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services," among other things. It also asserts that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms in the declaration, "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, etc." Gender mainstreaming in social housing deals with both of these guarantees.

However, these rights are not always granted.

- **Housing conditions depend on cost and location.** 8.3% of EU residents were overburdened by housing costs in 2021, while 4.3% faced severe housing deprivation in 2020.⁷
- Disaggregating the data by sex and gender, in 2022 22.7% of European women were at risk of poverty after paying their housing costs, compared to 20.4% of men.
- Risk of poverty also relates to the ability to generate income by pursuing full-time or part-time employment. According to available data, **employment is influenced by various factors, including parenthood and gender, creating marked income disparities between women and men.** In 2021, 86% of men with children worked full time, while only 48% of women with children did.
- Available data highlight significant disparities between men and women in the European Union concerning employment and income, with a gender employment gap of 10.7% in favour of men in 2022.⁸ That same year, women's tertiary education attainment rate in the European Union was 11.1% higher than men's.

Adequate provision of public social housing is crucial for alleviating the financial burden of housing costs and enabling people to generate sufficient income.

⁶ For example, [Law 2/2017 of 3 February on the social function of housing in Valencia](#), the [2018 special plan on urban quality guidelines for the city of Valencia](#), and the [Legislative decree 1/2021 of 18 June of the council approving the consolidated text of the law on spatial planning, town planning and landscape](#).

⁷ European Union, *Sustainable Development in the European Union. Monitoring Report on Progress towards the SDGs in an EU Context* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2023), 45, <https://doi.org/10.2785/403194>.

⁸ Eurostat Sustainable development in the European Union – Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context – 2023 edition - Products Flagship publications - Eurostat ([europa.eu](https://eurostat.ec.europa.eu)).

As stated in the [2017 UN New Urban Agenda](#), which addresses the link between cities, rural areas, housing, development and the environment, **the ability to access employment is closely tied to the facilities available in buildings and the services offered in neighbourhoods, as these can either facilitate or hinder caregiving responsibilities.** Community facilities like schools, day-care centres, libraries and transport services can be vital in making child and elderly caregiving compatible with employment.

2.5.2 Introducing gender mainstreaming into housing policies

Equality and housing are best enshrined as fundamental rights through housing policy frameworks that guarantee and protect them as such. And when it comes to upholding these rights — and progressing on others — past experience⁹ shows just how instrumental social housing policies with a gender perspective can be. **Sustainably promoting these rights will involve holistically incorporating a gender perspective into architecture and urban planning, in public and social housing policy in particular.** This calls for good analysis of phenomena like the following:

- Unequal power relations resulting from gender roles are often perpetuated and exacerbated via the construction of living spaces, including social housing.
- **The gender perspective is closely related to the notion of care** in a general sense. The Eurostat study [Reconciliation of work and family life](#) (2019) shows that: (a) more women than men have childcare responsibilities — among EU inhabitants with responsibility for childcare, 52.2% are women and 47.7% are men; (b) incapacitated relatives are mainly cared for by women — 63%, vs. 37% by men; and (c) women reduce working time or interrupt work more than men due to care responsibilities for ill, elderly and/or disabled relatives — 5.9% of women vs. 2.5% of men.
- **The built environment can increase climate change risk** or mitigate climate change effects. Analysis of this impact should apply a gender perspective, as individuals are often affected differently based on specific circumstances, including gender. For example, climate change exacerbates the already disproportionate adverse effects of energy poverty on women’s health, well-being and economic opportunities. A study conducted in Barcelona in 2016 found that 70% of social service subsidies to combat energy poverty were granted to women, and that the risk of energy poverty was higher in single-parent families, 80% of which were headed by women.¹⁰
- The COVID-19 pandemic shed light on the **connection between environment and public health**¹¹ — from ensuring indoor air quality in buildings, to knowing the impact of poor housing on mental well-being, to understanding how energy poverty can adversely affect health.¹²

In summary, gender mainstreaming public social housing (urban and rural) can protect the rights of women (and men).

This can be achieved by ensuring that the **design, location, accessibility and affordability of such housing fosters residents’ economic autonomy** (access to work and education, mobility opportunities and care facilities for dependents); **autonomy in decision-making** (even distribution of services, subjective sense of security inside and outside the home, and public spaces easy to navigate by design); and **physical autonomy** (green areas, air quality, accessibility, safety, sense of security, cleanliness and maintenance, and local services).

All these features make communities more resilient to climate change and help alleviate socioeconomic inequalities.

2.6 Current barriers to gender mainstreaming in housing

Gender mainstreaming in housing recognises that gender-based disparities can only be avoided by actively considering the diverse circumstances of different people and their related housing needs. It means **systematically integrating gender perspectives throughout housing policy development and implementation,**

⁹ City of Vienna: [Gender Mainstreaming in Urban Planning and Urban Development](#).

¹⁰ [Women in energy poverty | EESC \(europa.eu\)](#).

¹¹ [Environmental health and strengthening resilience to pandemics](#).

¹² “Fitxes de La Guia - Entorn Urbà i Salut - Diputació de Barcelona,” accessed 11 June 2022, [Fitxes de la guia - Entorno Urbano y Salud - Diputació de Barcelona \(diba.cat\)](#); [Fitxes de la guia - Entorno Urbano y Salud - Diputació de Barcelona \(diba.cat\)](#).

to promote fairness, equal opportunities and inclusive access outcomes. With this approach, policymakers, urban planners, developers, construction companies and promoters can create more equitable and gender-responsive policies and measures that help guarantee affordable housing for women and men, regardless of circumstances like age, socioeconomic status or caregiving duties.

Across the European Union, national governments, local housing providers and civil society organisations all manage housing differently, including when it comes to identifying barriers. Nevertheless, there are some **common critical barriers** in respect of gender mainstreaming:

- **Underrepresentation of women in the workforce and among decision-makers in STEM and architecture professions** (Sansone & Davern, 2021), limiting their ability to influence essential infrastructure services like housing, transport and access to renewable energy.
- **Insufficient disaggregated housing data, including by sex, gender and age**,¹³ from institutions like Eurostat and national statistical agencies. Without comprehensive data, it is difficult to design specific policies for reducing gender inequalities.
- **Lack of specific methodologies and criteria** for analysing disaggregated data and laying out processes to create homes, buildings and neighbourhoods that promote gender inclusion and equal opportunities (Damjanovic et al., 2013).
- **Lack of regular, well planned citizens' participatory processes**¹⁴ in local urban design projects aimed at neighbourhood transformation.
- **Gender-washing**, where gender is considered a superficial choice, and not a fundamental issue. In Vienna, for example, the city council manual [Gender mainstreaming made easy](#) lists the following shortcomings:
 - Gender-specific language and inclusive graphics are not consistently used.
 - Gender aspects are only tagged and are not embedded in design processes.
 - Gender is described in a general sense but is not translated into concrete goals or measures.
 - Data are shown separately for women and men but there is no gender-specific analysis or explanation.
 - The implementation of designs and results does not match equality goals, as conclusions are not drawn from a gender analysis.
 - While gender advisors are involved, they lack relevant competences.
 - Equality has not been integrated into steering instruments (for example, in forms like sustainable equality policies, quality management or budgeting).

2.7 Current trends in gender mainstreaming in housing

Housing is an obvious prerequisite for progress by women (and men) of all circumstances. Furthermore, gender mainstreaming trends in EU housing are likely closely related to gender equality trends worldwide. The 2016 study [Trends in Gender Equality and Women's Advancement](#) by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) suggests that the world is **making progress in gender equality and women's development**: While inequalities remain, women are closing the gap in education and some health dimensions — including some unique to women, like maternal mortality. They are also making progress reducing **economic and political gaps**, although these remain wide. In recent years, increasingly well-structured **gender equality indices** have proliferated. Although they vary widely, these indices can still be used to **compare countries at given a point in time**, while those with consistent structuring allow for time-series analyses.

The IMF findings cited above can be connected to **trends** in gender mainstreaming in EU national housing policies. Some of these are:

1. Though still not equally balanced, the **increasing inclusion of women in political, technical and economic decision-making positions** related to housing. This is positively affecting the progression of gender mainstreaming in housing and urban policies.
2. **Better integration of gender perspectives into national and regional legislation**, specifically on housing and the surrounding environment. Examples at the EU level are the [Partnership on Housing of the Urban Agenda for the European Union](#) and the [Housing Partnership Action Plan](#) to promote policies for affordable housing for all in the European Union. An example at the national level is the [Spanish National State Plan for Access to Housing 2022-2025](#), with a special programme to help victims of gender-based violence, people who have

¹³ [Gender marker implementation in UNIDO \(unwomen.org\).](#)

¹⁴ OECD, [OECD Guidelines for Citizen Participation Processes.](#)

been evicted, homeless people and other particularly vulnerable people. Another example at the regional level is the [consolidated text of the Law on spatial planning, urban planning and landscape](#) in Valencia, in which Article 1 incorporates gender mainstreaming as a fundamental objective; Article 13 refers to social cohesion, gender perspective and urbanism; and Annex XII, Section 8 states the criteria and rules for gender-responsive planning.

3. **Widespread adoption of indices and reports that enable gender considerations to be incorporated into national and local policies**, including those on social housing. Relevant examples are [Trends in Gender Equality and Women's Advancement](#) (IMF, 2016), the annual [Global Gender Gap Report](#) (World Economic Forum, 2022) and [Women and Transport](#) (Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs of the European Parliament, 2021).
4. Broad dissemination of guidelines and publications on effectively integrating a gender perspective into housing, buildings and neighbourhoods, addressing diverse circumstances and emphasising the importance of prioritising individual and collective caregiving. Such publications include the [Manual for Gender Mainstreaming in Urban Planning and Urban development](#) (City of Vienna, 2013), [Women and Housing: Towards inclusive Cities](#) (UN-Habitat, 2014) and the [Guidelines for Implementation of the Right to Adequate Housing](#) (UN, 2020).
5. Examining the housing market through a gender lens. This has highlighted the growing population of older women living independently and the challenges faced by younger generations, including single-parent families with mothers as sole caregivers, often in precarious situations. It also underscores the need for holistic solutions to gender-based violence, which predominantly occurs within domestic and neighbourhood settings. Data from [2022 Household composition statistics](#) by Eurostat show: (a) that 39.8% of women aged 65 or over in the European Union live alone, compared to 20.0% of men in the same age category, and that four out of ten women (40.1%) but six out of ten men (61.7%) live as a couple, probably because women outlive men on average; (b) that for people aged 18 to 24, 82.4% of men vs. 76.4% of women live in other types of households (for example, with their parents/family or as flatmates); and (c) that among these young people, 9.9% of women, but only 4.8% of men, live as a couple.
6. Requiring the use of gender experts in the administrative specifications for public tenders around architectural, urban design and planning projects. For example, the city of Vienna includes this in all architectural design procurement processes, through the terms of reference and by proposing expert juries (Damyanovic et al., 2013). And in Barcelona, the [Metropolitan Institute of Land Development and Property Management](#) (IMPSOL) asks to see gender mainstreaming in housing designs.¹⁵
7. The growing demand, in administrative specifications of tenders for construction companies or services related to housing or neighbourhoods, for equal and diverse work teams that include gender experts — both in the field of housing and more generally — and gender-balanced staff and boards of directors.
8. **Increasing integration of professionals with gender expertise in housing** by supervisory teams employed by government and public institutions.
9. **Pilot projects and new buildings that integrate a gender perspective**, showing political entities and the general public the advantages of such solutions for reducing inequality. For example, in the **Vienna model**, the city introduced gender mainstreaming into housing and urban places in 1991, with *Frauen-Werk-Stadt* being the first housing block to incorporate a gender perspective in its construction (Álvarez Isidro & Gómez Alfonso, 2014). In Barcelona, **IMPSOL** promoted public procurement practices with a gender perspective that transformed a number of housing developments, including 85 homes in the town of Cornellà, and 135 units in the [town of Gavà](#). A further example are the [GVA Valencian Government pilot housing competitions](#) that incorporate a gender approach.¹⁶

¹⁵ Crónica Global, "AMB Impulsa La Vivienda Protegida de Calidad y Con Perspectiva de Género," Crónica Global, 2023, https://cronicaglobal.espanol.com/global-content/20230223/amb-impulsa-vivienda-prottegida-de-calidad-perspectiva/743675688_0.html.

¹⁶ Nuria Matarredona and Olimpia Ferreiro, *Proyecto Piloto. Innovación y Sostenibilidad En Vivienda*, ed. Vicepresidència Segona i Conselleria d'Habitatge i Arquitectura Bioclimàtica (Valencia: LA IMPRENTA CG, 2022).

2.8 Why a gender lens matters for housing infrastructure investment

Incorporating a gender perspective into housing policies is crucial to promote gender equality, and gender mainstreaming in the housing sector responds to a global demand for this equality. But it also lends a new understanding of economic issues, by enabling a deeper analysis of the market situation and shedding light on new market opportunities.

The built environment, local services, mobility networks and green infrastructure can help or hinder people in daily life, especially the most vulnerable individuals. To reduce systemic hindrances caused by gender stereotyping, a gender perspective must be effectively incorporated into the systems that shape daily life — in this case, public social housing. The cities of **Vienna, Paris, Brussels, Barcelona and Berlin** are policy leaders for inclusive public social housing and well-designed dwellings, buildings and surroundings with a gender approach.

Vienna stands out as an example of best practice, at the forefront of progressive policy and with a legacy of nearly a century of promoting public housing. Since the 1990s, a specialised team on the Vienna city council has shaped policies, protocols and mechanisms that incorporate a gender perspective into all aspects of housing and public space procurement and tenders. As a result, **Vienna has successfully created high-quality housing and urban environments that cater to the needs of all individuals.**

France is committed to renovating and expanding its social housing inventory to meet its environmental and social inclusion objectives while proactively incorporating a gender perspective. One example is the project [Plus](#) by the architectural firm [Lacaton & Vassal](#), which promotes bigger living spaces, better energy efficiency and more common areas in housing projects.

In **Belgium**, there is a focus on community land trusts. This model facilitates **access to quality housing for immigrant families without conventional bank financing.** The [l'Espoir housing project](#) in Brussels is an example of this approach, an intermediary organisation that works with the parties to secure affordable housing in difficult cases and offers management support in complex administrative situations.

In **Spain, Barcelona** takes the lead in advocating for policies that **prioritise affordable public housing with a gender perspective**, as well as promoting cooperatives with usage agreements. In **Madrid**, the municipal housing company ([EMVS](#), Empresa Municipal de la Vivienda y Suelo) allocates social housing by prioritizing households based on disability, dependents and other social circumstances. The city council of **Castelló** promotes equality in the employment of managers and professionals through their public tendering processes. Meanwhile, **Valencia** has adopted inclusive policies and incorporated a gender mainstreaming approach in the promotion of public social housing through AUMSA, the city's municipal housing company.

Finally, the **Cooperative Spreefeld in Berlin is an inspiring example of a housing cooperative that embodies the principles of community, sustainability and social inclusion, as it targets families and beneficiaries of asylum or international protection.** The residential population is multigenerational and multicultural. Apartments are barrier-free, with communal spaces for residents (like laundry rooms and fitness rooms) and external common spaces accessible to the public, such as community gardens, guest rooms, rooftop terraces, and a music and youth room. Running the common spaces together creates a sense of belonging and strengthens relationships among the inhabitants. This cooperative prioritises energy-efficient, environmentally friendly construction practices, including the use of renewable energy, rainwater harvesting and green building materials. The cooperative ensures affordable housing options to alleviate the pressing problem of gentrification in urban areas. It is also a hub for cultural and social activities, hosting various events, workshops and gatherings that encourage interaction, collaboration and creativity among residents and the wider community.

2.8.1 Causes of gender inequality and their impact on the housing market

Greater equality generates new opportunities in the housing sector. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality ([EIGE](#)), there may be considerable economic benefits from gender policies regarding care services, women as a skilled workforce and sustainable mobility, among others. Causes of gender inequality include:

1. Unpaid care work

Unpaid care work is a key determining factor in the gender pay gap in EU countries and is directly linked to housing. The gap between the earnings of women and men is greater among couples with children than couples

and single people without children, mainly owing to women’s higher rate of involvement in unpaid care and men’s higher rate of participation in the labour market. The lowest gender gap in net monthly earnings is observed among people in the younger age groups who don’t have children, and thus have fewer caring responsibilities.¹⁷

Unpaid care work can prevent caregivers from entering the paid workforce and is not currently included in gross domestic product (GDP).¹⁸ However, even without adding it to the calculation, the European Institute for Gender Equality estimates that implementing economic and societal gender equality measures could increase GDP per capita by up to 10% in EU Member States. **Gender equality could markedly improve the current GDP index through the labour market and education systems**, which would boost competitiveness in EU countries.¹⁹

According to data from 2015, improving gender equality would have increased EU GDP per capita by between 6.1% and 9.6% (or between €1.95 trillion and €3.15 trillion) by 2050. The increase would already have been apparent in 2030, when GDP per capita would have risen by up to 2%. This would mainly occur due to women’s higher rates of employment and entry into more productive STEM jobs.

2. Ageing population

The EU population is ageing because of the declining birth rate. **This is affecting universal healthcare conditions in Europe**, which has a high proportion of elderly women. The old-age dependency ratio — the number of people aged 65 and over per 100 people of working age (15 to 64) — rose 5 percentage points in a decade, reaching 30.5% in 2018. By 2025, it is expected to reach 50%. In addition, one in four people in the European Union has a long-term disability — more often women (27%) than men (22%) — and around 5% of families have one or more children with disabilities. EU institutions and Member States are under pressure to find sustainable and affordable models to meet the ever-increasing demand for long-term care. **Many such services for the elderly are home-based, so housing policies must account for this.** The gender pay gap and the ageing population form a complex situation, compounded by the effect of both factors on related aspects like **childcare**.²⁰

3. Mobility

Mobility issues are directly related to housing policy. Home location, job opportunities and care facilities are inter-related, framing the concept of **mobility of care**.²¹ Access to housing, be it private or public, is mediated by supply and residents’ spending or debt capacity. Supply determines the price of a housing unit, and spending capacity depends on a person’s ability to generate income, usually through paid work. The most affordable private or public housing is usually located far from centres of employment, particularly for low-skilled jobs. In these circumstances, the length of the commute impacts whether or not someone can take a job, especially if they must also care for others at home.

According to a study commissioned by the European Parliament’s Policy Department for Citizens’ Rights and Constitutional Affairs (Sansonetti & Davern, 2021), although women use public transport more than men, there is a shortage of safe and affordable public transport to meet women’s needs. The study calls for the incorporation of **gender mainstreaming into transport planning to ensure equal access for women and define best practice.**

4. Skilled workforce

Increasing women’s presence in the skilled workforce and facilitating their access to STEM education, and thus to skilled jobs, is crucial for gender equality.

The gender pay gap is closely tied to opportunities for engaging in economic activities, according to research by the European Institute for Gender Equality.²² This is closely linked to people’s ability to afford external assistance in caring for children and the elderly.

¹⁷ EIGE “[Gender Inequalities in Care and Consequences for the Labour Market](#)”.

¹⁸ Some authors argue that if unpaid care work was calculated as a share of GDP, this rate could double. María Ángeles Durán, *La riqueza invisible del cuidado* (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2018).

¹⁹ EIGE “[Economic Benefits of Gender Equality in the EU](#)”.

²⁰ EIGE [Gender Inequalities in Care and Consequences for the Labour Market](#) [Gender Inequalities in Care and Consequences for the Labour Market](#).

²¹ Inés Sánchez de Madariaga and Elena Zucchini, “Movilidad Del Cuidado’ En Madrid: Nuevos Criterios Para Las Políticas de Transporte,” *Ciudad y Territorio. Estudios Territoriales. Urbanismo y Género* LII, no. 203 (2020), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37230/CyTET.2020.203.08>.

²² EIGE [Gender Inequalities in Care and Consequences for the Labour Market](#) [Gender Inequalities in Care and Consequences for the Labour Market](#).

The **link between the location of an individual's home, their workplace and nearby caregiving services** is significant. Paradoxically, a caregiver's domestic situation cannot improve without an improvement in their economic situation, and their economic situation cannot improve without addressing their domestic care responsibilities.

Gender mainstreaming in public housing policies must address this paradox and facilitate autonomy for all individuals, recognising their inherent interdependence. This involves implementing policies that focus on gender mainstreaming to improve the design and construction of housing and neighbourhoods, as well as social policies that support caregiving and local services.

2.8.2 Fine-tuning current housing market processes

Adopting gender mainstreaming in the housing market not only introduces innovative approaches, but also provides valuable insight for decision-makers to navigate the market. **Applying a gender lens in assessing current market processes to refine investment prospects can increase the benefits of housing infrastructure investments.**

This report shows decision-makers that a gender approach can:

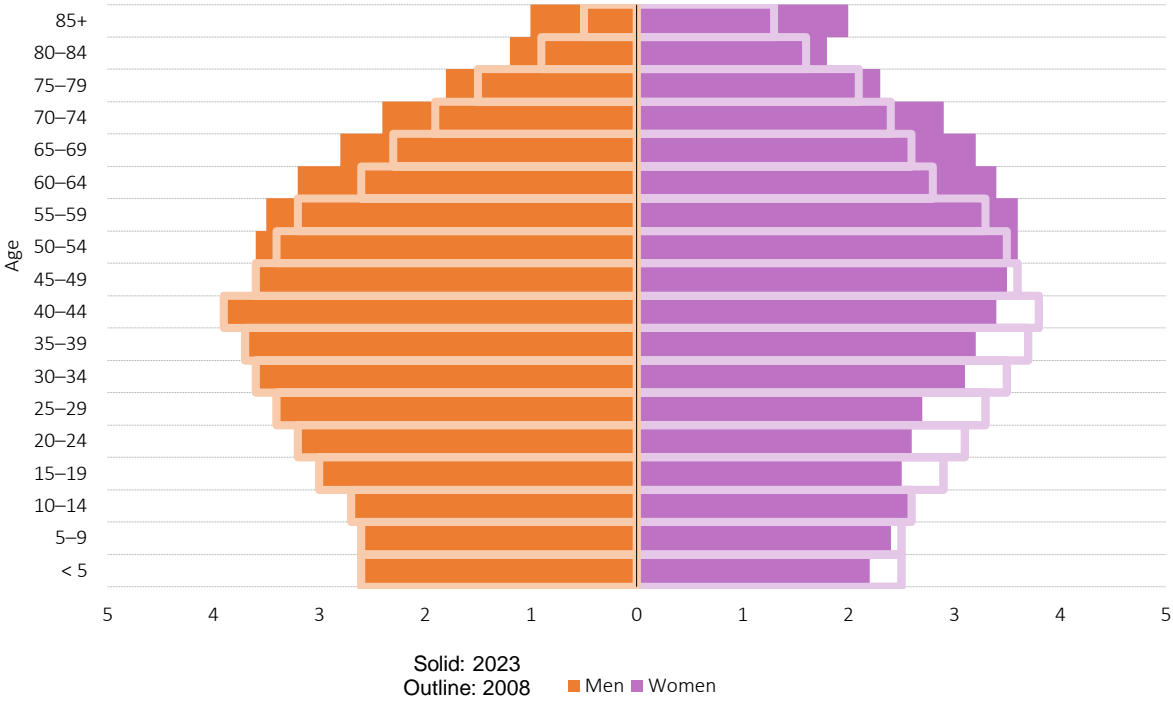
- Produce **more precise and comprehensive assessments of specific segments in the housing market**, like options for the elderly or single-person households. These segments are facing a demand for suitable housing, but lack sufficient solutions to meet their needs.
- **Mitigate financial risks by providing a comprehensive understanding of the persistent gender inequalities in the housing sector.** A gender-aware perspective helps policymakers and investors recognise and minimise potential financial risks by considering critical factors like affordability, accessibility and safety, which could otherwise expose their investments.
- **Increase the value of the assets** by integrating concepts like sustainable design, accessibility, affordability and safety measures. This strategic approach creates housing assets that appeal to a broader spectrum of potential tenants, increasing desirability and preserving value long-term.
- **Ensure alignment with SDGs**, particularly SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) to highlight the importance of gender mainstreaming for sustainable housing and cities. Investment strategies that are aligned with these goals can attract socially responsible investors, access public financing opportunities and strengthen their market position.
- Increase the participation of residents, developers, local authorities, community groups and environmental and social organisations with housing projects that prioritise gender equality through transparent and inclusive decision-making processes, allowing investors to cultivate trust and foster meaningful partnerships.

2.8.3 What the figures tell us

The following graphs visually underpin some of the findings highlighted in this report. The main topics analysed are (a) the ageing EU population and increasing share of women among older ages, (b) the employment rate by gender and age group and (c) the risk of poverty due to housing costs by gender.

The EU population is ageing, and women increasingly outnumber men above age 50 (Figure 1).

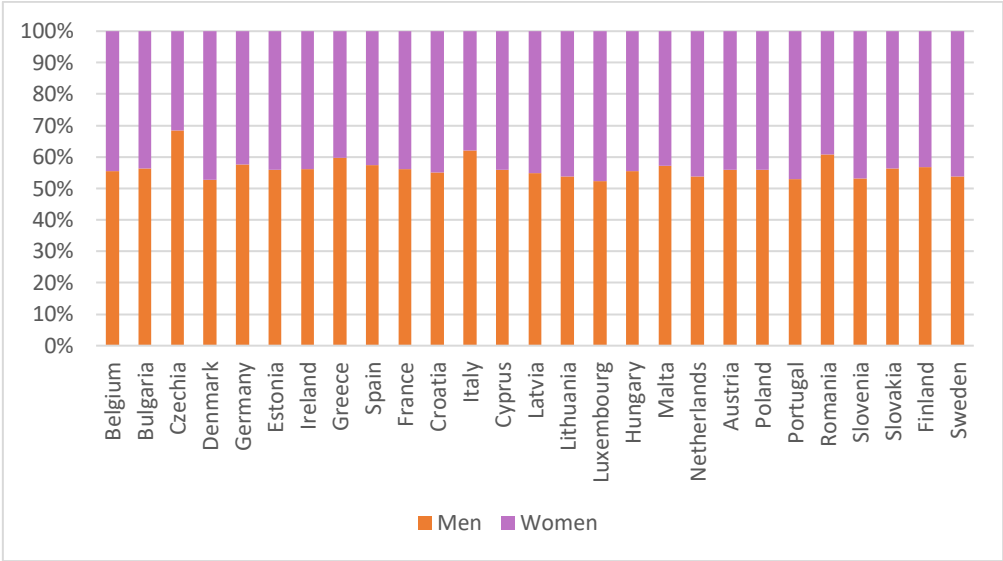
Figure 1. EU population by sex and age group, EU 2008-2023



Note: 2023 provisional/estimated.
Source: Eurostat 2024.

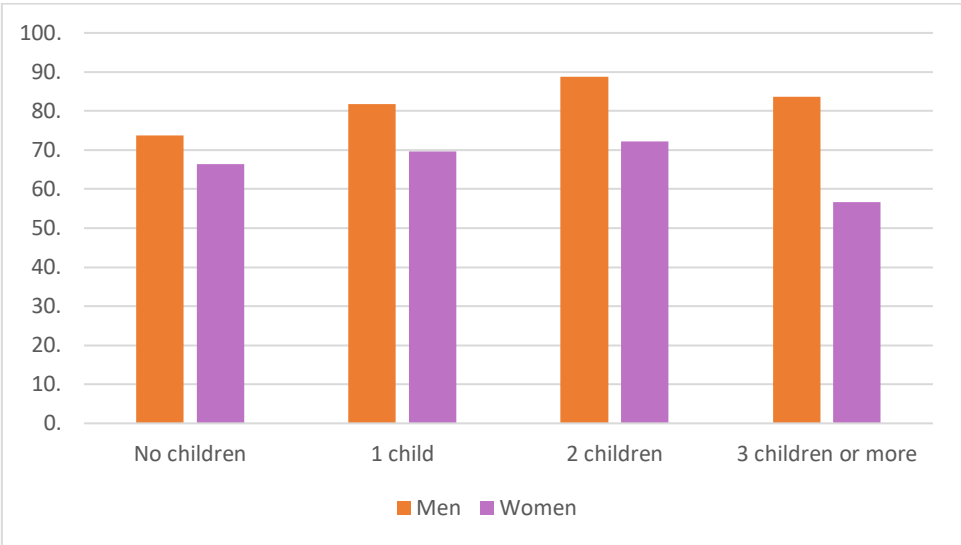
Women are often caregivers of children, affecting their rate of employment. By contrast, the employment rate of men with children is not as affected by the presence or absence of external childcare (Figures 2 and 3). In the European Union, women caring for children under the age of 6 do much more part-time work than men in the same caregiving situation (Figure 4).

Figure 2. Employment rate by sex of adults caring for children under six, EU 2022 (% of people aged 25 to 54)



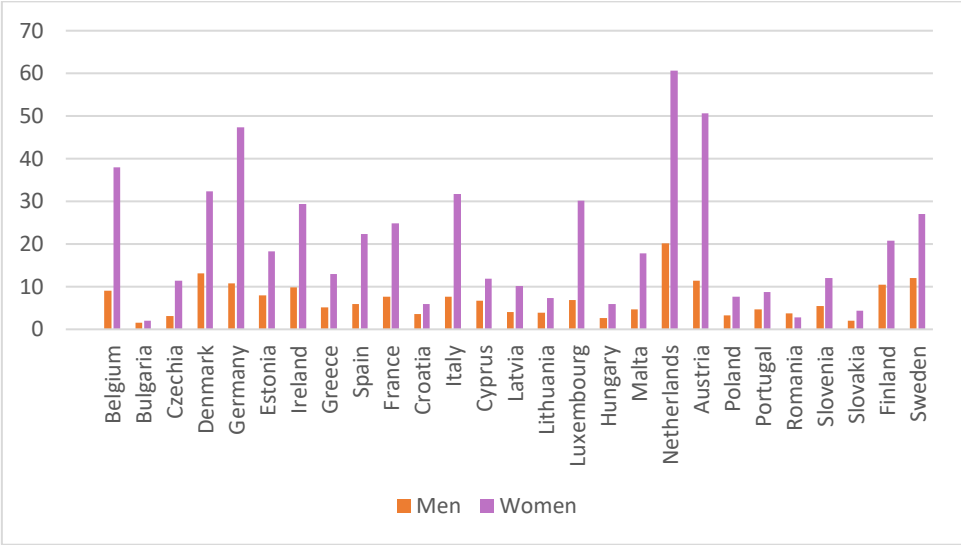
Source: Eurostat 2024.

Figure 3. Employment rate by sex of adults with or without children, EU 2022 (% of people aged 18 to 64)



Source: Eurostat 2024.

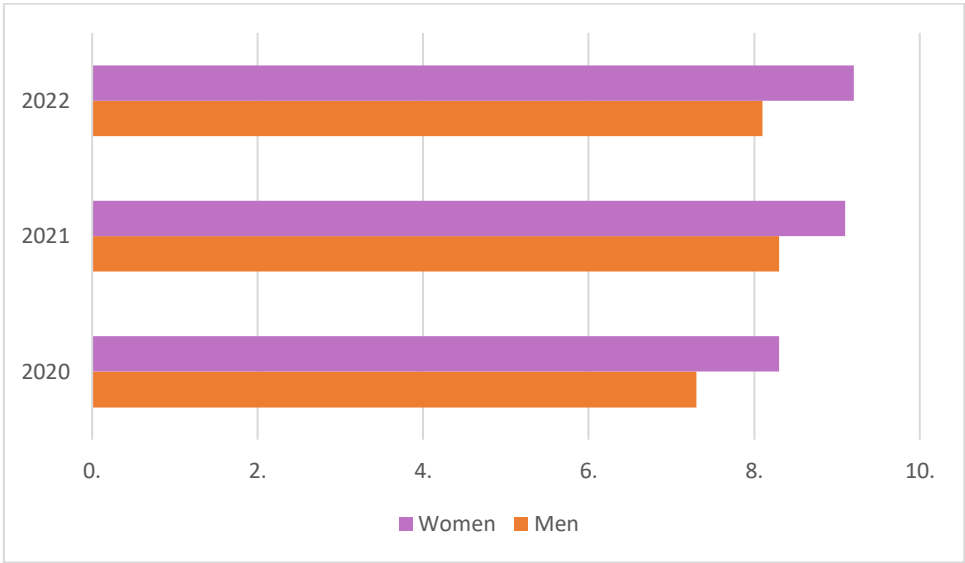
Figure 4. Part-time employment rate by sex of adults with children, EU 2022 (% of people aged 18 to 74)



Source: Eurostat 2024.

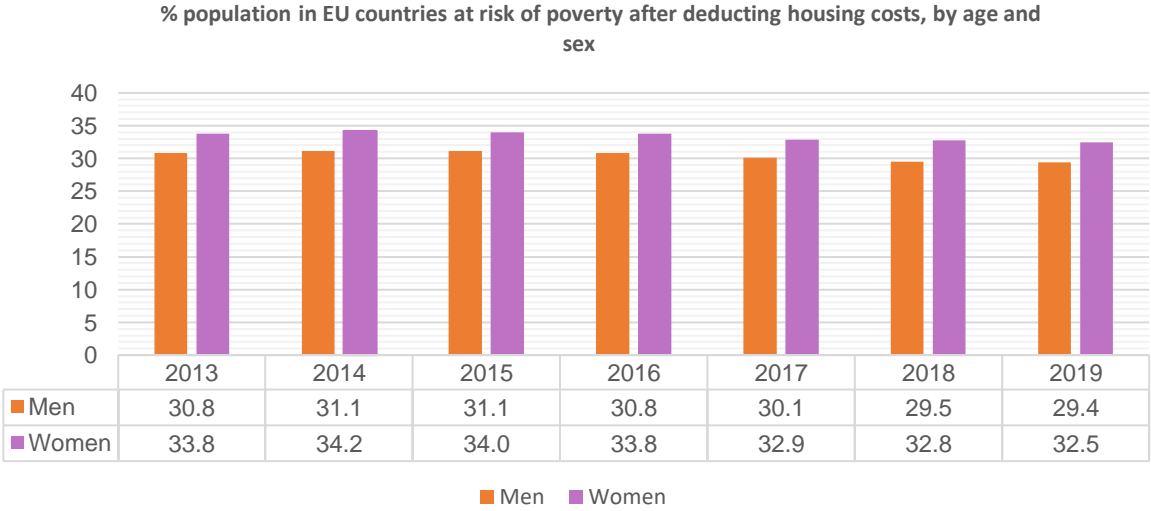
Housing costs are a significant burden for 30% of the EU population, putting them at risk of poverty (Figure 5). But women often bear a heavier burden than men, with a difference of around 2-3% (Figure 6). This disparity persists even when the housing cost burden exceeds 25% of disposable household income, with women experiencing a burden of around 2.5% more than men (Figure 7). These statistics clearly show the structural inequality that exists in housing, emphasising the urgent need to address housing costs for both genders. However, it is crucial to focus on the plight of women with dependent children, as they face additional challenges in accessing better-paid employment opportunities.

Figure 5. Housing cost overburden rate by sex, EU 2020-2022



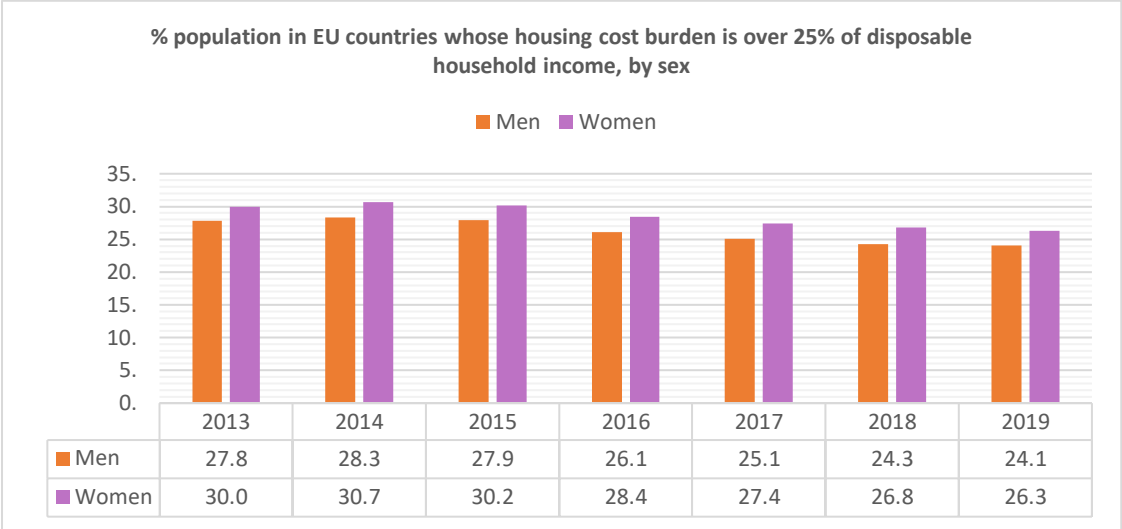
Source: Eurostat 2024.

Figure 6. Percentage of population by sex at risk of poverty after deducting housing costs, EU 2013-2019



Source: Eurostat.

Figure 7. Percentage of population by sex with housing cost burden over 25% of disposable household income, EU 2013-2019



Source: Eurostat.

3 Measures for improving gender equality in social housing

This section discusses selected measures for increasing gender equality related to public social housing, with a concise overview of design criteria, specific actions to increase attention to gender equality, and examples for reference. Three measures were chosen:

1. **Access to infrastructure, services and amenities:** how gender-mainstreamed policies in public social housing can improve women's access to these services and infrastructure.
2. **Employment, labour and working conditions:** how such policies can improve women's career development and employment progression.
3. **Expanded market activities:** how such policies can promote women's entrepreneurship and leadership.

3.1 Measure 1: Equal access to infrastructure, services and amenities

3.1.1 How can gender-mainstreamed social housing policies improve women's access to services and infrastructure?

Over **90% of women in the European Union are regular caregivers**, performing a wide range of care-related tasks, according to the study [Gender inequalities in care and consequences for the labour market](#) by the European Institute for Gender Equality.

According to the study, **housework is the most unequally shared care-related task** in the European Union, carried out by 93% of women and only 53% of men.

Career breaks due to care duties often constrain women to part-time, irregular, temporary and low-paid jobs, as these offer greater flexibility. Among part-time employees, 29% of women say care duties are their main reason for not working full time, compared with 6% of men citing the same reason.

The gender gap in overall earning is higher due to women's lower employment rates and their working fewer hours than men (EIGE, 2019). At the EU level, almost two-thirds (63%) of the overall gender pay gap is determined by the gender gap in working hours (accounting for 32% of the gap in overall earnings) and the gender gap in employment (accounting for 30%) (Eurostat, 2020).

Families' net monthly earnings are strongly affected by how care responsibilities are shared. The gap between the earnings of women and men is greater among couples with children than among couples and single people without children.

A report by the European Parliament published in 2021, [Gender equality: Economic value of care from the perspective of the applicable EU funds](#), offers some recommendations related to housing and infrastructure:

- The European Union should develop a clear policy framework that designates funding and support for the care economy, prioritising social infrastructure investments in Europe's economic and budgetary policies.
- Eurostat should collect disaggregated data on care, including the provision of different types of care, and profiles of formal and informal carers and paid and unpaid care workers in relation to gender, age, nationality, disability and ethnicity in different care settings.
- Funding for the care economy should account for at least 30% of the expenditure under the EU Recovery Plan for Europe to create equal standing with the 37% already allocated to green transformation investments and 30% to digital transition investments.

Another issue is the **procedure through which public social housing is allocated**. More women of all ages are in situations of vulnerability²³ compared with men, yet men have greater access to housing. It is therefore crucial to review the effectiveness and fairness of allocation procedures.

Women outnumber men at older ages in the European Union. Although this gap has narrowed in recent years as more men live longer, in 2019, the European Union had an average of 1.33 women aged 65 or older for every man of the same age.²⁴ In light of this, public housing policies must be adapted to the needs of older women, including the provision of spaces for social and cultural activities.

Public social housing projects should address the following design criteria about the scales of dwellings, buildings and neighbourhoods, to promote equality among inhabitants in complex urban environments:

- a) Dwelling design should eliminate hierarchies and stereotypes among residents and promote the equal value of caring tasks and services. Society has evolved and broken with the monopoly of the traditional nuclear family, and housing designs must accommodate new patterns — single-parent families, independent elderly people, young people leaving home late or sharing flats, etc. Versatile home designs should provide for changing needs, in a simple and adaptable way: For example, a room that serves as a home office should be convertible into a playroom for children. In addition, spaces should be designed to allow several people to use them simultaneously. For example, if one person is taking a shower, others should be able brush their teeth, while kitchens should provide ample space for several people to share tasks. Furthermore, the dwelling should have a sufficiently large private outdoor area, like a balcony or terrace.
- b) **Building design should incorporate inviting common spaces**, which can facilitate meaningful interactions between residents with diverse life circumstances, including different ages, health conditions and routines. Accessibility must be taken into account generally.
- c) **Building design should offer a range of dwelling sizes and types** to account for evolving life circumstances over time. If residents agree, flexibility allowing for modifications in dwelling sizes within the units could be incorporated, thereby avoiding the need to disrupt the established community environment when individuals age or experience life changes like divorce, disability or growth of the family group, or as new work objectives emerge.
- d) The semi-private and semi-public “intermediate” spaces that connect the housing-building-common services complex with the surrounding environment and the rest of the neighbourhood should be considered in the design. Studying all the transition and connection spaces is essential to understand the spatial continuum, which impacts the subjective sense of security.
- e) A gender-sensitive neighbourhood and city design should incorporate:
 - connected mobility networks (pedestrian, cycling and public transport);
 - public spaces and services for care and teleworking that lend help when needed;
 - green infrastructure that provides shade and a cool living environment;
 - accessibility, without mobility barriers;
 - sufficient network capacity to enable teleworking when feasible, allowing for better work-life balance.
- f) **Public social housing incorporating a gender perspective should also define allocation criteria** that improve people’s access to housing based on their individual circumstances; for example, if they are victims of gender violence (including gender-based violence towards LGBTIQ+ people), vulnerable single mothers with children, or elderly women living alone.

In summary, data show that the circumstances of men and women are different. Public social housing is essential infrastructure that addresses a fundamental need and right. However, in addition to providing adequate living space, housing should be connected to other types of infrastructure, including public spaces for leisure and sports, essential public services like schools and healthcare facilities, pedestrian and cycling pathways, adequate public transport services, and accessible utilities like electricity, water, gas and internet access. In essence,

²³ The European Commission is in the process of conducting a survey of EU countries to gather data on gender-based and other forms of interpersonal violence. To ensure comparable, EU-wide data, the European Institute for Gender Equality and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency are collecting data in EU countries where the national statistical authorities are unable to collect it themselves. The survey results will be released in 2024 and the data will help provide key indicators for laws and policies at the EU and Member State levels.

²⁴ Eurostat: [Ageing Europe - statistics on population developments 2020](#).

housing should be an integral component of a larger interconnected network of infrastructure and infrastructure services.

3.1.2 Examples of best practices in infrastructure around equal housing access

- **Austria:** [Wohnfonds Wien](#) is a Vienna-based non-profit organisation that buys land at favourable prices in anticipation of future land needs, and sells it on to the non-profit or restricted-profit development companies that win its design and contracting competitions. In these competitions, multidisciplinary teams led by architects submit proposals to be evaluated by an expert jury selected by Wohnfonds Wien.²⁵
- **France, Plus research by Lacaton & Vassal:** Buildings by the architectural firm Lacaton & Vassal, particularly the residential buildings, are designed based on a research-informed transition from private to public spaces, incorporating semi-private and semi-public areas. The architects design public spaces that will be in use most of the time, creating a sense of security.
- **Belgium, Community Land Trust:** Faced with a housing crisis in the Brussels metropolitan area, a group of housing rights activists came together to find ways to increase housing availability. The initiative built the l'Espoir building in the neighbourhood of Molenbeek with the support of the association Coordination et Initiatives pour Réfugiés et Étrangers, which helps refugees and migrants with or without residence permits. In 2009, the association supported 14 families who designed, promoted and developed the project, and ultimately became owners of the housing units.
- **Spain, EMVS (the municipal housing company of Madrid):** The core objective of EMVS is to safeguard the right to housing. It implements social rental initiatives that cater to various needs, including specialised support for women in vulnerable situations. EMVS also collaborates with NGOs by providing housing and emergency accommodation to address severe social exclusion. It also performs regulated housing allocation, with certain numbers of units reserved for different vulnerable community groups.
- **Spain, AUMSA (the municipal housing company of Valencia):** AUMSA developed its 2022 housing strategy to mainstream gender in the public housing sector (see Annex 1). The strategy includes criteria, recommendations and indicators for incorporating a gender perspective in the urban context, neighbourhoods, buildings and housing units. Checklists and indicators for gender mainstreaming are used in the public tendering process and monitoring phase. Priorities are also set out in the criteria for the allocation of housing units, and in the composition of technical teams and construction companies that bid on the construction and maintenance contracts.

3.2 Measure 2: Equal career opportunities

3.2.1 How can gender-mainstreamed social housing policies improve women's career development and employment progress?

In 2022, 11.1% of men and 8.0% of women aged 18 to 24 in the European Union had not completed secondary education and were not in further education or training, according to the Eurostat study [Sustainable development in the European Union – Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context – 2023 edition](#).

The share of the population aged 25 to 34 who completed tertiary education increased steadily between 2002 and 2022. Women's tertiary education attainment rate rose to 47.6% in 2022 from 25.3% in 2002, while the increase for men was to 36.5% from 21.0%. This caused the gender gap (in favour of women) to surge from 4.3% to 11.1% between 2002 and 2022.

The 2021 European Institute for Gender Equality study [Gender inequalities in care and consequences for the labour market](#) provides some important statistics relating to equal career opportunities:

- In the European Union in 2021, care responsibilities prevented 7.7 million women aged 20 to 64 from entering the labour market, compared to 450 000 men. The contribution of unpaid care work carried out mostly by women remains largely invisible.
- Among women who are employed, 60% reported experiencing employment changes because of childcare responsibilities, compared with 17% of employed men.
- 18% of employed women reduced their working hours, compared to 3% of men.

²⁵ For more information, see: <https://www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/projekte/aspersn-seestadt/pdf/studie-gendermainstreaming.pdf>.

Furthermore, according to a 2020 European Institute for Gender Equality study, [Gender equality and long-term care at home](#), more women than men assume informal long-term care responsibilities at least several days a week, and in some cases every day. Overall, women represent 62% of those providing informal long-term care to older people or people with disabilities in the European Union. Women of pre-retirement age (50 to 64) are most likely to provide long-term care. In 2016, 21% of women and 11% of men of pre-retirement age in the European Union were providing informal long-term care every day or several days a week (compared to 13% of women and 9% of men aged 25 to 49). The unequal distribution of informal care between women and men greatly affects women's opportunities in the labour market, especially in pre-retirement age, leading to gender inequalities in pay and pension and increased risks of poverty and ill health.

The Council of the European Union recently approved new rules that came into force in December 2022 ([Directive \(EU\) 2022/2381](#), to be transposed into national law by the EU Member States) to improve [gender balance on the corporate boards](#) of listed companies throughout the European Union.

[Europe has many highly qualified women](#), and 60% of its university graduates are female. And yet women are underrepresented in high-level positions, including on corporate boards, with very slow progress in this area. Only a third of members of non-executive corporate boards are women, and even fewer on executive boards. The new directive sets a target for EU companies listed on an EU stock exchange to accelerate the shift toward a better gender balance, to have women in the roles of at least 40% of non-executive directors and 33% of all directors. These companies must ensure that board appointment procedures are clear and transparent, and that applicants are assessed objectively based on their individual merits, irrespective of gender.

According to the [European Institute for Gender Equality statistics](#), in October 2022:

- The share of women on the boards of the largest listed companies registered in the Member States reached a new high of 32.2% — meaning that men still make up two out of every three board members.
- Governments can take a variety of actions to tackle gender imbalances, including legislative gender quotas with sanctions for non-compliance, and a wide range of soft measures designed to encourage companies to self-regulate. The impact of binding gender quotas is clear: In October 2022, women accounted for 38.2% of the board members of the largest listed companies in the eight Member States with binding quotas, compared to 31.4% in the Member States using soft measures, and just 17.6% in those that had taken no action at all.
- Despite progress among non-executives, women still account for only one-fifth (21.1%) of senior executive positions. Legislative quotas typically only apply to the top-level board or to non-executive seats, leaving the executive positions little affected by legislation.

Women are also underrepresented in senior architecture positions. Only three of the world's 100 largest architecture firms are led by women, and only two of these large firms have management teams made up of more than 50% women, according to an [article published in 2017](#) in *Dezeen*, a London-based online magazine on architecture, interior and design.

Gender mainstreaming in public social housing can therefore improve women's employability by:

1. Designing housing units, buildings and neighbourhoods to facilitate the combination of care and work, allowing women and men to work while caring for children or the elderly.
2. **Providing spaces that help the care economy develop** in well-designed public social housing, which can create new job opportunities.
3. **Developing more public social housing, which can generate employment for women** architects, builders, engineers, lawyers and many other related professions.

Public social housing management should address the following criteria to have an impact on the conditions affecting housing design:

- a) Incorporate gender experts in political, administrative and design decision-making, in clearly gender-balanced teams at all decision-making levels.
- b) **Establish criteria for housing design** that encourage the incorporation of a gender perspective in a committed and structured way in the project as a whole, and in management processes.

- c) Define **recruitment and tendering processes** that admit professional profiles with less conventional trajectories, such as young professionals, women returning to their professional careers and part-time workers.
- d) Include experts in gender, sustainability, universal accessibility and the circular economy on evaluation committees assessing public tender processes.
- e) Define **tendering processes** for construction companies and professional services that prioritise and promote companies with **gender-diverse boards** of directors, preferably at levels and in competencies where women are less well represented.
- f) **Use non-discriminatory and inclusive language and images in public documents**, avoiding persistent clichés on how women or men are considered or imagined.

Infrastructure services should enable people to be in paid employment at any level of decision-making while also providing care for others. This approach should produce more inclusive environments, which are necessary for **promoting the incorporation of women** — often the primary caregivers — **into paid work** and **increasing men's uptake of care responsibilities**. This inclusive approach should be embedded into project design and implementation.

3.2.2 Examples of best practices related to equal career opportunities and public social housing

- **Austria, [Aspern Seestadt Wien](#)**: This urban project focuses on inclusion and equality. The city is one of proximity, where basic services are close to home, with safe pedestrian routes, public spaces that are accessible and sustainable, and clear promotion of cooperative-type public social housing. Car sharing and bicycle mobility are encouraged. **The gender-focused design of this urban environment supports combining care and paid work.**²⁶
- **France, [IDHEAL \(Institut des Hautes Études pour l'Action dans le Logement\)](#)**: In 2021, IDHEAL published a [report](#) analysing the condition of 1 720 apartments in the Paris metropolitan area, 20 years after their construction. According to the report, while including public spaces near residential areas has gained attention in recent years, addressing gender equality in the private sphere is equally important. The report highlights factors like the quality of shared areas, equitable access to facilities, privacy, and security within homes, all of which are instrumental in promoting gender equality and equal opportunities.
- **Spain: [IMPSOL](#)**, Barcelona's Metropolitan Institute of Land Development and Property Management, believes that the tendering process for public social housing should be made more likely to recruit a good balance of qualified professionals. Its project tendering process is anonymous, and has a selection stage and an award stage. This policy has directly affected the incorporation of young women architects and non-conventional professional profiles. The evaluation criteria include gender-mainstreaming aspects in housing and the surrounding urban area. The second evaluation phase is remunerated. The selection is made by a jury of experts, with two members appointed by the Architects' Association of Catalonia. No financial bids are accepted and the proposals are assessed on quality alone.
- **Spain, [Castelló de la Plana](#)**: In 2019, the city council of Castelló de la Plana in the Valencia region redefined the evaluation criteria in tenders of housing projects to incite bidding companies to have women professionals on their boards of directors. In the same year, Castelló developed an [Integrated Sustainable Urban Development Strategy](#), incorporating a gender approach. The strategy included a checklist to guide verification and follow-up of gender recommendations, and self-assessment. The evaluation criteria and strategy aim to mainstream women as professionals at all levels of administration and to incorporate a gender approach in the design of housing projects. The lessons learned have been applied to AUMSA's housing plan in Valencia.

²⁶ For more information, see: <https://www.wien.gv.at/stadtentwicklung/projekte/aspern-seestadt/pdf/studie-gendermainstreaming.pdf>.

3.3 Measure 3: Equal leadership

3.3.1 How can gender-mainstreamed social housing policies help increase the number of female entrepreneurs and leaders?

Three-quarters of the some 18 million healthcare and social workers in the euro area are women, and a **similar share of women work in education**, according to [Christine Lagarde, President of the European Central Bank](#).

On average, just under half of all doctors across countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are women. However, data from some countries show that the share of female doctors tends to be greater in general medicine than in more specialised occupations like surgery. Women also tend to be underrepresented in the positions with the highest earnings.²⁷

Women are underrepresented in other STEM positions as well. Only 29% of PhD graduates in engineering, manufacturing and construction across the European Union are women; only 25% of self-employed professionals in science, engineering, or information and communication technologies are women and only 10% of patent applications come from women.²⁸

In addition, various reports and statistics are available regarding **women's entrepreneurship**.

- In 2019, the EIB issued the report [Support for female entrepreneurs: Survey evidence for why it makes sense](#), which stated that:
 - In EU countries, of all employed people, an average of just 2.16% of self-employed people with employees were women.²⁹
 - Only 15.5% of European entrepreneurs were women.³⁰
 - Female-led firms had higher rates of female workers.
- In 2021, the European Parliament published the report [Women's entrepreneurship and self-employment, including aspects of gendered Corporate Social Responsibility](#), which quotes the 2020 [Report on Women Entrepreneurs in Europe](#). According to these publications:
- To understand the main challenges that women face when deciding to go into business “[...] it is believed that **women entrepreneurs find it more difficult to access financial resources; that they go into business out of necessity; that women entrepreneurs also receive fewer organisational resources; that they suffer more from difficulties related to life domain and are excluded from business networks.**”
 - “Research suggests that both extrinsic characteristics (for example, financial resources, human capital, environment) and intrinsic characteristics (for example, motherhood, self-concept, risk attitude) make entrepreneurship more challenging for women. However, **it should be noted that most of these constraints are likely to be reversed through external actions, such as the case of public policies.**”
 - In December 2022, the European Economic and Social Committee published the position paper [Gender lens investing as a way to improve gender equality in the European Union](#). It underlines that creating a fertile ground for female entrepreneurship through financial and legislative instruments, such as gender budgeting, could create an inclusive financial ecosystem in the European Union, and that team diversity with a specific focus on women should be a criterion for receiving public funding.

To promote equal leadership opportunities, public social housing should meet the following design criteria:

- a) **Ample space** to accommodate a wide range of domestic and professional activities.
- b) **A quality internet network** to publicise and manage initiatives, projects and businesses linked to the neighbourhood, and enable teleworking.
- c) **A reliable and resilient electricity infrastructure.**
- d) **Effective acoustic insulation.**
- e) **Efficient thermal insulation** that prevents excessive energy consumption.

²⁷ OECD, [“Women Make up Most of the Health Sector Workers but They Are Under-Represented in High-Skilled Jobs Women Make up Most of the Health Sector Workers but They Are Under-Represented in High-Skilled Jobs.”](#)

²⁸ European Union External Action, [“Let's Hear It for Women in Science.”](#)

²⁹ See data on: <https://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=54671>.

³⁰ Startups & Places, [“Report on Women Entrepreneurs in Europe Report on Women Entrepreneurs in Europe 2020.”](#)

- f) Good indoor air quality.
- g) Mechanisms for security against intrusion and theft.

There is no possibility of leadership or entrepreneurship for women (or men) without basic infrastructure, basic services nearby, basic facilities and comfort in homes and workplaces, subjective and real security in public and semi-public spaces, and good networks to supply resources like electricity, water and internet.

3.3.2 Examples of best practices related to equal leadership and public social housing

- **France, Association [QUALITEL](#):** Created in 1974, this association brings together 175 partners, including professional organisations, consumer associations and French public authorities. In [a report published in 2021](#), QUALITEL looks at 1 000 dwellings representative of the French housing market and proposes areas for improvement to support women's leadership.
- **Spain, [cooperative Lacol](#):** This cooperative of architects, established in 2009 in Barcelona, specialises in building housing cooperatives with the participation of the future tenants, bringing their specific needs to light. This interaction has resulted in buildings with spaces and facilities that promote teleworking, for example.

4 Gender equality improvements based on Valencia's social housing strategy

In 2022, AUMSA comprehensively reviewed its housing strategy, reinforcing its commitment to integrating a gender perspective in social housing — brought to bear in around 300 new housing units. The strategy introduced:

- a) **specific criteria, recommendations and indicators for incorporating a gender perspective at multiple levels**, including in the master plan for the area, the neighbourhood, the building and the individual housing units;
- b) priorities for allocating housing units based on gender issues;
- c) considerations for the composition of technical teams and the selection of construction companies;
- d) guidelines for the **ongoing maintenance of buildings** with the goal of promoting gender equality.

AUMSA's 2022 strategy offers a methodological process with specific targets and checklists across four key areas of activity:

- architectural and urban design;
- organising and supervising architectural competitions;
- tendering work to construction companies;
- allocating housing units.

The checklists are to be used by those involved in the design, preparation, assessment and supervision of tender documents.

4.1 Self-assessment and monitoring checklists

4.1.1 About the checklists

The checklists in AUMSA's 2022 strategy are meant to be used for **assessing architectural design parameters, tendering architectural firms and construction companies, and allocating housing units**.

Each checklist consists of a series of guiding questions that reveal how well a gender perspective is incorporated at different phases of project development, and can be used for self-assessment.

A **Spanish version** of the checklist was developed for the purpose of the advisory service to AUMSA, that is available [here](#).

In addition, an **English version** of the checklist has been produced, being available [here](#).

Housing companies and promoters can use the completed checklists to monitor the degree of gender mainstreaming, evaluate the situation and arrive at policy improvements.

The proposed checklists are a tool for broad-based use that can be amended according to project-specific circumstances. The associated guiding questions and recommendations are drawn from examples of good practice and past experience of gender mainstreaming.

Four types of checklist have been created, for the following tasks:

1. **Assessment of architectural designs:** Lists of questions on design parameters of an apartment, building and/or neighbourhood, intended for supervisory technical teams and project development teams.
2. **Tendering of architectural firms:** Lists of questions on architectural or planning design competitions, intended for municipalities and housing companies running competitive tenders and for bidders.
3. **Tendering of construction companies:** Lists of questions on construction works, intended for municipalities and housing companies running competitive tenders and for bidders.
4. **Criteria for the allocation of housing units:** Lists of questions for defining criteria in the housing allocation phase.

The **associated guiding questions** are grouped into four categories for identifying **priority areas** for action:

- a) Questions on unequal **power relations**, to bring to light any unequal treatment of people in a housing context.
- b) Questions on **physical and emotional realities**, to reveal how a space cares for all occupants (or doesn't).
- c) Questions about **paid and unpaid work**, on whether this dimension is sufficiently embedded in a housing context.
- d) Questions on the contribution of the **environment** to residents' health and well-being.

4.1.2 Implementation of the checklists

The checklists are easy to use, and provide measurable outcomes. The questions, values, quantities and scales are standardised and assigned numerical values to clearly indicate the level of suitability for the action being evaluated, using an Excel spreadsheet.

The checklists were designed as a methodological approach rather than a fixed tool. If specific questions are not practical or applicable, they can be modified. However, there are some guidelines to remember when using the checklists.

- **At least 80% of the questions must be answered.**
- It is important that **mandatory questions are not left unanswered**. These are the most relevant questions for the assessment, and are marked with an asterisk (*).
- **Questions are answered with a score from 1 to 5**, with 1 indicating worst standard or least satisfaction, and 5 indicating best standard or most satisfaction.
- The score is indicated by placing an "X" in the relevant box.
- **The results are summarised as indicator tables** (by housing unit, building and neighbourhood), which are automatically aggregated once answers are provided for all questions in a section.³¹
- **The results fall in a range of 1 to 10**, which allows each section to be evaluated according to the specified scale.
 - If less than 80% of the questions are answered, the final assessment is **INCOMPLETE**.
 - If 80% or more of the questions are answered, the automatic evaluation is as follows:
 - below 5 is **UNSATISFACTORY**;
 - 5 to below 6.50 is **NEUTRAL**;
 - 6.50 to below 8.50 is **SATISFACTORY**;
 - 8.50 to 10 is **EXCELLENT**.

This methodological approach is designed to help professionals avoid arbitrary decisions. It is based on the premise of assuming good intentions throughout the process, and refrains from adopting a punitive approach when questions are answered incorrectly. Any disparities in the evaluation content facilitate observation, giving users a deeper understanding of the ongoing activities.

³¹ A secure, automatic Excel file was provided by the Universitat Politècnica de València to AUMSA to facilitate the assessment for all users for each of the checklists and indicator table.

Figure 8. Sample checklist assessing dwelling scale from AUMSA’s 2022 housing strategy

Checklist for DESIGN PARAMETERS related to DWELLING SCALE by PRIORITY AXES:

01 HOUSING: CHECKLIST		MARK THE SELECTED BOX WITH AN X				
		1	2	3	4	5
01.01 Examine power relations						
01.01.01	Is there a typological variety of dwellings? *					
01.01.02	Is there a diversity of housing sizes? *					
01.01.03	Are all the bedrooms the same size, or similar? *					
01.01.04	Do all homes allow access for people with disabilities/reduced mobility? (Visits, friends, relatives) *					
01.01.05	Rooms: are daily care work visible to the inhabitants of the house? (ex: open kitchen) *					
01.01.06	Does the dwelling have spaces where you can carry out work/study?					
01.01.07	Does the dwelling offer enough self-contained storage space for everyone who lives there? *					
01.01.08	Is the dwelling adaptable to the different stages of life? (Adaptability) *					
01.01.09	Does the dwelling accept uses other than conventional ones? (Flexibility)					
01.01.10	Does the dwelling allow its transformation without major works? (arrangement of wet rooms) *					
01.01.11	Is the main door of the dwelling sufficiently secure against intruders?					
01.01.12	TOTAL					
01.02 Consider bodies and emotions						
01.02.01	Is the indoor air quality adequate? Consider the construction materials used and their qualification. *					
01.02.02	Does it have enough insulation to prevent condensation inside? (mold free, indoor air quality)					
01.02.03	Is the house adequately insulated from exterior and interior noise? *					
01.02.04	Does the electrical wiring correctly avoid the positions of the headboards of the beds in the bedrooms?					
01.02.05	Are the bathrooms arranged with direct access, and not through the bedrooms? *					
01.02.06	Is the process of washing, hanging and storing clothes planned? *					
01.02.07	Is the food preparation process planned? *					
01.02.08	Is there a terrace that allows the cultivation of vegetables and edible plants, in pots?					
01.02.09	In dwellings that are not specified as accessible, is it possible to transform them to adapt them?					
01.02.10	Does the house offer good natural lighting conditions? *					
01.02.11	TOTAL					
01.03 Visibility of paid and unpaid work						
01.03.01	Does the dwelling offer enough space for possible paid work and/or study? *					
01.03.02	Does the dwelling offer a good broadband Internet connection? *					
01.03.03	Is there a visible and shared space for unpaid work?					
01.03.04	Do the facilities allow adaptability of use over time? *					
01.03.05	Is the dwelling designed for easy maintenance? *					
01.03.06	TOTAL					
01.04 Regeneration of the environment and collective health						
01.04.01	Do the design and installations of the dwelling contribute to the reduction of energy consumption?					
01.04.02	Does the dwelling have a space for recycling?					
01.04.03	Does the dwelling incorporate passive air conditioning mechanisms? *					
01.04.04	Does the dwelling ensure healthy comfort? *					
01.04.05	Does the dwelling have an outdoor space, with capacity for use? (small terrace) *					
01.04.06	TOTAL					

Figure 9. Table of indicators assessing gender mainstreaming in housing design

INDICATOR TABLES for DESIGN PARAMETERS

01 HOUSING: INDICATORS							
LINE	AMOUNT	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	%(1)	MAXIMUM(2)	RATIO(3)	BASE 10	EVALUATION(4)
01.01.12 TOTAL							
01.02.11 TOTAL							
01.03.06 TOTAL							
01.04.06 TOTAL							
TOTAL 01 HOUSING							
			(1) % RESPONSES MUST BE OVER 80%			(3) RATIO= QUANTITY/ MAXIMUM	
			(2) MAXIMUM= NO. ANSWERS x 5			(4) MUST BE NEUTRAL, AT LEAST	
02 BUILDING: INDICATORS							
LINE	AMOUNT	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	%(1)	MAXIMUM(2)	RATIO(3)	BASE 10	EVALUATION(4)
02.01.16 TOTAL							
02.02.15 TOTAL							
02.03.09 TOTAL							
02.04.10 TOTAL							
TOTAL 02 BUILDING							
			(1) % RESPONSES MUST BE OVER 80%			(3) RATIO= QUANTITY/ MAXIMUM	
			(2) MAXIMUM= NO. ANSWERS x 5			(4) MUST BE NEUTRAL, AT LEAST	
03 NEIGHBORHOOD: INDICATORS							
LINE	AMOUNT	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	%(1)	MAXIMUM(2)	RATIO(3)	BASE 10	EVALUATION(4)
03.01.14 TOTAL							
03.02.15 TOTAL							
03.03.07 TOTAL							
03.04.05 TOTAL							
TOTAL 03 NEIGHBORHOOD							
			(1) % RESPONSES MUST BE OVER 80%			(3) RATIO= QUANTITY/ MAXIMUM	
			(2) MAXIMUM= NO. ANSWERS x 5			(4) MUST BE NEUTRAL, AT LEAST	
TOTAL DESIGN INDICATORS							
	AMOUNT	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	%(1)	MAXIMUM(2)	RATIO(3)	BASE 10	EVALUATION(4)
TOTALS 01							
TOTALS 02							
TOTALS 03							
TOTAL, DESIGN							
			(1) % RESPONSES MUST BE OVER 80%			(3) RATIO= QUANTITY/ MAXIMUM	
			(2) MAXIMUM= NO. ANSWERS x 5			(4) MUST BE NEUTRAL, AT LEAST	

5 Key conclusions

Gender mainstreaming transforms the approach to housing from a generic solution (simply providing housing) **to one that considers the diverse needs and contexts of different people** (housing that offers tailorable solutions for residents). Based on the methodological approach presented in this report, we conclude that:

1. **It is crucial to conduct gender analysis and avoid gender-washing** to identify inequalities, propose strong remediation actions throughout project cycles, and allocate sufficient financial resources.
2. **Public social housing has a role in diminishing the gender pay gap**, a major cause of which is the difficulty in reconciling caregiving responsibilities with obligations in the workplace. **Having care facilities near the home** can facilitate daily tasks and support economic autonomy.

Addressing the causes of the gender pay gap is necessary to avoid **poverty**, the **loss of skilled professionals**, and the bias and imbalance caused by a **lack of professional women in decision-making positions**.

Connecting housing developments to mobility infrastructures is essential for facilitating women's access to paid work, as is providing housing solutions that enable women (and men) to perform part of their professional work from home.

3. The perspectives and needs of women can be appropriately addressed by **promoting women's leadership** and ensuring that **women have equal opportunities to participate in housing-related decision-making processes**.

Women must be involved in the design and implementation of housing policies and empowered to take on leadership roles within housing companies and community initiatives.

This can be supported through public tendering processes for architectural firms or construction companies that encourage the inclusion of women on their boards and in their workforce.

4. **Fostering collaboration to integrate diverse perspectives** can yield more comprehensive and effective housing solutions.

Community members, housing providers, policymakers, NGOs and other interested parties should be encouraged to participate in the planning, implementation and evaluation of housing developments to achieve gender mainstreaming in public social housing.

5. **A gender approach has the potential to unlock new investment opportunities and increase returns on investment**.

Applying a gender lens reveals the need for childcare facilities, long-term care for the elderly at home, co-working spaces for teleworking, spaces to start small economic initiatives, etc. All these activities may be feasible only where considered in housing design. The relevant dimensions of housing policy should be reconsidered.

6. **Equality and decent housing are fundamental human rights that are interconnected**. Gender mainstreaming is key in exposing and understanding this relationship. The aim of integrating a gender perspective in housing projects and policies is to create equitable and inclusive housing opportunities for all individuals.

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Annex 1. Strategy for mainstreaming gender in AUMSA's housing plan

A.1.1 Gender mainstreaming in design parameters

These design parameters address all scales of action: the neighbourhood and the city, the immediate surroundings of the building and the streets, the building itself, and the unit. While developers and design participants can certainly have a decisive impact on apartments and buildings, gender mainstreaming must be implemented at all these levels to achieve results effectively.

Most of AUMSA's new residential buildings are in the area of Camino de las Moreras, next to Nazaret. According to the Special Plan of Urban Quality Guidelines 2018 prepared by the Valencia city council, in functional area 10 (corresponding to Nazaret-Camino de las Moreras), most of the plan's indicators meet the objectives in AUMSA's 2022 strategy, and some even exceed them. The area has a good range of facilities, as well as sufficient public transport connections with the rest of the city (except for the cycle lane network). The area's weak point — below the minimum objective — is that housing will remain insufficient, even after the growth provided for in the plan. This is one example of an imbalance in the gender mainstreaming of a large-scale project.

Many of the design parameters that can embed a gender perspective at the various levels — from the neighbourhood to the unit — are incorporated in the criteria evaluated by the BREEAM method/certification.

These parameters affect materials, public transport and alternative transport, the home office, intermediate spaces in buildings and units, the conditions associated with energy savings that translate into multi-use spaces in the home, and use flexibility over time. Successful design of these variables allows not just gender mainstreaming, but also BREEAM certification at the same time.

A.1.2 Parameters of the neighbourhood, city and streets

Neighbourhoods and the adjoining city must be easily accessible to residents. Men more often enjoy a simple commute: to work and back. Women more often travel more complex and varied routes, perhaps with multiple trips a day on public transport and on foot: shuttling children to and from school, getting groceries, taking care of older family members, making trips to doctors, etc.

Key parameters

- **A transport network** that provides access to services and places beyond the neighbourhood, with appropriate proximity. For example, bus stops should be no more than 300 metres apart.
- **A comprehensive network of cycle lanes and personal mobility vehicles**, like electric scooters.
- **A network of streets that meets standards of safety, lighting, comfort and greenery**, pleasant for pedestrians and with reasonable distances. The maximum journey time is normally set at ten minutes for people with no mobility difficulties.
- **Full accessibility for people with disabilities.**
- **Good diversity, mix and distribution of facilities and services.**
- Shops and resources to **encourage public life in neighbourhood.**
- **Public spaces and vegetation.**

A.1.3 Parameters of residential buildings

Residential buildings should expressly accommodate some of the daily tasks of residents, especially those related to caregiving. They should include functional spaces to meet specific and diverse needs, and comfortable common spaces.

Outdoor spaces should contain areas encouraging children to play and elderly residents to socialise, and should link the building to the street and neighbourhood. Properly sheltered and shaded, they will also offer comfortable conditions that align with climate and energy needs.

Key parameters

- **Diversity of residents.** Buildings should not be intended for just one category of resident. Two or more categories permit interpersonal support between residents for different life needs.
- As a corollary, **universal accessibility** for people at different stages of life.
- **Apartments for families with children should be close to ground level** (below floor 5) so that play areas can be easily monitored.
- **Access areas (courtyards, entrance halls, stairwells) must be safe.** There should be no blind corners, so that users — particularly women — have a clear view of the staircase, lift and walkway to their front doors.
- **Parking spaces and storage areas for bicycles, scooters, prams, etc.,** preferably separate from the apartments. A communal space for laundry may also be appropriate.
- **Workspace in the building, like a shared home office, could be highly beneficial.** This could be small separate office spaces in one part of the complex, or a collaborative workspace like a co-working space. This is a way of directly improving the work and training access and conditions of residents — especially women, who are more often responsible for household tasks in the immediate surroundings of the home.
- **Outdoor green spaces linked to the building,** where children can play and residents can gather.
- **Internal community spaces, with good lighting and ventilation,** for a variety of collective uses.
- **An accessible roof** for collective activities.

A.1.4 Housing parameters

Apartment design should de-hierarchise rooms and make them adaptable over time. Rooms should have similar dimensions and be suitable for multiple uses to meet residents' changing life needs.

Reducing energy consumption is key, but the energy needed for environmental space conditioning of buildings remains substantial, even in well-designed complexes. To find alternative means of optimising energy use, therefore, more research is needed into how buildings are used, and occupant expectations of comfort in building environments. A potential relatively low-energy, high-comfort design option is the use of transition spaces like entrance foyers, circulation zones, lobbies, stairways and atria.

Apartment layout should allow domestic and care tasks to be shared. Apartments should be on a single level to make them accessible to everyone, without hierarchisation or isolation of spaces.

Key parameters

- **Single-storey apartment design** (no two- or three-storey apartments).
- **De-hierarchisation of spaces.** For example, bathrooms should be located in the centre so that all other rooms can have windows.
- **Rooms similar in size and geometry, with similar access to the exterior.** It is recommended to use a modular scheme that allows modules to be added if different numbers of rooms are needed for different dwellings.
- **Connecting passageways between rooms wide enough to provide continuity** (at least 1.6 metres wide and with a standard floor-to-ceiling height), and that can be opened up if the user needs to adjust the apartment layout.
- **Significantly smaller rooms (if any) placed only as extensions to other rooms, with a direct passageway** (for example, a sliding door).
- **An open kitchen,** or one that can be opened or closed, for example with a sliding door. It should be separate from the other common space (like the living room) to give users multiple room options, but should not isolate the person cooking from the dining space.
- **No en suite bathrooms for specific bedrooms,** so that all bathrooms can be used by all occupants. Bathrooms should be equivalent, and not classified as main or secondary.
- **Separation between toilets and bathing facilities** to permit use by multiple occupants simultaneously.
- **Wardrobes placed outside of bedrooms** to increase flexibility of room usage.
- Where possible, **include transition spaces,** such as entrance foyers, circulation zones, lobbies, stairways and atria. These can both improve a building's climatic conditions and have uses complementary to the strict interiors (children's play, pets, green areas, etc.).

A.1.5 Gender mainstreaming in housing allocation parameters

AUMSA's housing is allocated strictly in order of a list of applicants who meet the requirements in the Register of Applicants for Housing. Women survivors of gender-based violence who meet the requirements are given priority, with immediate allocation.

While this process is already somewhat gender sensitive, priority should also be given to single-parent families with young children headed by women.

A.1.6 Gender mainstreaming in employability parameters

Gender mainstreaming can directly improve women's employability by facilitating the home-work-care triangle, among other benefits. Although it is not yet possible to quantify its direct economic benefits for residents in public housing architecture and urban planning, there are clear reasons to believe that the expected improvement in employability outweighs the investment.

Key parameters

1. **Equal representation on teams that compete draft building projects** (over 40% women). This can be ensured in the objective criteria of the competition decision.
2. **Quotas for women on the staff of construction companies bidding to build AUMSA Housing Plan projects.** As a first step, women must constitute at least 20% of the field and/or technical staff, not including administrative staff.
3. **Quotas for women on the staff of companies contracting with AUMSA to maintain buildings in the AUMSA Housing Plan.** As a first step, women must constitute at least 20% of the field and/or technical staff, not including administrative staff.

Annex 2. Gender mainstreaming in the design features of the Moreras_21 building

The Moreras_21 building was a pilot project used for the research phase of this report. It was designed by AUMSA's technical staff and supervised by UPV. This annex is an overview of the results of this pilot project.

A.2.1 Improvements in AUMSA's results related to gender equality

AUMSA has added a range of inclusion-oriented requirements from tendering companies, maximising the integration of inclusive design principles wherever possible.

The **Moreras_21 project** was selected to assess the feasibility of using the proposed checklist, specifically for evaluating design elements.³² It also served as a valuable case study for assessing the extent to which a gender approach was integrated into design decisions, and the effectiveness of incorporating gender mainstreaming in designs based on the suggested guiding questions for the dwellings, the building and the surrounding environment. The results of the Moreras_21 project were included in AUMSA's 2022 strategy.

The Moreras_21 building follows distinct urban planning principles. Located in the Camino de Moreras area of Valencia, it contains 90 dwellings with diverse layouts and features. The building has 11 floors, partially encircles a prominent roundabout and features an open block courtyard on the northwest side. Beneath this courtyard space are two basement levels for parking.

After applying the checklist assessing the architectural designs, various recommendations were made for the building layout and the design of the individual housing units.

1. Building layout

The building was meant to be intergenerational, with housing units for both younger and older individuals. Therefore, the following recommendations were made:

- **Add more housing units for the elderly and people with disabilities than initially planned.** The final version of the project included 15 flats for the elderly and four accessible dwellings.
- **Change the distribution of dwellings, with the two lower floors for the elderly.**
- **Equip the building with common and accessible areas**, such as a gym, a social space and a repair shop area.
 - **Transform the roof for collective use**, with an urban vegetable garden and a common area for hanging clothes.
 - **Transform the hallways into visible spaces** to access the semi-private courtyard at the back.
 - Use natural light in designing the landscaping at the rear of the building.

2. Unit design

- **Reduce hierarchical spaces**, making rooms approximately the same size and making bathrooms accessible from common spaces.
- **Ensure cross-ventilation.**
- **Open kitchens to the common spaces**, with the option of closing them if needed.
- **Include sliding doors in the smaller flats between the bedroom and the living/dining room**, making the potential use of space more flexible.
 - **Add small balconies to the design**, providing some private outdoor space in all the housing units.

A.2.2. Moreras_21 building designs

The proposed improvements can be seen in the following images provided by AUMSA technical staff.

³² The criteria and checklists for the tendering processes of architectural teams and construction companies were checked in the tender documents for the building at Moreras 10 in Valencia City; the housing allocation criteria have been proposed, but were not checked by means of a test case.



■ Affordable housing
 ■ Housing for the elderly
 ■ Inner street
 ■ Communal spaces

Moreras_21 building (Valencia)

FIRST FLOOR

- 7 flats for the elderly
- 2 accessible apartments
- Community room
- Gymnasium
- Workshops



■ Affordable housing
 ■ Housing for the elderly
 ■ Inner street
 ■ Communal spaces

Moreras_21 building (Valencia)

SECOND FLOOR

- 8 flats for the elderly
- 2 accessible apartments
- Community room
- Care space
- Workshops



- Affordable housing
- Housing for the elderly
- Inner street
- Communal spaces

Moreras_21 building (Valencia)

3-8 FLOORS

- 8 flats for rent
 - 6 two-bedroom flats
 - 2 three-bedroom flats



- Affordable housing
- Housing for the elderly
- Inner street
- Communal spaces

Moreras_21 building (Valencia)

9-10 FLOORS

- 8 flats for rent
 - 5 two-bedroom flats
 - 2 three-bedroom flats
 - 1 one-bedroom flat



Moreras_21 building (Valencia)

ROOF-TERRACE FLOOR

- Community orchards for auto-production
- Improvement of thermal efficiency
- Rainwater absorption
- Adiabatic humidification



Promoting gender equality in public social housing



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