



GENDER INCLUSIVE CITIES PROGRAMME ROSARIO, ARGENTINA

In articulation with the Regional Programme “Cities without Violence against Women, Safe Cities for All”
CISCSA – Coordination of the Latin America Women and Habitat Network – UNIFEM

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Public Policies Review

Result 1.2: Review of policies, tools, and strategies to evaluate their potential as facilitators of greater equality and inclusion.

SELECTED POLICY: EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLANS FOR MEN AND WOMEN IN ROSARIO, ARGENTINA.

Presentation

The present document is part of the component **Public Policy Review** whose objective is realising an analysis of the pertinent strategies, tools, and policies that allows for understanding what actions currently contribute to inclusion and equality for women and girls in cities. In the analysis of these experiences, we try to emphasise women’s “**right to the city**” through the identification of facilitative practices that can be transmitted to women’s groups, policy makers, and decision makers. The goal of this product is to eliminate the waste of resources in practices that act as inhibitors to this right. Additionally, this result aims at reducing the common practice of “reinventing the wheel” through clarification of the best and most effective experiences that are already available and ready to allow women and girls to participate in cities exercise their rights.

It’s purpose is to discover:

- What key **policies and programmes** exist to promote women’s safety and inclusion in cities – government initiatives and other.
- What makes them **effective** or not.
- What large **gaps** exist.
- What **opportunities** are present.

To obtain the result of this component, firstly, an analytic framework was designed that allowed for a policy review and impact evaluation. To achieve this, work and evaluations of EOPs implemented in other cities were reviewed. Secondly, documents of policies produced by the local administration in the selected policy were critically reviewed. Later, interviews were realised with the protagonists and decision makers of

this policy. With these inputs, a preliminary report was prepared that was validated in a workshop with the participation of different actors. This document is the result of this process.

Selection of the policy under analysis

The policy selected in Rosario, Argentina is the **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND TREATMENT PLAN FOR MEN AND WOMEN 2005/2009** (EOP).

The first criteria defined for its selection were:

Impact: In thinking and prioritising in terms of impact, different aspects are considered: First, that the causal explanation of the problematic refers to a multiplicity of interconnected factors, and that these causes have a differential weight and value for the problem. Second, each of these causes has the possibility of impacting and synergising with another factor or other factors identified that influence the problem. That is, the impact of a cause and, as such, an alternative for resolution, will have more impact because it can affect the problem more significantly and synergise more with other causal factors.

Institutionality: The initiatives or alternatives considered are perceived as valid by the actors that execute them as well as by the rest of the actors that, in some way, even passively, are involved, or to whom the activities are directed. Institutionality is strongly linked to governability in that it defines spheres of action and incumbencies.

Governability: Governability of the actions implemented refers, in this case, to a degree of representativity in a given area, to the effective possibility of being responsible for commitments made, incumbency in the issues at play as strategic lines chosen, pertinence to act one way or another with suitability and legitimacy. So, there must be a possibility of holding power (or influencing it) over an issue and acting on it in effective terms. Legal norms, social legitimacy, selection of issues based on responsibility, material, human, and technical resources available, and political clout are elements that make up governability. Among other things, in strategic terms, governability provides provisions and protection in the face of imponderables typical of dynamic scenarios and modifiable situations.

The Equal Opportunities Plan is the most important policy developed by the municipality of Rosario to achieve gender equity. While it has not yet achieved the desired results, and it presents some management deficits, overcoming these difficulties will positively impact the construction of safer cities for women. Its formulation and implementation present the following characteristics:

- Intervention strategies that combine positive actions for women with gender mainstreaming.
- Interventions directed at women's strategic interests, not only their basic needs.
- Transformative gender policies: their intent is to act upon the causes that create inequalities between men and women.
- Incorporates innovative policies
- In the axis "Use of Public Space" it comes out of a vision of a safer city for women.
- It begins with a decision at the highest level of the municipal executive and is institutionalised through an ordinance of the City Council.
- It ensures women's participation.

ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK: WHAT ARE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLANS (EOP)?

Equal Opportunity Plans (EOP) are, in some cases, a starting point, and in other cases a new phase in an advanced and consolidated process. An EOP can be considered as a framework agreement that proposes a process of creating and implementing public policies, that includes all entities of formulation and implementation of government actions. It is a proposal that transcends the specific competencies of gender units, although responsibility rests on these units or on ad hoc organisms. The EOP includes specific actions directed at the society and positive actions directed at women, and actions meant to impact the structure and reasonableness of public administration.

EOPs at the level of municipal governments are instruments directed at creating public policies that promote egalitarian democracy and allow women to effectively be the targets and co-managers of policies to transform the structural and cultural conditions at the base of discrimination. They are strategic tools that plan and systematise a government's gender policies, aiming to achieve an effectively democratic process for women in the elaboration and management of these policies.

The existence of a consolidated municipal work group that advances gender issues and the existence of a critical mass of projects and programmes aimed at women guarantee a minimum support network for the steps necessary for elaborating an EOP. At the same time, the existence of an organised women's movement with capacity in political consensus is a vital element in the elaboration and implementation of the EOP.

For the formulation and implementation of an EOP, the following is necessary:

- A diagnosis of gender inequalities by area,
- The formation of a collective to be the driving force behind the plan,
- An inventory of social actors,
- The formation of working groups for each area, in order to make a deeper analysis of inequalities and plan lines of action or intervention,
- Formulation of specific measures to confront inequities (affirmative action measures for women),
- Design of execution, follow-up, and evaluation mechanisms, indicating the public and private actors who are responsible,
- The creation of new regulations in the local sphere, expressed in declarations, agreements, conventions, laws, and municipal ordinances.

Equal Opportunity Plans are one of the public policy instruments for building citizenship and creating agreements on gender in public spaces, aimed at affecting the various dimensions of exclusion present in society's structural and cultural processes. As a symbolic discourse advance, they signify a change in focus from necessities to rights. Under these premises, an EOP can become an effective instrument to make the demands of the women's movement a reality and citizen participation a mechanism that involves men and women in democratic development.

In principle, there is no single model. These plans begin with different conceptions of equal opportunity and privilege different mechanisms and spheres of action.

Equal gender opportunity is a concept that has been used as an umbrella concept in the last two decades. The most common meaning is that men and women should have the same possibilities and formal rights and receive equal benefits in education, labour, and economic plans. However, the concept is ambiguous:

- Does it mean the same opportunities in access to goods and services, in treatment, in results, or in all of these dimensions?
- Is it about providing equal opportunities to each individual subject or to each social group?
- Does it imply that women should incorporate themselves in and appropriate traditionally masculine resources as a way of overcoming their marginalisation? Or does it also propose goals and strategies for breaking down masculine stereotypes?

The types of policies that these plans and programmes are based on are also divergent in various aspects:

- Some propose actions aimed exclusively at women and other include men as well as women.
- They may focus on certain groups or include the entire female population.
- They may be adaptive to or transformative of existing structures, practices, and norms.
- Some treat women as beneficiaries and others as active participants in planning and implementation, and even in monitoring and evaluation.
- They may deal exclusively with the public sphere or may impact the distribution of labour in the domestic sphere.
- They may depend on a specific administrative entity or may be present in different government sectors.
- They may assign a significant role to civil society organisations or establish a partial and formal relation with them.

THE MUNICIPALITY OF ROSARIO A FAVOURABLE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY

Increasingly, Latin America municipalities have mechanisms for the advancement of women as well as plans for equal opportunities and rights for men and women. While these experiences, quantitatively, still make up a relatively small percentage of the 16,000 total municipalities in the region, the most innovative experiences regarding how to guarantee women's rights and living conditions are unfolding in local arenas.

In Argentina, beginning in the first half of the nineties, expressions of social discontent grew exponentially, leading to the social explosions of December 2001. A singular characteristic of this phase is the emergence of new spaces of political and citizen participation where a broad spectrum of actors visibilised great disconformity with traditional forms of political and social representation.

The United Nations Development Programme, in 2007, recognised Rosario for its best practices in governability and local development. One of the practices highlighted by the UNDP was the **Equal Opportunity Plan for Men and Women**.

The Equal Opportunities Plan has the possibility of being formulated and implemented because Rosario's political-institutional context has permitted it. Different situations have come together to create this window of opportunity:

¹ **Local Gender Policies from the Point of View of State Capacities**. by Ana Laura Rodríguez Gusta, Ph.D. Lecturer-Researcher, CEdET, School of Politics and Government (UNSAM).

1. One of the key political instruments has been the construction of a **Strategic Local Plan** in which a vision of the city and priorities for public-private investment have been defined through consensus. The Strategic Plan is the product of broad participation by organisations and people very representative of the local society, which has given it the sufficient legitimacy to overcome the difficulties encountered.
2. The appeal to the citizens through various participation scenarios has brought the State closer to its citizens and has resulted, among other things, in the recognition of local leaders, allowing them to build a positive relation with actors on other levels.
3. The adoption of a model of an inclusive and sustainable city is reflected in positive impacts in the quality of life and the city's human development indicators, which has been developed with quality public policies, which have been given continuity and which are coherent with the model.
4. The creation of institutional capacities has qualified municipal staff, decentralised the city government and brought recipients closer to the provision of goods and services for which this municipal entity is responsible.

The municipal government of Rosario has developed holistic social policies that promote the exercise of citizenship through strategies of inclusion, integration, participation, improvement in the quality of life, and gender equality. The Equal Opportunity Plan for Men and Women is an important part of these strategies.

The Participatory Budget in Rosario is another of the policies that reflect the intent of local powers to face the crisis by introducing a mechanism that allows for regenerating confidence in the political sphere.

The programme was launched in early 2002, through Ordinance 7326, dated May 9, 2002, which formally establishes its implementation:

[...] Art.2: The concept: The participatory budget consists in a form of budget management, in which the city's population, through the development of participatory sessions, debates the budget priorities by thematic areas (Ordinance 7326 Rosario City Council).

From the beginning it has been defended by the local administration as a practice that promotes a new political culture through dialogue between the municipal government and the citizenry, as well as promoting the strengthening of community bonds. It was a valuable political strategy to respond to the population's demands (transparency in government administration, efficiency in the assignation of resources, greater citizen intervention in public affairs).²

Another central axis that forms part of the favourable context is the **associative and organisational fabric** of the city, which, although unequally distributed in the territory, is very diverse and active. Urban life is marked by diversification, fragmentation, and heterogeneity. Also worth pointing out are the social policies that the municipal government has been developing, which contributed to broadening access to rights and to the practice of citizen complaints and mobilisation.³As an example, neighbourhood women's networks come into existence in Rosario in 2004 because of an initiative propelled by the Participatory Budget, a programme of the Secretary General of the local government. The goal of the networks is to promote women's rights among district residents and to specifically address, in a decentralised manner, the issue of gender, coordinating their work with diverse neighbourhood institutions. To date, four networks have been created: "Women for Growing Women" (Northwest

² CEPAL – Social Politics Series No 151 The participatory budget and its potential contributions. Bloj Cristina

³ Neighbourhood associations, clubs, social movements, political parties, labour organisations, professional organisations, cooperatives, NGOs, citizens' organisations, churches. According to figures released by the municipality, Rosario has 103 neighbourhood associations, 109 senior centres, 237 social and sports clubs, as well as 6 museums, 9 theatres, and 30 cinemas. Rosario Municipal Website. <http://www.rosario.gov.ar> Human rights organisations: 47 are dedicated to education and 46 identify with social areas, 37 with health, 34 with culture, and 30 with gender.

District); "Southern Women's Network" (South District); "Woman, You Decide" (Southwest District); and "Bonds of Women Networked for Our Rights" (West District).

The decentralisation process is central to the definition of inclusion policies. It began in 1995, promoted by the socialist administration that has governed Rosario continuously since 1989.

In Rosario, historically, overlapping boundaries were added the problem of territorial heterogeneity, and as such the decentralisation unifies territories around the figure of the "district". Currently the city is divided in six districts.

Each district has its seat in a Municipal District Centre (MDC) whose location responds to a strategic concept defined by the City Master Plan, and which is in charge of incorporating the most disadvantaged social sectors in urban life.

This new structure hopes to respond to the necessity of redressing imbalances in the territories and creating new policies of management and administration related to the decentralisation of municipal services; the coordination of activities by the distinct government areas; the organisation of community association structures; the redefinition of public policies. In this manner, the creation of new spheres of political participation, collective planning, and oversight of municipal administration is promoted. In 2003 these districts underwent subdivision in neighbourhood areas with the intention of facilitating the population's access to the Participatory Budget programme.

The Participatory Budget, conceived by the local administration as a step in the process of decentralisation, has its base of operations in the MDC.

<p style="text-align: center;">MUNICIPAL PLAN FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND TREATMENT FOR MEN AND WOMEN 2005/2009</p>
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Antecedents: 1st Equal Opportunity Plan.

The equal opportunity policy developed by the municipal government, through the implementation of the Equal Opportunity Plan for Men and Women, considers a set of actions and programmes aimed at undoing discrimination against women in Rosario, and more broadly at contributing to the construction of a more inclusive, just, and fair democratic society.

Diverse thematic axes are addressed by the plan: communication and diffusion; education, culture, and recreation; labour, occupational training, and employment; participation in the public sphere, health, urbanism (habitat, housing, and services), family violence, and division of family responsibilities.

To drive and follow up on the EOP, commitment has been obtained from various areas of the municipal executive branch, the municipal legislature, civil society organisations, political parties, women's groups, and others.

The elaboration of this plan was the fruit of a long process with multiple actors. It began with the sanctioning of Decree 15322 in the City Council, which created the Ad Hoc Commission. A diagnosis of the situation of women was realised, and based on this, priorities were decided, objectives determined, and concrete actions elaborated.

Throughout the entire process, the methodology employed involved the city's women's organisations, councilwomen, elected officials and bureaucrats, academics, and others.

The 2nd Equal Opportunity and Treatment Plan for Men and Women 2005-2009 continues and strengthens the actions realised in the 1st Plan, developed from 2001 to 2004^{fn}, advancing in the development of gender policies in the local government.⁴

The first EOP (1999) came out of a diagnosis of the situation of women in Rosario. It is formulated with the approval of the mayor and the advice of the Ebert Foundation. Some aspects of note:

Institutionality: The legislature formulates a city ordinance. An integrated commission is formed by various members of the executive branch to formulate the first Equal Opportunity Plan.

The first plan was **formulated in goals and actions**, and did not incorporate quantification, and as such it was difficult to evaluate because there were no indicators for each action that would have permitted evaluating the level of fulfilment.

Problems in the formulation: not having indicators for its evaluation (neither qualitative nor quantitative).

Initial Conditions: participation in the Legislature, a very masculinised atmosphere that makes it difficult to promote gender legislation. Not using inclusive language.

Gender Mainstreaming: the institutionality is designed for work in sectors and not for gender mainstreaming.

2nd Municipal Plan for Equal Opportunity and Treatment for Men and Women in Rosario 2005/2009

The 2nd EOP is a strategic instrument directed at creating public policies that promote egalitarian democracy and allow women to effectively be the targets and co-managers of policies to transform the structural and cultural conditions at the base of discrimination. These plans have allowed us to address the disadvantages women face, placing the issue of gender equity on the public agenda.

The 2nd EOP maintains gender mainstreaming as a criteria, a key strategy meant to incorporate specific equal-opportunity policies in the general policies of transport, health, social services, employment, youth, tourism, etc.

To accomplish this, in contrast to the previous EOP, which included thematic axes, goals, and actions, the current plan is made up of municipal programmes in the different government areas involved⁵.

⁴ The evaluation of the 1st EOP established that the plan's execution showed an average of 50% of the actions completed by the local administration, which was considered an important figure when evaluating if the municipal policies are gender sensitive. Of the 8 thematic axes contained in the 1st EPO, the greatest drive forward was observed in health policies (sexual and reproductive health) and family violence - both themes with a percentage of completion greater than 60%. The percentage observed in the axis related to actions that effect and modify sexist conceptions through the media and language - registering 53% - and the axis related to creating income for women, occupational training and employment (59%). The innovative aspect of the plan is found in safety and urbanism policies in cities. Additionally, a marked deficit was observed (37.5%) in the axis related to the division of domestic responsibilities in an equitable manner, which shows the need for formulating government interventions in the democratisation of family relations, to advance along the path to effective equality for women in public spaces.

⁵ Social Promotion Secretary specifically, the Undersecretary of Social Action, Children's Area, Women's Area, Sports and Recreation Office, and Employment Office. **Government Secretary:** with its innovative programmes. **Public Works Secretary:** particularly, the Undersecretary of Public Works, Waterworks Office, and the Office of Roads. **Health Secretary:** with the Women's Holistic Health Programme (medical care, Health Services: Hospital Emergency Services, Health Education Office. **Public Services Secretary:** particularly the Undersecretary of Environment, the Municipal Gardening School, **Secretary of Culture:** Inter-neighbourhood Theatre Programme. **Public Housing Services. General Secretary:** Participatory Budget; Head Office of Social Communication, and the City Council of Rosario.

The municipal programmes are divided in six axes: Labour, occupational training, and economic autonomy; Women's participation in the public sphere; Use of the city from a gender perspective; Culture and education; Health; and Communication.

The criteria for the current plan are the following:

1) Gender Mainstreaming is a key strategy directed at incorporating specific equal-opportunity policies in the general policies of transportation, health, social services, employment, youth, tourism, etc. as a complete and integrative strategy.

"Gender mainstreaming is the organisation (reorganisation), the improvement, the development, and the evolution of political processes such that a perspective of gender equality is incorporated in all policies, at all levels, and in all phases, by the actors normally involved in the adoption of political measures."

2) Formulation of Municipal Programmes the EOP is made up of municipal programmes in various government areas that make gender mainstreaming concrete.

3) Civil Society Participation: the participation of women's social and community organisations is an indispensable component for strengthening EOP's development processes. Debate and social analysis create potentialities in the situation of women's citizenship and equality as indispensable components of social development.

4) Gender Indicators System: the gender indicators are based on the fact that gender roles exist and that these roles sustain social inequality for women.

The EOP foresees the confirmation of an Equality Commission. The gender mainstreaming strategy necessitates accompanying institutional improvements that guarantee its implementation. As such, it is necessary to create integration and participation spaces in which the various secretaries of the municipal cabinet are represented.

The members of this commission are the following: representatives of the Municipal Executive Secretaries, representatives of the City Council, and representatives of the Women's Area Advisory Council.

A twice-yearly call for participation is held, reports are solicited, actions are realised, and evaluations are made based on the gender indicators system.

EOP Vision

The EOPs. at the municipal level, come about as strategic instruments directed at creating public policies that promote egalitarian democracy and allow women to effectively be the targets and co-managers of policies to transform the structural and cultural conditions at the base of discrimination.

A Municipal Plan for Equal Treatment is a key element in the configuration of local policy for women, equity, and justice.

It is a municipal intervention built through participation, learning, and collective decision making.

This second experience, that continues the actions of 2001-2004, gives continuity and sustainability to the equality policies in Rosario and represents a challenge for innovation and a recognition of the consolidation and strengthening of human rights.

Miguel Lifschitz

Mayor

An advance to guarantee rights and citizenship, conceived to reduce gender gaps through the equal opportunity plans for men and women formulated in municipalities. These plans have allowed us to address the disadvantages women face, placing the issue of gender equity on the public agenda.

The search for gender equity should be understood as a goal that is incorporated across the board in all public policies, and the EOP are instruments used to involve different political, state, and social actors together.

Pedro Pavicich

Social Promotion Secretary

Selected strategies of the 2nd EOP

The 2nd EOP selected Thematic Axes, Projects, and Actions related to various problems women face in Rosario.

For this analysis the thematic axis **USE OF THE CITY FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE** was chosen, which involves programmes from the following areas: Public Housing Services; Public Works Secretary; Public Services Secretary; and the programme **Participatory Budget and Women's Active Citizenship** as they are considered the most pertinent to women's inclusion in cities.

The overall goal of this axis is to qualitatively improve the surroundings and the environment where citizens' daily lives develop, aiming at the creation of flexible neighbourhoods with infrastructure and services and multiple uses that allow for the rational use of time and space by citizens, both men and women, in a framework of citizen safety.

Synthesis of the Axis USE OF THE CITY FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

WOMEN IN THE CITY AND ACCESS TO HOUSING SECRETARY: PUBLIC HOUSING SERVICES		
Goals:	Projects	Actions
Eliminate discriminatory practices against women and other groups in urban planning and administration.	Gender statistics in the allocation of housing.	Obtain differentiated data for male or female head of household with respect to requests for housing, understand the demand in percentages with respect to gender, economic situation by district, use of public space, institutions they attend, etc.
Stimulate women to join the field of urban planning, architecture, construction, and housing.	Gender quotas in forming cooperatives.	Propose the modification of the cooperative contracting ordinance to include the quota. Promote women's participation in forming construction cooperatives.
	Awareness-raising policies.	Incentivise gender consciousness in the spheres where the Public Housing Secretary acts, which are the most economically and socially vulnerable sectors of the population.
DEMOCRATISATION OF PUBLIC SPACE SECRETARY OF PUBLIC WORKS		
Goals	Actions	
The city should have spaces perceived as safe for circulation, recreation, social and cultural expressions, and work.	Advance in the degree of awareness raising on gender, urbanism, and public works with the Secretary's design teams.	
The possibility of participation is guaranteed and promoted by concrete possibilities that public spaces allow us to develop. Public space is a scenario that should facilitate its use by everyone.	Implement a system for analysing inter-area projects that add new points of view to urban projects. Promote women's participation in the definition of projects in the framework of the participatory budget.	
PROJECT TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT SECRETARY OF PUBLIC SERVICES		
Goals	Actions	
Design safe public spaces that contribute to the sensation of safety with visibility, illumination, and transparency. Clearly marked streets that allow for quick and easy reading. Clean, pretty, inviting multi-functional environment that promotes safety day and night.	Installation of shelters, bus stops, and information points.	

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION SECRETARY OF PUBLIC SERVICES – GENERAL OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY	
Goals	Actions
Establish the habit of separating recyclable waste originating in homes and businesses. Improve urban cleanliness. Preserve the environment. Contribute in solidarity to the work of those who seek a means of living in recycling.	"SEPARATE" PROGRAMME

The Equality Commission realised an evaluation of this thematic axis, and obtained the following results, among others:

- Solicitation for housing by female heads of household was 93.13% of the total (6.87% by male heads of household).
- Ramps and sidewalks were built in various places in the city.
- Work was realised to improve accessibility in public spaces.
- Around 50 projects were completed in connection with street and sidewalk improvement, construction of pedestrian paths, sports complexes, and recreation centres.
- 306 bus-stop shelters were built.
- Work was done on lighting and signage.
- Multiple awareness raisings and trainings on gender and urbanism were realised.

Participatory Budget and Women's Active Citizenship

In the 2nd EOP, it is important to highlight the Participatory Budget and Active Citizenship Programme of the Rosario Municipal Women's Area.

As part of the municipal policy aimed at more focused attention to the needs of specific groups, beginning in 2004 the Women's Area of the Social Promotion Secretary, supported by UNIFEM, has driven forward the initiative "**Participatory Budget and Active Women's Citizenship**".

It is neither an independent programme, nor a gender-sensitive budget in a strict sense, but rather represents the mainstreaming of a gender focus in the sphere of the participatory budget. To achieve this, joint training activities are realised with the neighbourhood councilwomen. The emphasis is on training, political participation, gender mainstreaming, and the realisation of a greater number of projects aimed at women. The idea is to lay the foundation for a spending policy with a gender focus in order to achieve greater equity in the structure and composition of the budget.

In a similar direction, in 2005 the "Youth Participatory Budget" was launched, which, as its name implies, brings together this age group and makes up an autonomous programme of the general Participatory Budget.

This fragmentation favours the representation of the interests and demands of certain sectors and age groups.

This programme is an initiative that since 2004 has the goal of strengthening women's public and social participation through the Participatory Budget. It proposes incentivising women's participation in the Participatory Budget and visibilising their presence in instances of public decision, breaking down the gender stereotype that associates women with intervention only in domestic and private matters. At the same time, it proposes reflecting on women's specific point of view in the participatory budget, training them to exercise influence in the budget priorities and in the distribution of existing municipal resources.

The goal of this programme is that the principle actors be women, especially those that lack the tools and personal experiences for discourse and for identifying themselves as citizens in order to make public projects, problematics, and needs of their gender or those that involve other women in their community.

The training focuses on various thematic cores that prioritise the specific needs and rights of women from a holistic point of view of their lives.⁶

This instance has achieved in the councilwomen a process of problematisation of the basic obstacles to participation in social and public spheres, which impede their real and effective insertion in decision making based on their participation.

The programme proposes:

- Incentivise women's participation in the Participatory Budget (instance of public decision-making).
- Visibilise women's presence in instances of public participation and decision making.
- Reflect on the feminine perspective in the Participatory Budget. Reflect on women's participation, on the importance of being present in processes of public policy elaboration, as part of the introduction to a gender perspective in the Participatory Budget.

Programme documents show the development of varied actions as results achieved:

- 2nd Day of Activities "Women in Municipal Budgets"
- Participatory Budgets with a gender focus (training for councilwomen in each of the municipal districts)
- Playroom (recreation space for children during the assemblies) led to 100% of women being able to stay for the entire assemblies.
- Dissemination with a gender perspective of the presence and participation of women in the public sphere (Women's Area of the Participatory Budget)
- Women's participation in the Participatory Budget increase five-fold since the implementation of the programme in 2004. From its beginning, the Participatory Budget Council included a quota system that guaranteed 30% female councilmembers, and in 2004 "gender parity" was enacted and the guaranteed percentage of female councilmembers rose to 50%.

⁶ Since 2004 councilwomen have been trained about strengths and weaknesses of their participation in the public sphere; the differences in participation in the public and private spheres. Work was also done on issues related to sexual and reproductive rights, gender perspective, prevention of family violence, and the promotion of new leadership. In 2006, specific training in project construction, importance, presentation, agreements, councils, and alliances was added. In 2008 meetings were held with women and men in relation to their perceptions and revealing the different needs, privileges, interests, and realities that impact the community in diverse manners, and particularly in the construction of projects that are debated in these participatory spaces.

Work in courses and workshops has contributed to the problematisation of local culture, as a way of legitimising affirmative actions developed in the context of the procedure of formulating the participatory budget ("parity"), as well as the introduction of non-discriminatory language in the everyday business of local public administrators.

In absolute terms, growth is observed in both women's participation and women running for office in instances of representation foreseen in the participatory process.

On the other hand, projects with a gender perspective contribute to broadening perspectives or overcoming the individualistic logic of the process, leaving the territorial focus behind in favour of collective construction around issues that bring the gender problematic into play.

In this sense, we can consider the spending that, in principle, is placed at the disposition of the entire community, as "indirect spending on women". Spending related to the recuperation and re-functionalising of urban public spaces (squares and pedestrian areas) stands out, as well as illumination of paths and spending related to leisure and recreation for children and seniors. The first, because they contribute to women's experience of safe living in the city (see Rainero and Rodigou, 2004), and the second, to the degree that they contribute or potentially could contribute to lessening the weight of women's domestic work connected to caring for children and seniors⁷.

Beginning in the Participatory Budget for 2006 (deliberations in 2005) the perspectives for the development of the proposals driven by the programme were more than auspicious. The projects with a gender perspective approved in the framework of the municipal Participatory Budget, doubled with respect to 2005, and with them, the funds designated for their execution.

There was an increase in the number of councilwomen, who through the programme participate in the task of defining priorities for the population and the distribution of available resources. This situation makes evident a growing process of awareness raising about gender problematics that has moved into an important place in society, becoming stronger year after year.

<p style="text-align: center;">MUNICIPAL PLAN FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND TREATMENT FOR MEN AND WOMEN 2005/2009</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">FACILITATING FACTORS, OBSTACLES, AND CHALLENGES</p>

To evaluate the plan, the Women's Area convoked a commission, called the Equality Commission that is made up of NGOs, political parties, an advisory council, and the municipal legislature. This commission has proposed a 3rd EOP.

In the following, we detail some of the obstacles foreseen for this 3rd plan.

1) *Obstacles for its formulation*

- The Women's Area has a scant budget assignation and a small technical staff. Additionally, it depends on another hierarchy, and as such its dialogue with the

⁷ Gender-Sensitive Budget Initiatives Project in Latin America: an instrument for strengthening democratic governability and women's exercise of their economic and social rights. Gender, development, and participatory budgeting: analysis of the municipal budget allocated to the Equal Opportunity Programme in Rosario, Santa Fe, Argentina, 2007. Consultant: Corina Echavarría; Assistant: Laura Ezpeleta.

highest municipal authorities is mediated by intermediate actors. Also, its actions are developed in segments in relation to other municipal activities, which face administrative and operative weaknesses.

- The commissions are made up of personnel with little hierarchy. Municipal secretaries are represented, but there is no one to hold accountable. The representatives in the commissions do not have power within the secretaries to sustain agreements reached. What does it mean, then, to do gender mainstreaming? What kind of representation should government areas have? What can the women participating commit to?
- Equality of opportunities and treatment for men and women invisibilises other possible sexual and gender identities and the specific experiences of lesbians.

2) Obstacles for its implementation

- Key areas are absent. Also absent are key women that transit different spaces and introduce the issue (generally they have been women militants from the governing party). Double belonging: (to the party and the feminist movement) until a programme or policy is established. In many cases, policies are sustained by the commitment of a few people. Does this imply a pseudo-institutionalisation? formal institutionality? The following is observed: women with weaknesses in the issue and women with weaknesses related to their work area.
- Trainings on the following topics were held for the various areas committed to the EOP's implementation: methodology for preparing gender indicators and gender-sensitive budgets. While continuing with the trainings and awareness raising is necessary, up to know they are not producing the necessary changes.
- The removal or reassignment of some government employees produces difficulties for sustaining policies.
- With respect to finances: each government secretary committed part of the budget of established programmes. The Women's Area is responsible for the trainings. The EOP itself does not have a dedicated budget.
- Implementation is easier with some areas: Social Promotion, Participatory Budget, and Health. There are more obstacles with the areas of Government and Treasury and Economics.
- Problems in the procedure: the EOP introduces an innovative form of administration (intersectorality, co-management, cooperation, etc.) that do not fit in with the traditional forms of public administration. Gender policies imply coordination and, fundamentally, demanding across-the-board work within the municipal structure. As the 2nd EOP proposes, gender actions should be included in the set of local government policies, as the totality of public measures affects, directly or indirectly, men and women's opportunities for the exercise of their rights and access to goods and services.

3) Obstacles for the evaluation

- The incidence and participation of women's organisations in the Evaluation Commission is unclear.

- The Ad Hoc Commission's work is not given priority by some of the government secretaries.
- It is difficult for the indicators to measure the real transformations in women's lives.
- *Lack of evaluation culture*: the 2nd EOP incorporates an evaluation system. However, the lack of an evaluation culture in the various sectors analysed make the production of and access to information more difficult.

Facilitating Factors

- New gender agendas promote anchoring gender policies at the municipal level and the decentralisation of public functions in municipalities. Rosario has developed both perspectives: It has begun a process of gender mainstreaming in its local secretaries and is furthering the process of decentralisation.
- In Rosario there are institutionalised public deliberative spaces. This situation appears as an important facilitating factor because gender policies propose significantly altering the interaction between the women's movement, women, and the State. The coordination of needs and demands is favoured when fluid bonds exist between the local government, women's organisations, NGOs sensitive to these issues in consultation and participation spaces.

Challenges:

1) For the formulation and implementation of policies based on the EOP

Achieve gender mainstreaming in public policies. That every action be thought about as a function of the impact it has or will have in the lives of women.

Even in the cases where there is stability and continuity in the administration, working with all the people that participate in the administration, and individually with each person, is necessary. It is not only necessary to guarantee the initial conditions for the formulation of the policy, but also the entire process.

Considering the distance between the formulation and the implementation of a public policy with a gender perspective is necessary. It is possible to formulate an excellent policy and when the process begins, it can occur that the intermediary officials, or even the operative officials, do not implement it exactly as it was designed. It is common to maintain the idea that a good formulation alone is sufficient. However, to sustain gender equality and equity, work must be done from the formulation of the policy down to the last person involved in its implementation, especially in services and delivery of services in which the concrete practice is face to face with the beneficiaries.

It is important to have **strategic flexibility**: contexts change, actors change, administrations change, and as such long-term goals must be maintained while being flexible in order to adapt the policies, devices, and instruments to these new circumstances.

It is not possible to sustain a state-centred matrix. Currently, the state has problems of impotence or insufficiency to solve some public problems. For this reason, a public policy that wants to advance in gender equality and equity must be co-administered with other social actors.

The Equal Opportunity Plans should strengthen mechanisms that imply cooperation and not develop incentives for competition.

Action on other actors: to sustain an Equal Opportunity Plan, defining strategies toward other actors is necessary:

- 1) Institutionalised political parties that sustain positions related to gender equality and equity in the central themes of their programmes are needed.
- 2) The legislature and its capacity to develop policies are needed.
- 3) An independent, gender-sensitive judiciary is necessary.
- 4) A well-developed public administration with competencies and abilities for developing public policies with gender equality is another important aspect. Adequate incentives to orient actors towards good policies are also needed.

Encourage the formation and development of women's collectives in territorial spheres where they are scarce. Support for women's organisations must consider the restrictions of this population.

In-depth study of the political, economic, social, and ideological reasons for incorporating gender equity.

Consolidate strong leadership around a process of gender equality. It does not have to be an individual leader; it can be a group, a collective that leads the process. But it is an important point to formulate, implement, and sustain, particularly the issue of sustaining public policies in a certain direction. As such, we must rely on strong leadership, which is not contradictory with democratisation, because we are not talking about authoritarian leadership, but rather inclusive leadership with a collective vision. By inclusive, we mean that it achieves the adhesion of individual, group, and collective interests in a more general interest.

Create and sustain institutional scenarios to plan, design, negotiate, and establish alliances. This is related to democracy, transparency, and maintaining institutionalised discussion mechanisms.

Encourage participating actors to have long term time horizons.

Institutional changes must be dealt with globally. The Equal Opportunity Plan does not have to develop particular areas, but rather must have a global and interdependent vision of the necessity of incorporating gender equity in all phases, in all policies, in all structures.

This implies long, gradual, slow processes because it implies a political-cultural transformation that requires multiple investments. This implies incremental models and a more step-by-step approach rather than radical transformations. It also requires non-linear directionality.

Resistance to the gender perspective: Technical and political officials generally feel that they are busy with "the big issues" that benefit everyone equally, and as such far away from "women's issues".

It is important to make clear the different meanings the EOPs have acquired: Some propose actions aimed exclusively at women and others include men as well as women. They may focus on certain groups or include the entire female population. They may be adaptive to or transformative of existing structures and norms. Some treat women as recipients and others as active participants in planning.

Reach consensus that the EOPs, based on their content and the consequences of their implementation, should be seen as a real innovation of the local public administration,

as they change structures and procedures, as well as the fabric of relations with the environment and local authorities' was of conceptualising social problems.

2) For the renovation of the public administration of the EOP

Professionalise civil service and incorporate a gender perspective in all ranks of public administration: develop awareness-raising and training tools.

Government cooperation and coordination: between sectors and between jurisdictions. The EOP can be a bridge for this cooperation.

Management of Intersectorality: integrity of government action. The human rights perspective creates the possibility of designing cross-sector actions because it requires holistic responses. Both the human rights perspective and the gender perspective have a vision of indivisible rights.

PROPOSALS FOR A THIRD EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PLAN

The elaboration of protocols for each government area is proposed for the Third EOP, which will specify in as much detail as possible the actions that each area commits to realising. Reach agreements with each secretary regarding work commitments established through a resolution. Incorporate evaluation indicators (qualitative and quantitative) from the beginning for the actions being developed.

Work in four areas is proposed for the Third EOP:

- 1) Gender mainstreaming in the entire municipal budget (not only in the participatory budget).
- 2) Women's right to the city and citizen safety.
- 3) The situation of lesbians with in the GLTB universe.
- 4) Democratisation of private relations.

Work is proposed with the areas most resistant to incorporating a gender perspective: Treasury, Budget, and Public Works.

The ad hoc commission proposes organising working tables to formulate positive actions as well as cross-cutting policies. That is, strengthening a dual strategy.

Proposal: rethink the strategy from the bottom up, an active and shared commitment by the entire chain of actors, policies, and programmes, and also change the programming traditionally focused in quantitative aspects.

Proposal: "escape from the trap of good intentions" because actors are called to participate, and they come, but they do not give priority to this work and if it is not given priority there is no transformation.

Proposal: that the Gender Sensitive Budget Programme being worked on with the Treasury be incorporated into the EOP.

In synthesis, the 3rd EOP requires strengthening multiple components: among the most prominent, we can mention the active participation of organised women with the ability to articulate their demands, technical staff trained in a gender-equality perspective, with information processing abilities for understanding gender differences, and appropriate structures and procedures with participatory instances where women's diverse needs can be considered.

An important aspect for its further development is achieving greater political representation of women in the hierarchies of the local government, a central issue for the sustainability of the EOPs. This is based on what has been shown in numerous studies that report that, in Latin America, growing participation of women in national legislatures effectively coincides with greater attention to issues such as women's rights, violence, and reproductive issues.

In order to institutionalise gender policies, political commitment is highly relevant because it implies dedicating material resources and legitimacy to the policy. This political commitment creates a formal framework for the implementation of actions that otherwise could possibly evaporate due to informal power relations, which generally benefit interests other than that of greatest fairness. Additionally, given that the measures aimed at greater gender equality face problems of comprehension and implementation by intermediate organisational levels, the interest shown by the highest authorities offers the opportunity to bring actors into line around issues defined as priorities⁸.

The effective execution of gender policies depends, to a large degree, on the practical interaction between the Women's Area and the rest of the State apparatus. In short, they are policies that should be "**everyone's business**" among those that make up the municipal State.

⁸ Ana Laura Rodríguez Gusta: Local gender policies from the point of view of State capacities. School of Politics and Government, UNSAM.