What is gender analysis and why does it matter?

One of the first step towards achieving gender equality is gender analysis supported by reliable data. Gender analysis identifies gender gaps, reveals systematic or unconscious gender biases and allows for a better understanding of how policies affect women and men, as well as girls and boys, differently due to the discrepancies in social roles, travel patterns, transport preferences and behaviour (Ng and Acker, 2018). The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognise the crucial role of gender equality as a driver of development. SDG Goal 5 sets out nine targets to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (UN, 2015). Actions need to be accelerated in order to achieve gender equality as outlined in SDG 5 by 2030, as only 48% of the data needed to monitor progress on SDG 5 are available (UN Women, 2021). In addition, promoting gender equality in transport will also contribute to the achievement of all 17 SDGs. Particularly for Goal 3, which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, Goal 11, which aims to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable and Goal 13, which is on taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Gender analysis is a systematic analytical process to identify, understand and describe gender differences and their relevance in a specific context. It includes the analysis of how the same policies would affect women and men differently and requires gender-disaggregated or gender-sensitive data. Examining gender-based differences in the access to assets, resources, opportunities, jobs and services helps to identify existing, but invisible, bias in how transport is planned and designed. The intersection of gender roles and norms in transport leadership, decision-making and employment can also be assessed through gender analysis.

Finally, gender analysis identifies constraints, opportunities, and entry points for first identifying then narrowing gender gaps and creating effective and equitable policies and interventions that will result in social and economic benefits for women and men. The identification of gender gaps in national development and transport strategies is also essential to the understanding of how sustainable and inclusive transport can play a role in boosting the global economy by getting more women into the formal transport workforce, where women only represent 17% of it globally (Ng and Acker, 2020).

How can gender analysis benefit transport policies?

Transport is an enabler of economic and social empowerment, but it is currently not gender neutral (SuM4All, 2019). Women and men do not usually play the same role depending on the composition of the household. Hence, policies that assume that women and men have the same preferences, behaviour and constraints, and have equal access to different services will not reach their full potential impact if they do not consider their differences. Studies have shown that women are more likely to have shorter commute distances, to chain trips, to have more non work-related trips, to travel at off-peak hours, and to choose more flexible modes (Ng and Acker, 2018; Best and Lanzendorf, 2005; Boarnet and Sarmiento, 1998; Moriarty and Honnery, 2005). There may also be gender bias in existing transport policies and services, as gender differences in travel behaviour is often overlooked, especially since the transport workforce is male dominated, contains gender gaps throughout all levels and is created,

maintained and controlled by males (Ng and Acker, 2020; Jandeska and Kraimer, 2005). Gender analysis is therefore critical in developing transport policies that will benefit all users, ensuring minimal gender bias and improving existing transport services for women.

Women and girls would be the primary beneficiaries of greater gender equality in the sector through the enhancement of their access to human capital, desired jobs and other services. In addition, societies would benefit from a more gender-responsive transport, including economies (in terms of GDP growth), businesses (transport service providers) and the environment (transport decarbonisation, biodiversity protection and air pollution reduction).

Although this toolkit only focuses on gender analysis, it can be further expanded over time to include other demographic and socio-economic factors to be analysed jointly with gender, such as income, age, disabilities, ethnicity, religion, race, location, or sexual orientation. Analysing the impact of transport policies or projects from an intersectional lens reveals that some groups are affected by additional barriers that hinder their choices in making decisions as to if, when, where and how to travel. For example, the needs of a woman with a disability living in a rural part of a country with inadequate public transport services will be different from those of a non-disabled woman in an urban area with multiple transport options. Similarly, an elderly low-income man with limited mobility would have more acutely pronounced mobility needs than an able-bodied young man with more resources to afford private transport. A deeper analysis of transport policies will ultimately lead to more informed projects and programmes that address different transport impacts on different user groups, and ultimately improving transport equity and equality effectively.

As governments around the world work towards sustainable, resilient, safe, and inclusive transport, a better understanding of the factors that influence individual travel behaviour can:

- Reveal different preferences and attitudes by gender.
- Provide insights into existing travel patterns and behaviours.
- Improve transport planning and identify future needs for infrastructure and services.
- Help design and implement better transport policies that will meet multiple goals and at the same time enhance gender equality.

View ITF's work on gender and transport.