

URBAN ISSUES

a) Urban Development and Equality between Women and Men: The Case of Market Rehabilitation

1. Key gender issues relevant to market projects

In general, **women constitute the majority of vendors of « poor products »** with low added value, particularly foodstuffs. They often work in the shabbiest part of the market which is least well-equipped, with poor hygiene and sanitation. Often, they have no secure tenure/occupation rights.

Women and men sell different products, they have different occupation rights, they work in different parts of the markets and women tend to have less financial means than men. Therefore, they use different selling structures, and their rehabilitation needs differ (women often work on simple tables – or on the floor – whereas vendors of “rich products” - the majority of which are men - have “boutiques”).

Market management committees may include vendors and/or other partners (city and local representatives) but the transparency of these structures is often problematic. First, they tend to represent affluent and influential business people. Second, women are systematically under-represented, if not excluded, meaning that their needs and interests are not represented.

Proportionally, street vendors and vendors of « poor products » pay more taxes than « rich businesses » because they are subjected to bullying and fraud by tax collectors. Furthermore, female vendors working part-time pay as much as those who work full-time on the market.

Women often have significant transport problems, which get worse when retail markets are moved far from wholesale markets. This usually happens during rehabilitation efforts.

Many women look after their young children whilst working on the market, and have no resort to structures such as child-care to help them. Many are victims of sexual/moral harassment.

2. Reflecting women's and men's needs when drawing up the rehabilitation project

The project should be designed in such a way that it contributes to fighting poverty and reducing inequalities between women and men. It should not focus only on economic and financial viability.

The project should include socio-economic objectives explicitly targeting the improvement of working conditions of all categories of vendors, the protection of their activity on the renovated market and their equitable participation in its management. Alongside institutional beneficiaries (local authorities), female and male vendors should also be direct beneficiaries.

All measures concerning infrastructure and institutional arrangements should guarantee that the most vulnerable vendors - the majority of which are women - can stay on the market after its rehabilitation.

Human, financial and technical resources should allow for socio-economic follow-up of the vendors during project implementation (planning and completion). These resources should aim to strengthen equal access for women and men to dialogue at three levels: during planning and conception, during construction/renovation and after vendors return to the markets.

It is legitimate that vendors should want to know the nature and content of the project and the conditions – financial/technical – of their return to the market. A system assuring information and consultation with both female and male vendors must be maintained throughout the project, for this is likely to increase its relevance and efficiency. In addition, conflict is less likely to arise when an active and equitable social dialogue is established between all project partners.

An impact assessment should be carried out to identify the potential socio economic effects/outcomes of the displacement of vendors, to ensure that their vulnerability is not increased and that they are not excluded from the market as a result of the project. It should consider the effects on all categories of vendors of the changes brought about by the project: tariffs, supra/infrastructures, management, the economic role of the market in the city's economic network.

An evaluation of the project's final impact on institutional beneficiaries as well as male/female vendors should be budgeted and carried out 2 to 3 years after rehabilitation is complete.

3. Integrating gender in the feasibility study

The commercial and urban diagnoses should identify and analyse:

All categories of tradespeople, including those operating on the informal fringes of the market and adjacent streets: how do these relate to the official market? Do they operate on different product lines, with different wholesale/retail practices? Do they belong to a different category of vendors?

All categories of vendors by gender, including the most vulnerable ones: their status, their retail methods - e.g. do they sell on the floor or a table, are they daily/occasional workers, informal or registered, mobile or sedentary, etc.).

The socio-economic characteristics of women and men in different categories: their age, civil status, number of dependant children, education level, years on the market, sources of revenue, proportion of household income per activity, etc.

The work-related **constraints** met by female and male vendors within these different categories, and the different **means** they use to run their business in the market (e.g. storage, transport, hygiene, credit, training etc.).

Constraints and needs of women/men related to social issues in the market-place: do they suffer from violence/harassment, theft, a lack of information on rights, health issues, etc.)?

The financial diagnosis should identify and analyse:

The economic conditions (running costs and turnover) of the different categories of businesses (by gender and product), in particular the most vulnerable/poor ones. This includes fixed costs and taxes (official and non-official), costs of services (municipal and/or private). The objective is to determine the real profit margins of businesses, particular the poor ones, and their capacity to absorb economic shocks and changes such as those likely to result from a rehabilitation project.

The institutional diagnosis should identify and analyse:

The **internal organization** of markets: ratio of female/male, poor/rich businesses in committees, collective initiatives of self-management run by female and/or male vendors (toilet and water management, cleaning, etc.) and those run by private operators to compensate for the lack of municipal services. Mobilization capacity of the vendors and/or committees and potential for their empowerment.

The **relationships and/or differences in opinion – including conflicts** – between the Committees and the vendors (female and male), between different categories of businesses, between the committees and local authorities, between donors and local partners, etc.

Local organizations (NGOs, government bodies) either actively working on the market and/or which can be of potential assistance to the project in the future, bringing with it relevant skills in social dialogue, gender awareness, mediation/conflict resolution, micro credit, IEC, training, etc.).

The willingness and **capacity of local partners to integrate socio-economic issues in planning** (often, this means the municipality), e.g. to conduct gender-aware census and information campaigns, to define gender-aware criteria for the allocation of places on the market, to train female and male vendors in market management, etc.

The diagnosis of equipment and services should identify and analyse :

Differences in infrastructure needs (tables, stalls, etc.) between businesses dealing with “rich products” and those dealing with poor/low added value products (which concerns mainly women). **Differences in storage needs** (temporary, permanent, tailor-made, etc.) for different types of products, including those sold by highly vulnerable women.

The priorities/preferences and ideas of women and men concerning public equipment and services (toilets, water, cleaning, rubbish, etc.) and their **social needs**, e.g. personal and business security, health of vendors and clients (particularly on large markets), childcare, training/information, credit, etc.

The aim of integrating gender in the feasibility study is not to produce « interesting » sociological information! A feasibility study should inform the project of the different needs and constraints faced by women as well as men, particularly in poorer categories. The project should meet their needs too, not only those of the most influential and affluent vendors – often men. The study must be able to assess the ability to pay of poor businesses – run by women and men – in order to propose a tariff system they can afford, that does not exclude them from the market and, consequently does not increase poverty.

Gender information on all aspects of the feasibility should influence the project formulation – e.g. what will be the capacity/size of the market? Will it integrate street vendors and informal vendors? What type of infra/supra structures will be built and who will benefit from them? What services and tariffs will be implemented, etc.?

The feasibility study should also identify the training/empowerment needs of female as well as male vendors, and the need of local partners in terms of gender and social mobilization.

4. Implementation - a check list

How does the project associate female and male vendors to the **dialogue to define the project** and its management?

What resources are used to **reinforce the equitable participation and capacity of women and men** to manage the project during its implementation, and then manage the market after its rehabilitation?

What strategies are implemented to ensure a real **representativity of vendors** (female as well as male) in the project (including different sectors, product categories, informal/formal markets, etc.)?

What measures/strategies are implemented to achieve the project's **socio-economic objectives** – training/information, micro credit, etc.? – What can women and men expect as a result?

What infrastructures are included to **meet social needs** of vendors (training room, health and childcare centre, etc.)?

What measures/strategies are implemented to **reinforce the capacity of local partners** to integrate gender in project planning, implementation and monitoring and to address gender issues (e.g. violence against women, childcare, female and male poverty)?

5. Three key questions for social impact monitoring

What are the effects on different categories of female/male vendors of their displacement, their settlement on the temporary market site, conditions to return to the market?

To what extent do socio-economic measures soften the negative effects of the rehabilitation work on different categories of businesses, including those operated by the most vulnerable women and men?

To what extent are socio-economic objectives in the fight against poverty, gender equity and empowerment of female and male vendors, as well as local authorities, implemented and achieved during the implementation of the project?