



A Call to Action:
**GENDER IN THE
CIRCULAR ECONOMY**

RAFAELLA R. POTESTADES | BAYI, INC.

aellapotestades@gmail.com | programs@angatbayi.com

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Questions to Answer

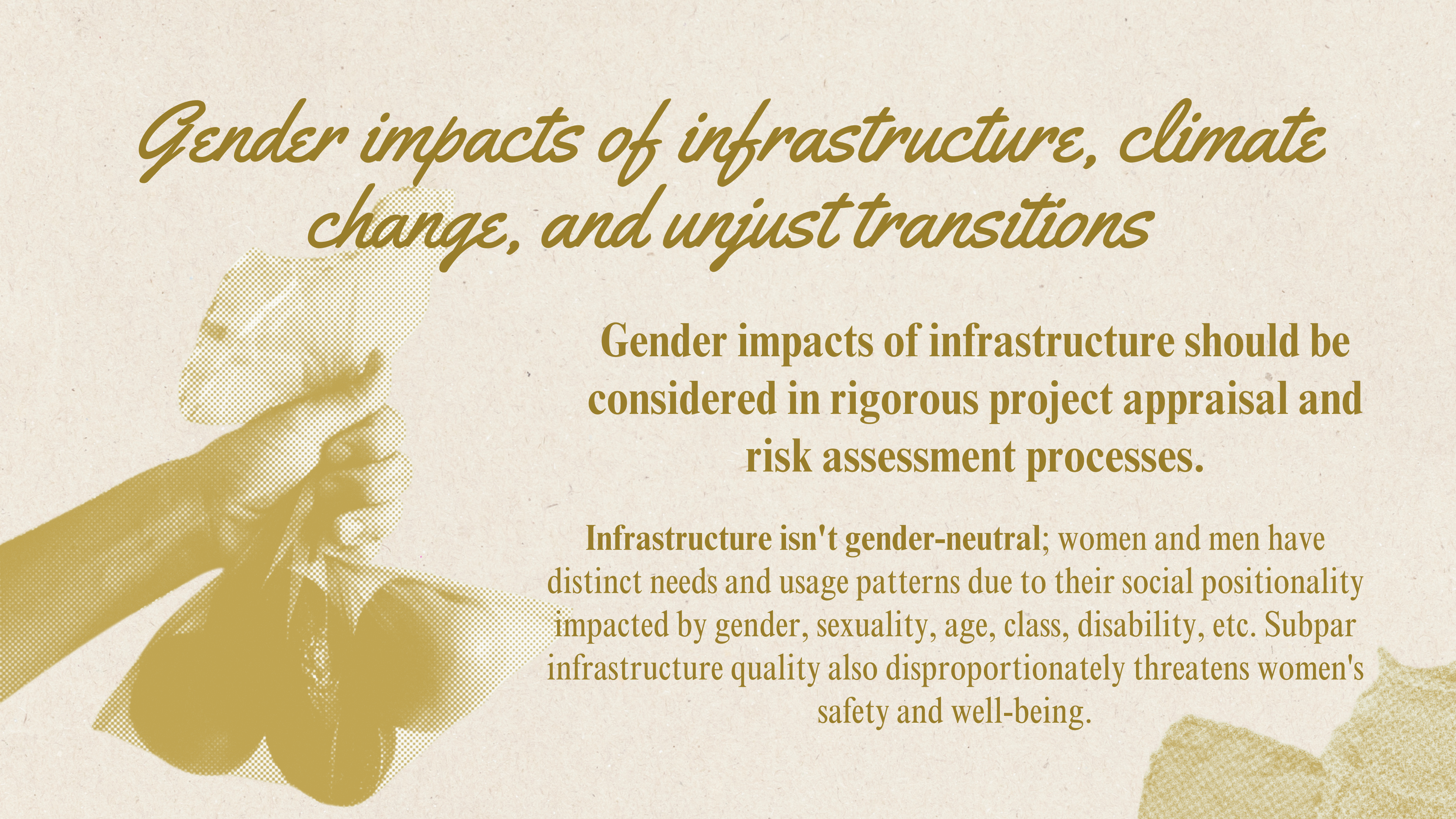
A collage of autumn-themed items including a gift box, leaves, and a book. The gift box is wrapped in gold and red paper with a red ribbon. The leaves are in various shades of red, orange, and yellow. The book is a hardcover with a gold spine and a red cover.

- Why do we need a gender lens in CE?
- How to make CE gender-inclusive?
- How to avoid tokenism?

Agenda

- Alternative economies, circular economy, feminist economy, and a just transition
- Women's social positionality and mapping their lived realities in CE
- Closing the gender gap in CE: pathways, mainstreaming, and strategies





Gender impacts of infrastructure, climate change, and unjust transitions

Gender impacts of infrastructure should be considered in rigorous project appraisal and risk assessment processes.


Infrastructure isn't gender-neutral; women and men have distinct needs and usage patterns due to their social positionality impacted by gender, sexuality, age, class, disability, etc. Subpar infrastructure quality also disproportionately threatens women's safety and well-being.



Alternative Economies

**Outside the traditional realm of productive activities,
women have organized alternative economies**

Grassroots alternatives form based on the lived realities, needs, and knowledge of women shaped by social roles and environmental factors. For instance, community-based economies would entail mothers trading clothes, toys, and other things. Women would form communal loaning systems with minimal interest for caregiving needs.





SOCIAL AIM OVER PROFIT MAXIMIZATION

Recognition of community's needs and championing it as the main reason for income generating and economic activities; building of green value chains

INTEGRATION OF GENDER CONTEXT & NEEDS

Redress mechanisms designed with the community's gender context and needs, such as addressing unpaid care and domestic work, gender-based violence, and SRHR

TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY & JUSTICE

Models such as Feminist Social Solidarity Economics, Caring Economies, Feminist Cooperativism, Feminist Union and Organizing, and Land and Agroecology are designed to attain sustainability and gender justice.

Feminist Economy



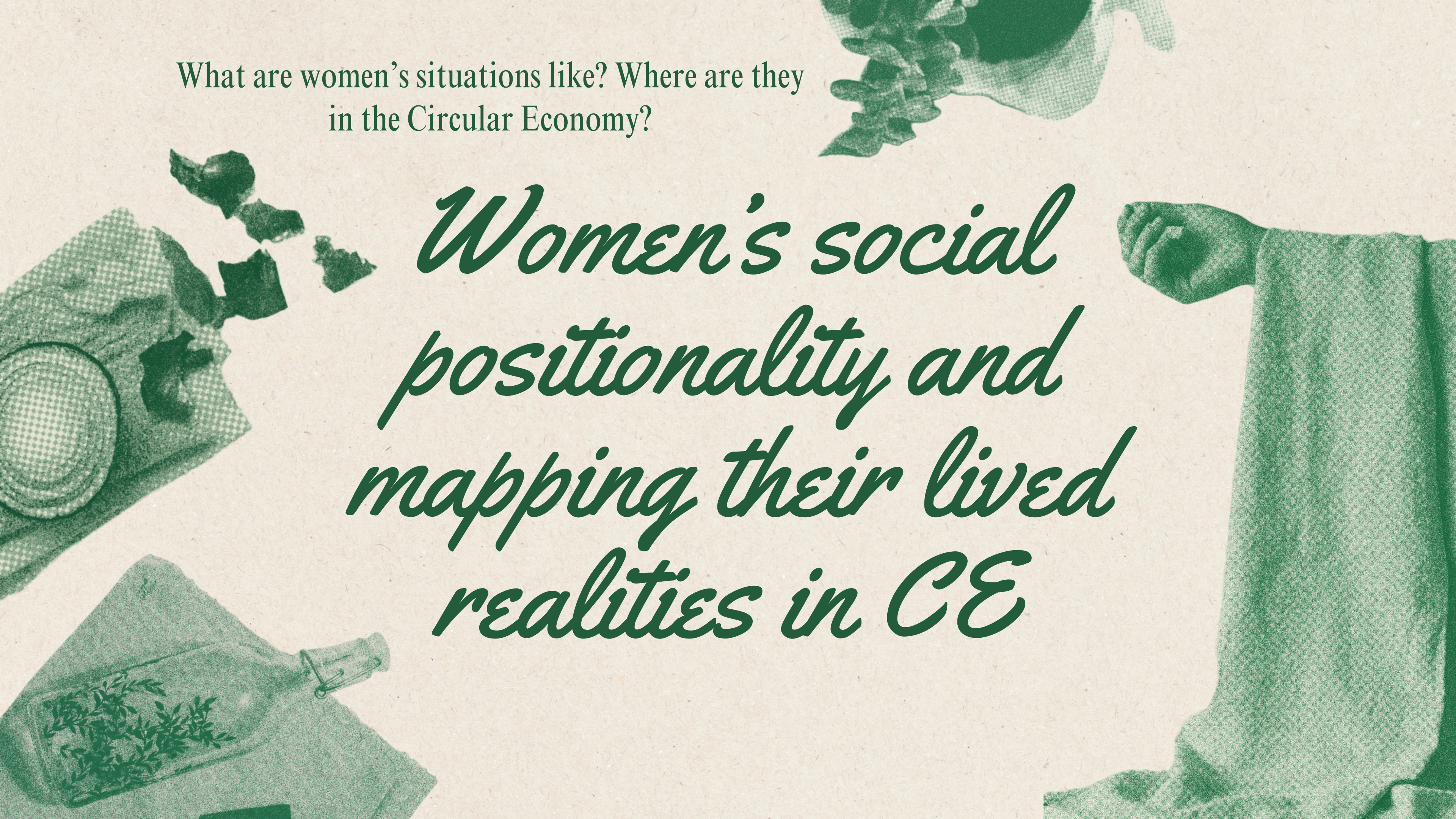
Circular Economy

The emerging concept of the circular economy offers a transformative economic model

that challenges traditional production and consumption practices, with the potential to address systemic issues. This model can serve as a catalyst for achieving various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To understand its impact on promoting equality, it's crucial to analyze the circular economy through a gender lens.

What are women's situations like? Where are they
in the Circular Economy?

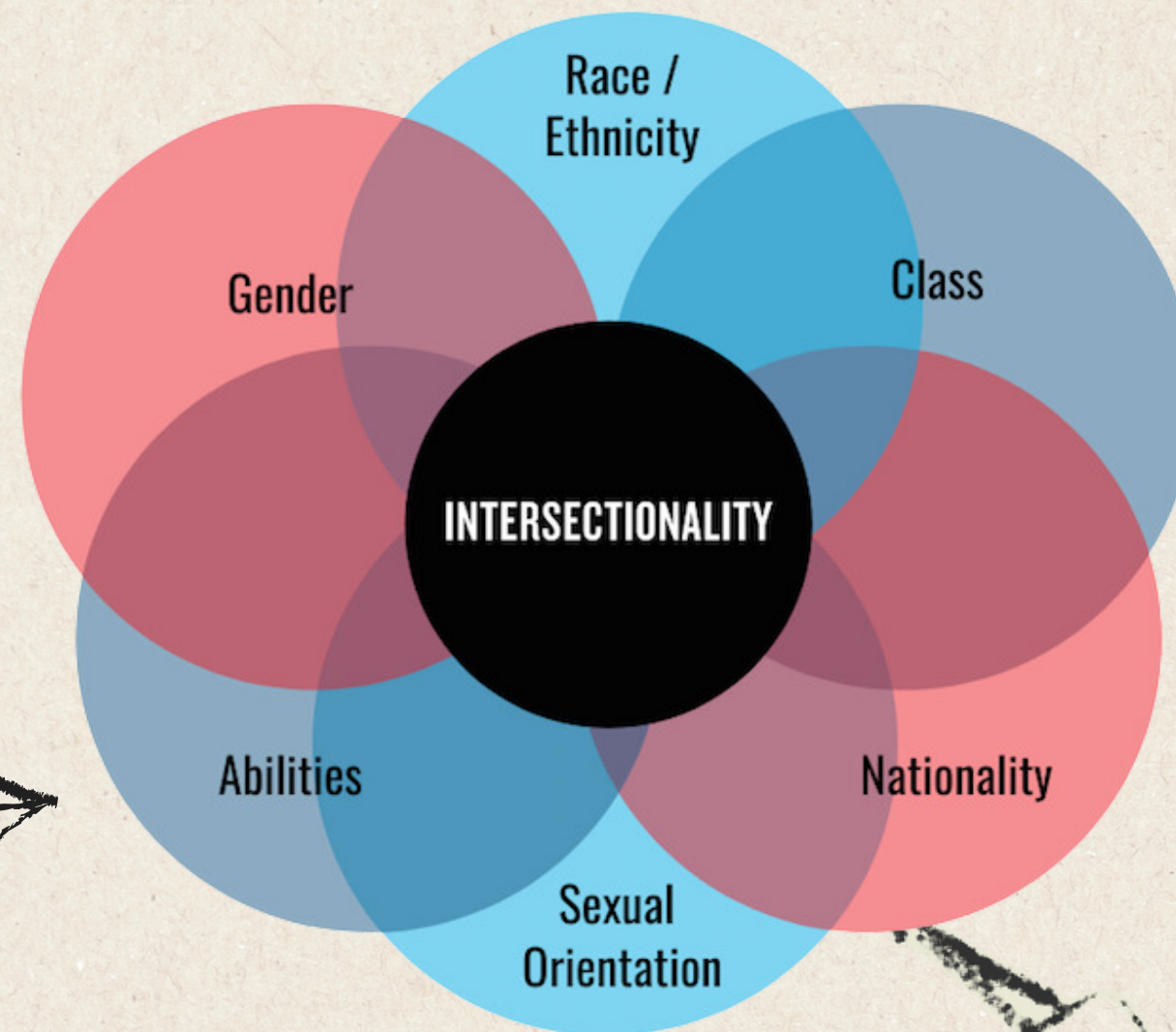
*Women's social
positionality and
mapping their lived
realities in CE*



Women experience

DISCRIMINATION
EXPLOITATION
MARGINALIZATION
OPPRESSION
SUBORDINATION

ON THE BASIS OF THEIR INTERSECTING IDENTITIES



in various institutions: family,
community, workplace,
schools, media, churches, state



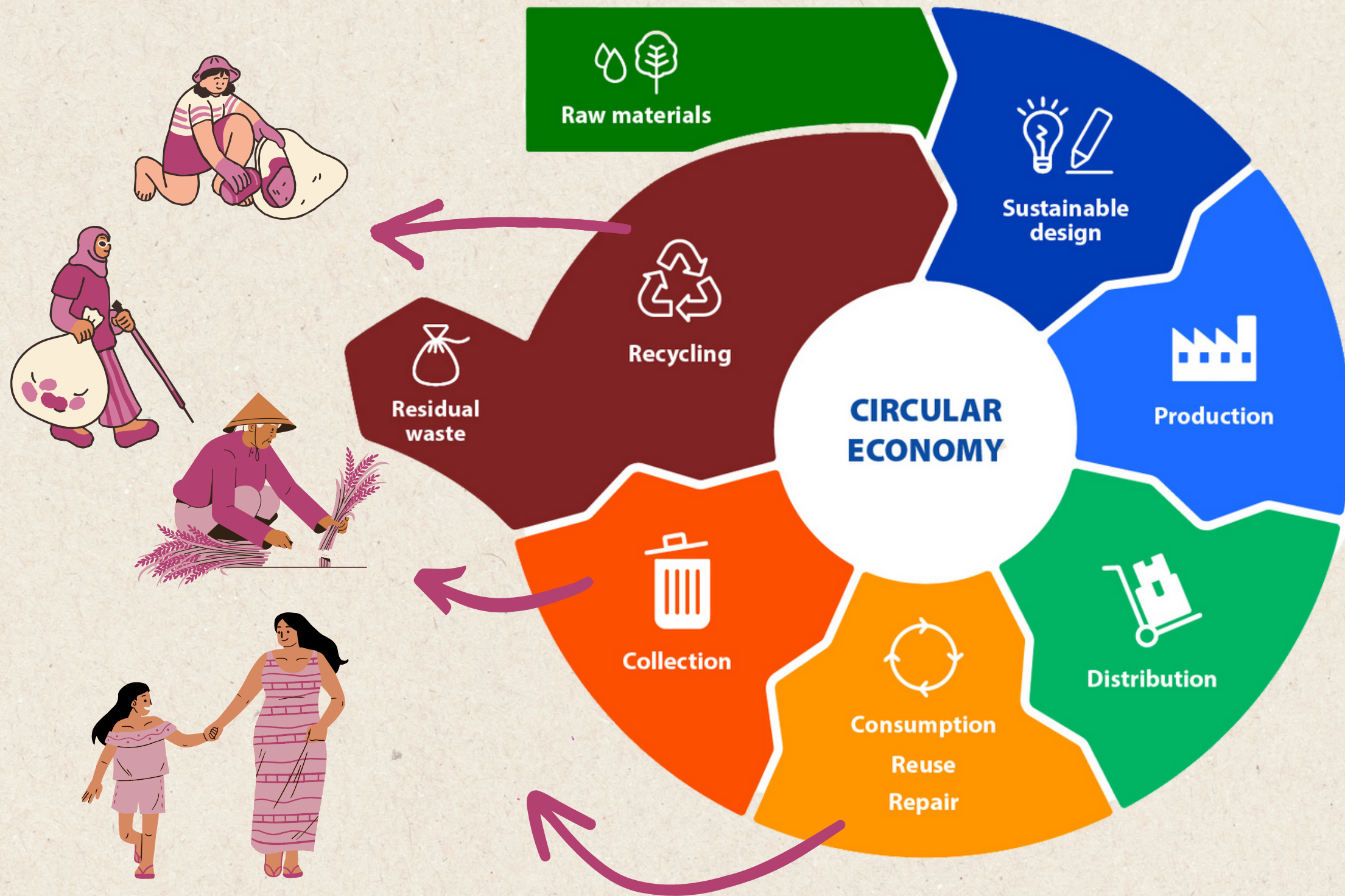
REPRODUCTIVE
ROLE

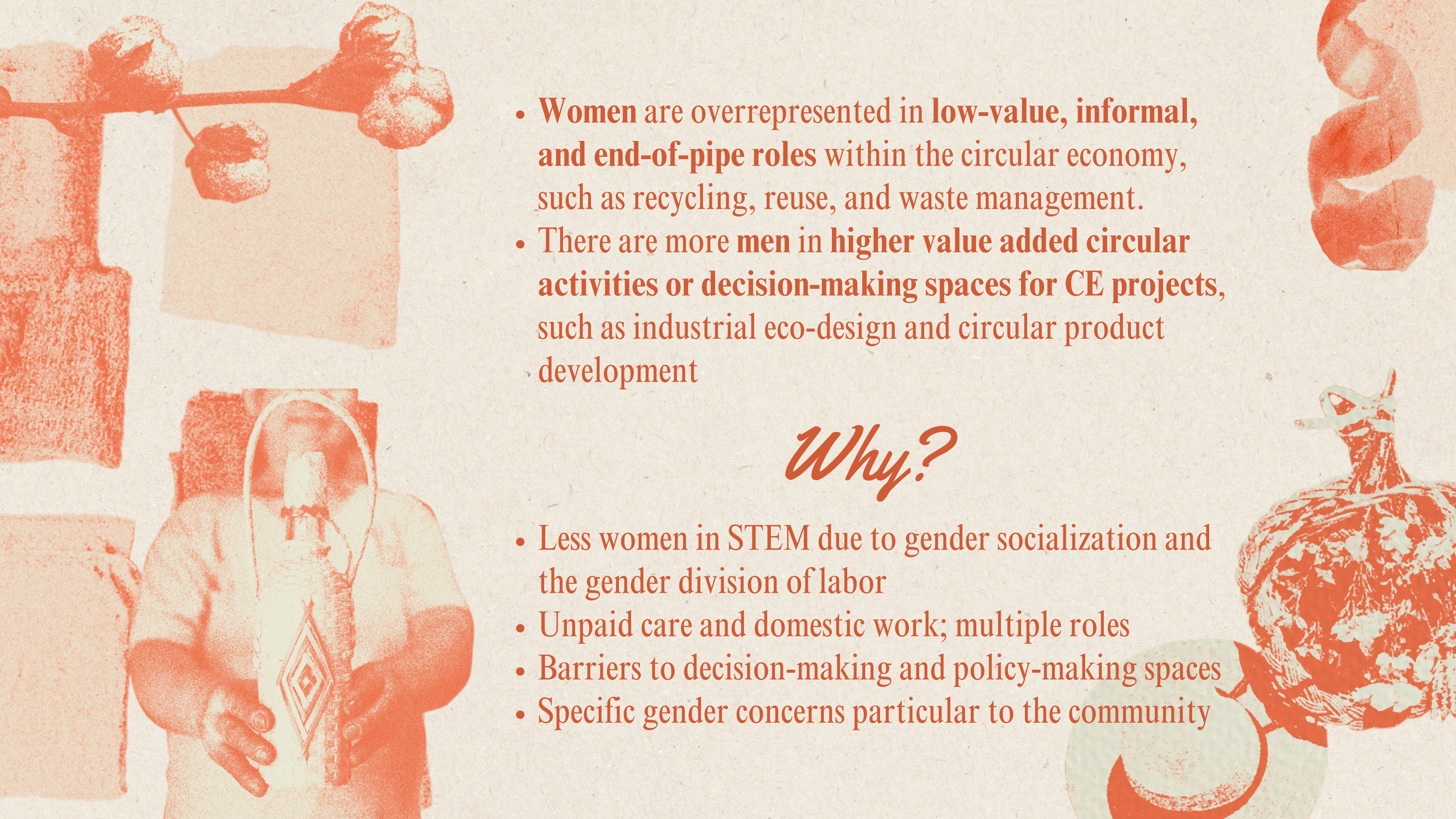
PRODUCTIVE
ROLE

COMMUNITY
ROLE

Women's Situation

WHERE ARE WOMEN IN CE?



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- **Women are overrepresented in low-value, informal, and end-of-pipe roles** within the circular economy, such as recycling, reuse, and waste management.
 - There are more men in **higher value added circular activities or decision-making spaces for CE projects**, such as industrial eco-design and circular product development

Why?

- Less women in STEM due to gender socialization and the gender division of labor
- Unpaid care and domestic work; multiple roles
- Barriers to decision-making and policy-making spaces
- Specific gender concerns particular to the community

WHERE ARE WOMEN IN CE?

According to the UNDP (2022):

- "[G]lobally, women make up the majority of the workforce working in the informal waste management sector."
- "Women work in precarious situations and are exposed to harmful substances and chemicals along the value chains in the textile, agriculture, or waste sectors."



A collage of various objects including fabric, a brush, a hand, and citrus slices. The background is a textured, light-colored paper. In the top left, there is a piece of rough, fibrous fabric. In the top center, there is a brush with a dark bristle head and a light-colored handle. In the middle left, there is a hand with fingers spread, appearing to be made of a dark, textured material. In the bottom left, there is a piece of dark fabric. In the bottom center, there are two slices of citrus fruit, possibly lemons or oranges, showing their internal segments.

And the reality is

There's a disconnect between the CE productive sector and gender equality in policymaking and project design.

Most largely policy making bodies that “allude to the gender dimension seem to only do so at the rhetorical level, given that no concrete strategies or action plans are articulated for the achievement of greater equality and inclusion of women” (Albaladejo, Arribas, & Mirrazo, 2022)

Gender Matters



PERPETUATION/DISRUPTION OF GENDER INEQUALITY

Our projects and policies have large implications on perpetuating or disrupting gender inequality



GENDER EQUALITY AS A SUSTAINABILITY PILLAR

In a CE Just Transition, gender equality is a crucial pillar especially towards sustainability and affecting social transformation

Gender Matters



CE TRANSITION ACCELERATION

Foreign Policy Analytics (2020) observed that “companies with improved gender diversity on boards from 2013 through 2018 were 60 per cent, 39 per cent and 46 per cent more likely than those without to reduce the intensity of energy consumption, GHG emissions and water use respectively”



GENDER SHAPES THE CE DESIGN PROCESS

“Public policies and programmes that fail to integrate a gender perspective and lack gender mainstreaming do not have the capacity to provide truly exhaustive solutions.”



How do we then start with our gender mainstreaming efforts and analyses?

*To care, to listen,
and to be intentional*

We should make CE work for women, not just women work for CE

- Recognition of their agency and ways of contribution is crucial
- Women's contributions should not just be limited to activities and tasks shaped by gender roles and a disadvantaged position
- Opportunities to “higher value added” CE activities should be made possible

How to assess and affect gender responsiveness?

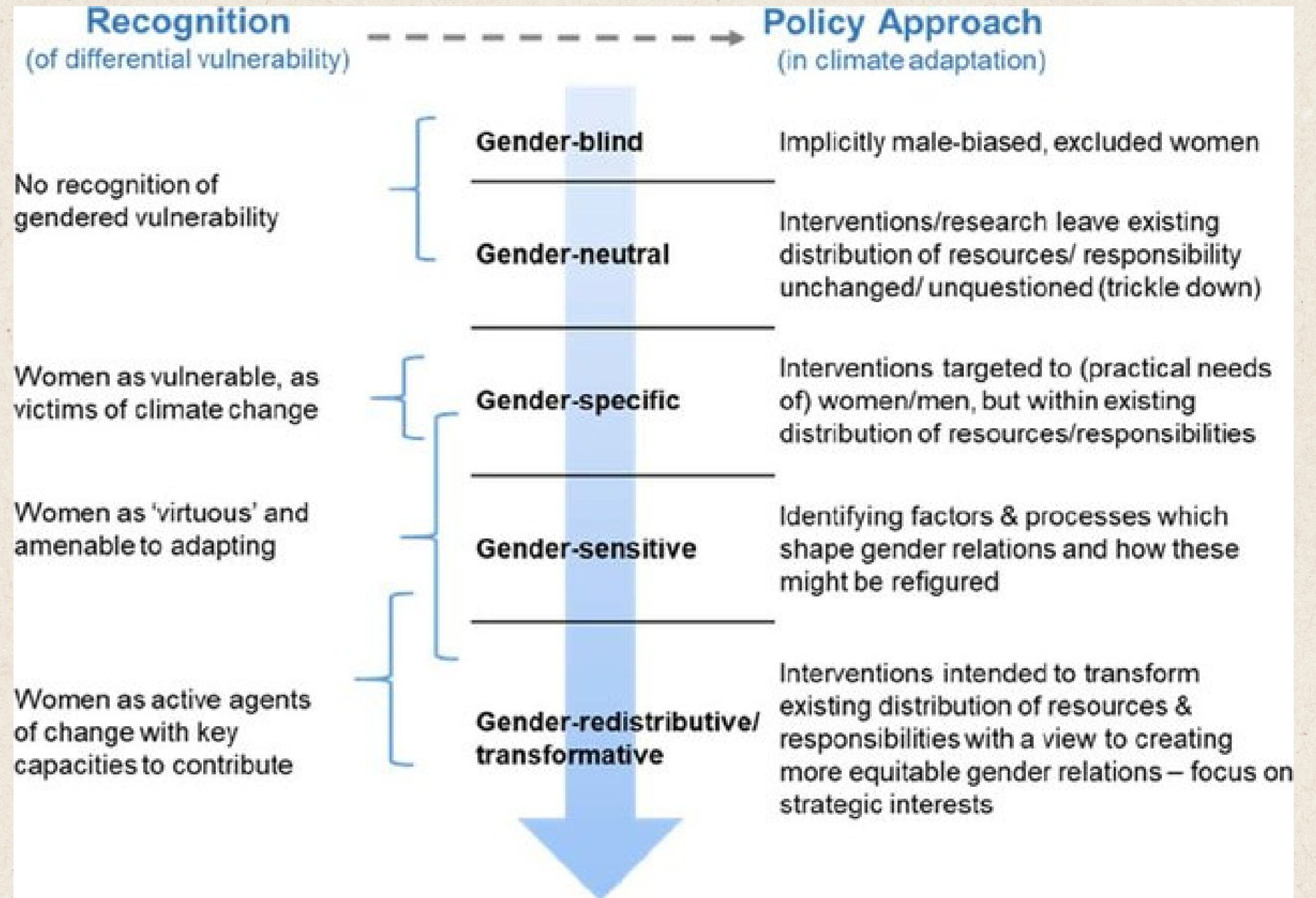


Figure 1. Different framings to recognize gendered vulnerability lead to different policy approaches (Singh, Solomon, & Rao, 2021)



Applying a Gender Lens

requires integrating it in our CE design

Such as “understanding consumer behaviours, integrating lessons learnt from traditional sustainable practices, of which women are often knowledge holders, and leveraging local value chains for sustainability” which “ would not only ensure a “just transition” for all, but would also inform how to make the new economic paradigm operational and sustainable.” (OECD, 2020, p. 1).



*To all the fighting for
gender equality*

“... Around me the trees stir in their leaves
and call out, ‘Stay awhile.’
The light flows from their branches.

And they call again, ‘It's simple,’ they say,
“and you too have come
into the world to do this, to go easy, to be filled
with light, and to shine.”

-Mary Oliver



A collage of various objects including a fork, a brush, a hand, and citrus slices. The background is a textured, light-colored paper. The objects are arranged in a way that suggests a collection of items related to food, hygiene, or daily life.

Questions and Discussion

We invite your questions, thoughts, and ideas.



It's time to
TAKE ACTION!

REFERENCES

Albaladejo, M., Arribas, V., & Mirrazo, P. (March 2022). Why adopting a gender-inclusive approach towards Circular Economy matters. Industrial Analytics Platform UNIDO. <https://iap.unido.org/articles/why-adopting-gender-inclusive-approach-towards-circular-economy-matters>

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