

Mainstreaming gender in quality infrastructure

W.P.6 Report to Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (SCTCS)
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**Standards are the basis of nearly
all technical regulations**

Why Gender Responsive Standards?



**Aren't standards
neutral ?**





The Standard Person... Default Male

The standard person or reference person is a theoretical model individual which has perfectly “normal” characteristics.

This model is used in radiation safety.

Reference man is defined as being:

- Between 20-30 years of age
- Weighing 70 Kgs
- 180 cm in height
- Lives in a climate with an average temperature of from 10 to 20 degrees Celsius
- He is a Caucasian and is a Western European or North American in habitat or custom

Standards



Crash Test Dummies

Female drivers and right front passengers are approximately

17 percent more likely
to be killed

in a car crash than a male occupant of the same age.

Any seatbelt-wearing female vehicle occupant has

73 percent greater odds of being
seriously injured

in a frontal car crash than the odds of a seatbelt-wearing male occupant being injured in the same kind and severity of crash.

CPR

Men's odds of survival is 23% higher than women when resuscitation is in public... because training is on male models



Equipment designed for men

2011: 35 years after admitting women
the US Military designs uniforms
allowing for hips & breasts



Surgical Equipment / Female Surgeons

Gloves, gowns, bed heights, staplers...

“Not having equipment fit might sound like small inconvenience but it communicates that you don’t belong, and is costing us talent.”



PPE Personal Protective Equipment

Gloves, safety glasses, protective shoes, earplugs or muffs, hard hats, respirators, coveralls, vests, full bodysuits...

*Poor fit respiratory protection
→ serious health effects*

*Improperly conformed fall-arrest
harness workers → risk suspension
trauma...*



Default Office Thermostat

Cognition & Test Scores

Women's scores on math tests increased by 27% when the temperature rose

from below 70 degrees Fahrenheit to above 80 degrees.




Racial Disparities in Pulse Oximeter Device Inaccuracy

Oxygen saturation as measured by pulse oximetry

Differentially less accurate for people with darker skin pigmentation

Potentially affect the course of COVID-19 treatment






Gender-responsive standards improve the desired outcome

The COVID 19 pandemic saw a proliferation of use of **personal protective equipment** and clothing such as face masks in order to stop the spread of the outbreak. The main objective is **health safety**.

The standards for face masks were therefore aiming to protect the health and safety of those who wear the masks – however, the **initial standards were developed** with a Caucasian man aged 25-30 as the model.

This left women, who are over-represented in the healthcare industry at greater risk.

The technical committees responsible for this standard saw this problem and resolved it, ensuring that the standard this product is based upon took into account the anthropometric needs of women. The result is an **improved health safety**.



Gender-responsive standards improve the desired outcome

Chemicals in daily household products are often based upon standards that were tested against a man's biology

even if women are more often performing household maintenance.

The standards that these products are based upon are intended to ensure that there are no adverse side effects for the user and that consumers purchase products with the confidence that these have been cleared for safety.

By ensuring that the testing and resulting standards take into consideration a woman's biology, the resulting standard again improve the desired outcome.



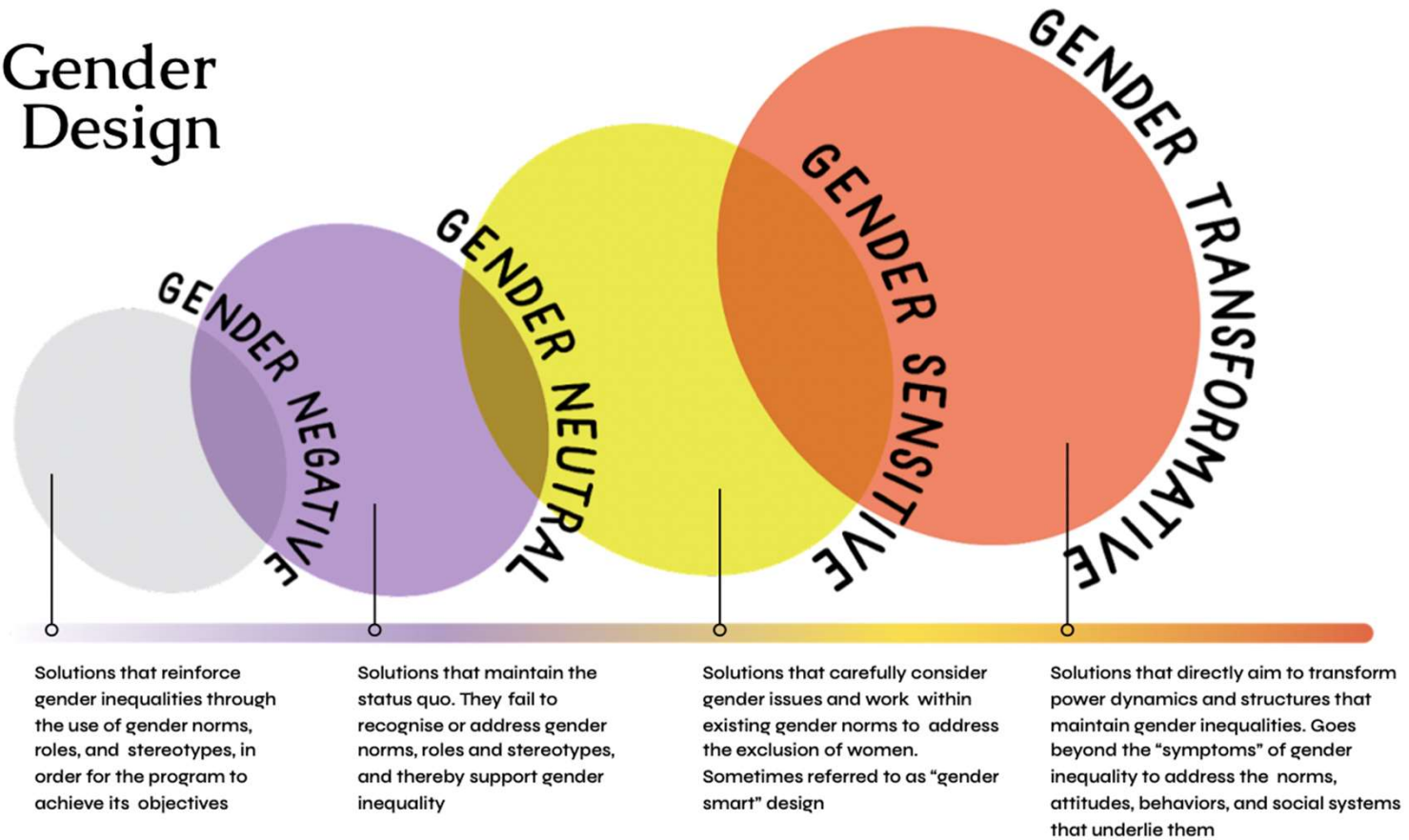
Gender Responsive

A state of robust
recognition & reaction
to gender inequality

In implementing
activities, policies &
programmes

Continuum for Gender Transformative Design

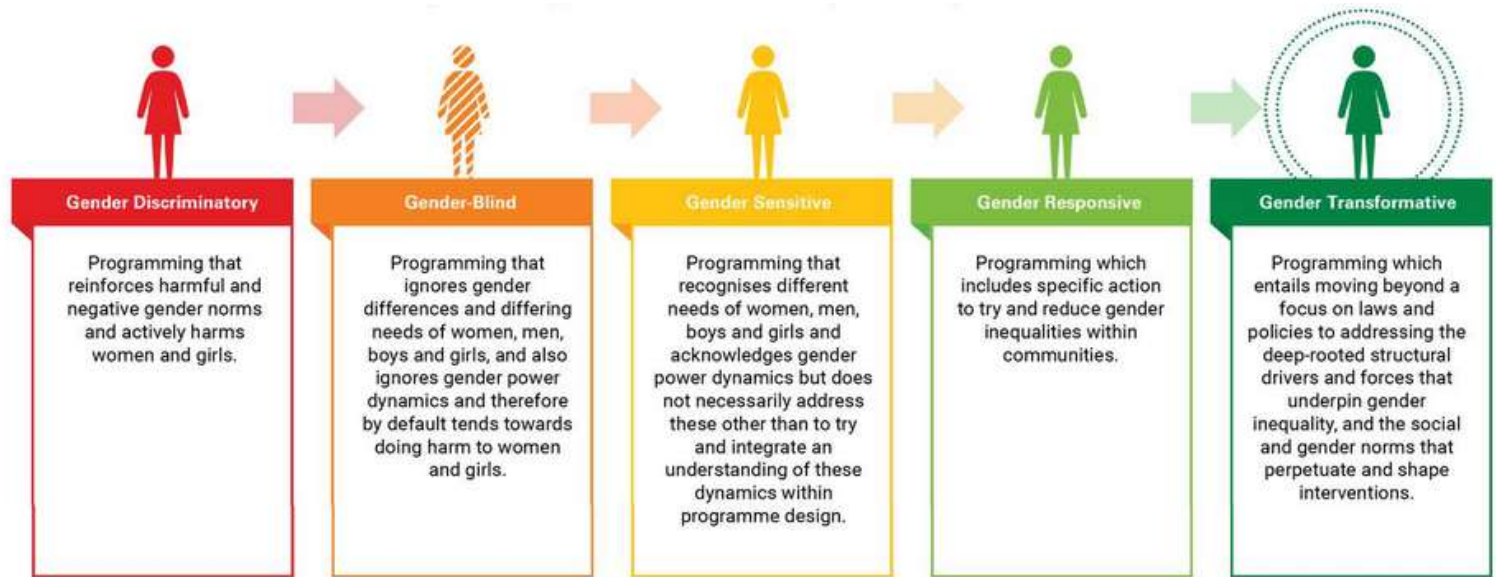
This framework is critical to help teams build and assess gender transformative solutions. It's a method that helps determine where concepts and prototypes sit on a continuum, from Gender Negative to Gender Transformative. By holding our early ideas and prototypes up to this continuum at key milestones in the challenge process, teams can spot opportunities to strive for more gender transformative solutions.



Note: This spectrum should also include "Gender Responsive" in between "Sensitive & Transformative."

Continuum for Gender Transformative Design

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Why should government bodies want

gender-responsive
standards?

Equal protection and opportunities for all its citizens.

Gender-responsive standards (and gender responsive technical regulations) contribute to gender equality and protecting women and girls to the same level as men and boys.



Why should technical committees want gender-responsive standards?

The **main objective** of the technical committee should be **to create standards that will produce the same result all the time** (i.e. the product, process, system or service will consistently be the same and function the same way for all consumers).

If the results are not the same for men and women, then the standard is not working properly, and the credibility of the technical committee is diminished.

Useful to have **gender experts**



Gender-responsive standards are important

for current global
challenges and their
cross cutting themes

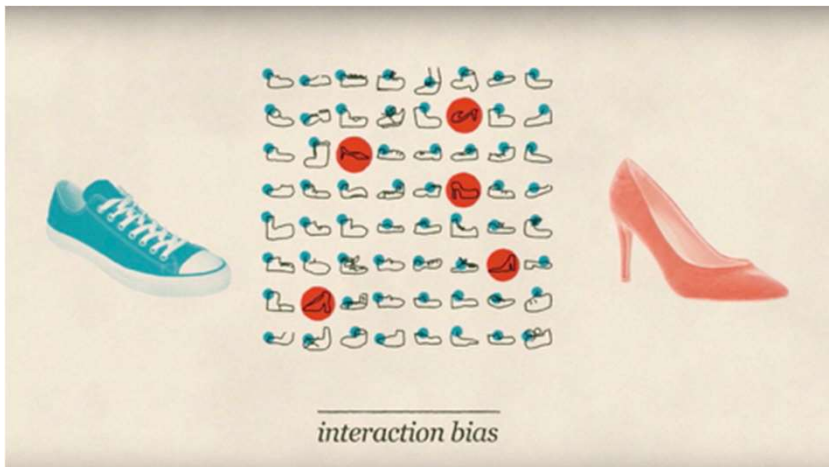
for environmental, social and
governance (ESG) concerns which
are becoming more urgent than
ever.

Digital Standards

Gender concerns to consider in digital standards



Interaction Bias

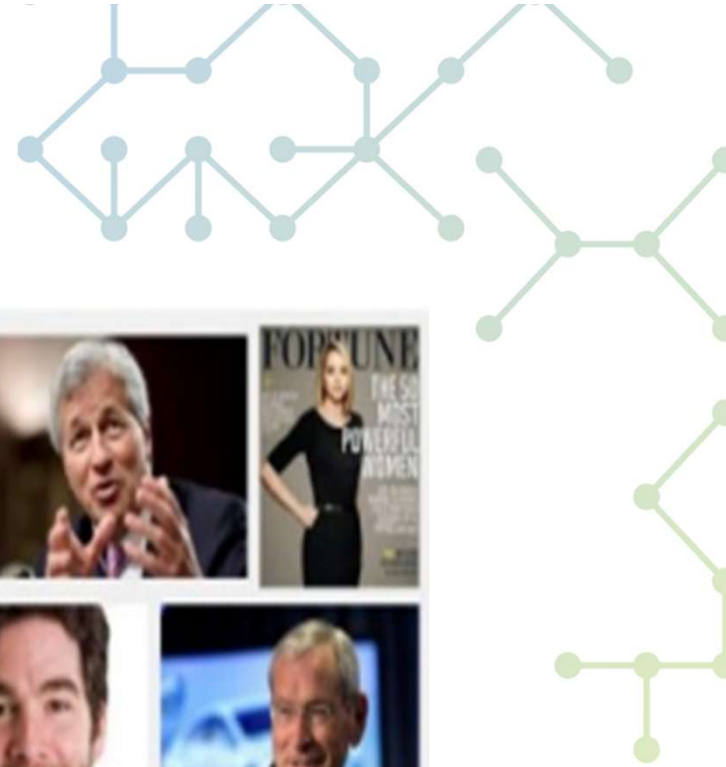


Google asked users to draw a shoe.

Users drew a man's shoe,

so the system didn't know
that high heels were also shoes.

Search = 11% **Ground Truth = 27%**



Percentage of women in top 100 Google image search results for CEO: 11%
Percentage of U.S. CEOs who are women: 27%

Hard coding stereotypes

Facebook/Meta Ad Delivery

31 Oct 2019 – Facebook Inc was sued in a proposed class action accusing it of discriminating against older and female users by withholding advertising for financial services such as bank accounts, insurance, investments and loans

09 Apr 2021 – An audit by researchers at the University of Southern California found Facebook's ad delivery system is biased against women ? had the algorithm had figured out each job's current demographic when it targeted the ads

15 Jun 2023 – Nonprofit Global Witness shares new research showing the algorithm distributing job ads is based on gender stereotypes – car mechanics – preschool teachers



Proxies

Apple Goldman
Sachs Credit Card





Environmental Standards

Addressing challenges
in holistic manner

“climate change is a ‘threat multiplier,’

which escalates social, political and economic tensions in fragile and conflict-affected settings.

When disaster strikes, **women are less likely to survive** and more likely to be injured due to long standing gender inequalities that have created **disparities in information, mobility, decision-making and access to resources and training.** UN Women



Circular economy Standards

Products for **re-use or recycling** are often shipped to countries with developing economies or **least developed economies**.

The **processing** of these materials is often **performed by women and children**, potentially exposing them to health hazards.

The **standards** about such crossborder re-use or recycling could potentially affect women differently from men.

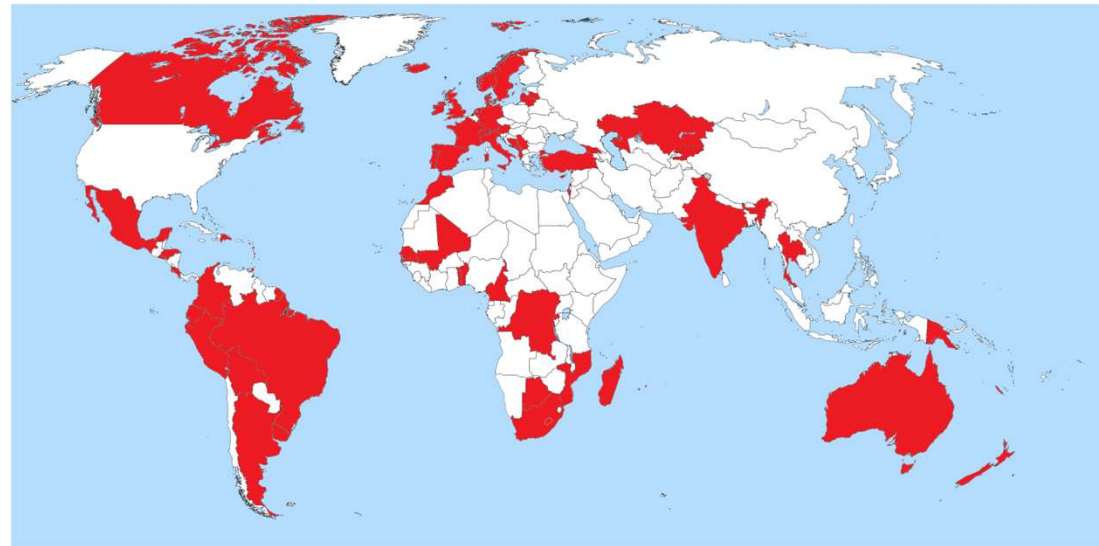


UNECE WP.6

**Leading the way in
Gender Responsive
Standards**

UNECE WP.6 & Gender Responsive Standards

- **UNECE Recommendation U on Gender-Responsive Standards**
- **Declaration on Gender Responsive Standards and Standards Development**



UNECE WP.6 & Gender Responsive Standards

- UNECE Guidelines on Developing Gender Responsive Standards
- e-learning training

