

Gender-Inclusive Mobility in Cities

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Pourquoi les femmes
marchent-elles
si vite ?



9 FEMMES SUR **10**
DÉCLARENT ADOPTER DES
CONDUITES POUR ÉVITER DES
ACTES ET PROPOS SEXISTES
DES HOMMES

#PARTAGEONSLESPACE

La rue aussi !

➤ Why do women walk so fast?

9 out of 10 women adapt their behaviour to avoid sexist/sexual harassment in public spaces

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URBACT- the EU-funded programme dedicated to the cooperation of European cities

Capacity building activities & tools



Knowledge uptake and sharing



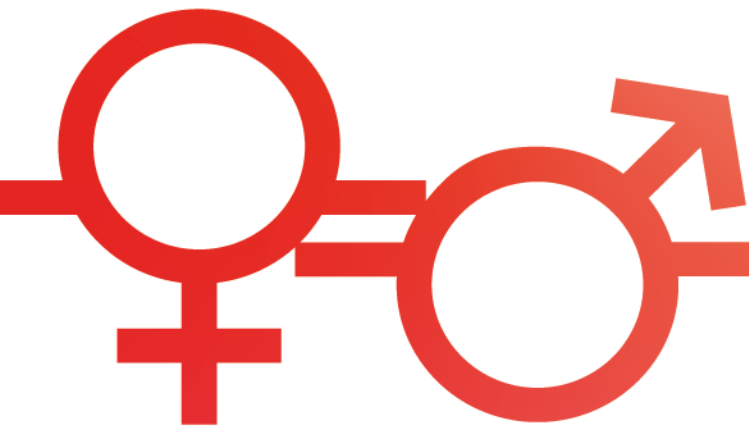
Networks of European cities

*From 2014 to 2021,
83 networks involved 678
partners across the EU*

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Why a webinar on gender-inclusive mobility in cities?

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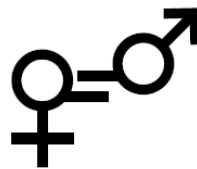
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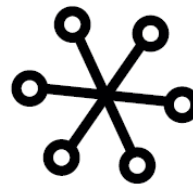
1. **Gender Equality** is one of URBACT's cross-cutting priorities.



Green
transition



Gender
equality



Digital
transition



URBACT brings Gender Equality into focus

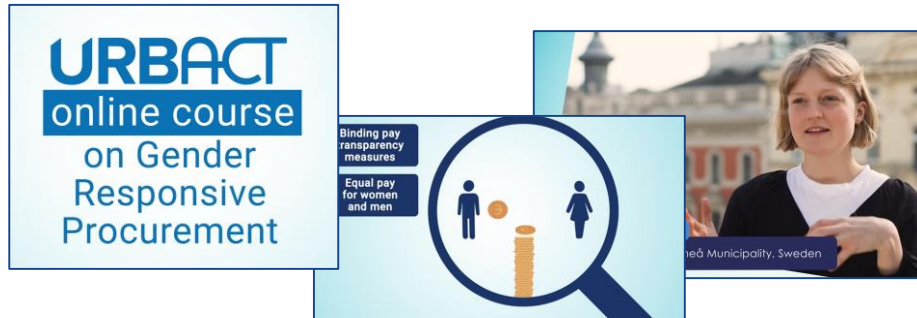
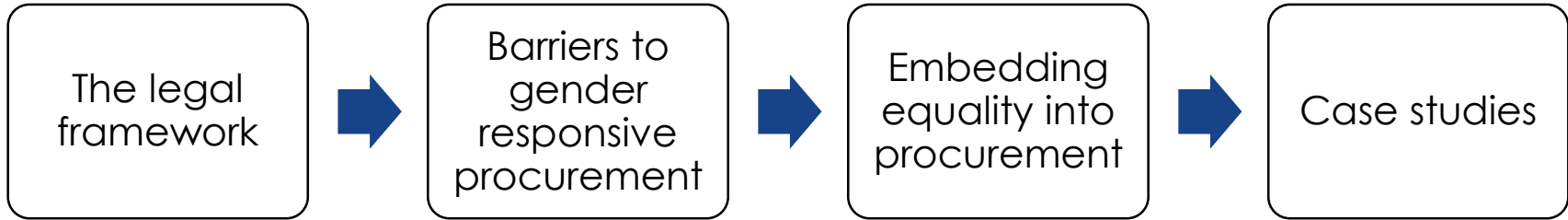
- Building on **URBACT's Gender Equal Cities reports** (2019 & **2022**)



<https://urbact.eu/gender-equal-cities-report-2022>

URBACT brings Gender Equality into focus

- Online course on **Gender Responsive Public Procurement**




<https://urbact.eu/knowledge-hub/gender-equal-cities>



URBACT brings Gender Equality into focus

- For 2025, a new **Gender Equal Cities Online Course** for URBACT cities

URBACT ONLINE COURSE Gender Equal Cities

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| MODULE 1 | MODULE 2 | MODULE 3 | MODULE 4 | MODULE 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 05 March 2025 10 - 12 (Paris time) | 14 May 2025 10 - 12 (Paris time) | 25 June 2025 10 - 12 (Paris time) | 17 September 2025 10 - 12 (Paris time) | 05 November 2025 10 - 12 (Paris time) |
| Introducing the Gender Equal City <i>Why does gender matter for integrated urban development?</i> | Gender Check: Project Team, Stakeholders and Policy Beneficiaries <i>Who decides changes and who is affected by change?</i> | Integrating Gender Perspectives: Data in urban development <i>How does an integrated approach take gender equality into consideration?</i> | Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation <i>How do we implement gender mainstreaming in cities?</i> | Embedding gender equality into sustainable urban development <i>What role does gender play in sustainable urban development?</i> |
| Learn the key concepts of gender mainstreaming and its relevance for integrated urban development. You'll explore how a gender-sensitive approach can shape your city, beginning with a gender-based analysis of key factors to consider when planning actions. | Discover why and how to improve gender balance in your project management team and local stakeholder groups, using concrete examples to reduce gender disparities and gender blindness in action planning process, project management, and delivery. | Learn to integrate a gender perspective into your intervention logic : define problems, set common objectives, and design actions through a gendered lens. Make evidence-based decisions with the right data and understand how gender-disaggregated data informs policy-making. | Explore how gender impacts implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. Examples will highlight how a gendered perspective can uncover blind spots and provide new insights. Learn to set up indicators and incorporate gender analysis into monitoring and evaluation . | Explore how cities localise the SDGs and other sustainable urban development goals, focusing on gender's role. You'll address the existing connection between gender and sustainability, supporting an integrated approach to these development goals. |

2. URBACT networks and good practices on women's rights in cities

URBACT networks:

FEMACT-Cities (2023-2025):

<https://urbact.eu/networks/femact-cities>

GenderedLandscape (2019-2022):

<https://urbact.eu/networks/genderedlandscape>

URBACT Good Practices:

Tamega e Sousa (PT): <https://urbact.eu/good-practices/intermunicipal-victim-support-network>

Esplugues de Llobregat (ES): <https://urbact.eu/good-practices/reducing-gender-gap-steam>

Umea (SWE): <https://urbact.eu/good-practices/gender-equality-heart-city>

Barcelona (ES): <https://urbact.eu/good-practices/inclusive-entrepreneurship-model>

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3. **Mobility**, currently a **hot topic** for European cities

PUMA

- Planning Urban Mobility Actions

<https://urbact.eu/networks/puma>

S.M.ALL

- Sharing urban solutions towards **Sustainable Mobility for ALL**

<https://urbact.eu/networks/puma>

ECONNECTING

- Greener and closer communities

<https://urbact.eu/networks/econnecting>

EcoCore

- Green transition in small cities along transport corridors

<https://urbact.eu/networks/ecocore>

Beyond the Urban

- Connecting urban-rural communities

<https://urbact.eu/networks/beyond-urban>

Schoolhoods

- Safe, green and happy ways to school

<https://urbact.eu/networks/schoolhoods>

This webinar

A focused session, to raise awareness on mobility challenges and solutions from a gender perspective.



This webinar

- **Webinar** mode
- Will last until **15.30**
- **Recording and slides available** after the webinar
- Hold your questions for the dedicated **Q&A moments**
- Connect to **Mentimeter (menti.com)** for interactive exercises - use code 38112360
- Stay until the end to give us your thoughts about this webinar and if you want us to deliver more webinars on gender equal cities

Today's Webinar

Delivered by **Ph.D. Arch. Iris Popescu**
URBACT Ad-hoc Expert



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Experience

- Architect specialized in inclusive design and accessibility.
- Design and facilitate empathy workshops to turn accessibility into a priority.
- Engage diverse communities in shaping public spaces.

My work focuses on research and design for more inclusive urban environments.

Webinar's Objectives

- Identifying and understanding biases on gender and the effect they have on mobility.
- Expanding the concept of accessibility and inclusion beyond permanent disability by considering how the built environment and public facilities create gender-based barriers.
- Exploring real-life experiences of mobility challenges and exclusion in the built environment, public facilities, and transportation systems based on gender.

Structure

- Empathy exercise
- Gender Biases & Social Model of Disability
- Real-Life Experience in Bucharest
- Accessibility, Mobility & Data Biases
- Best practices
- Guest Speakers
- Q&A
- Summary



Multidisciplinary Perspectives

| Profession | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| Project/Program Management | 35.05% |
| Expert/Consultant | 19.24% |
| Urban Planning/Architecture | 16.49% |
| Other | 16.49% |
| Research/Education | 6.19% |
| Student/Trainee | 4.81% |
| Communication/Knowledge | 1.72% |



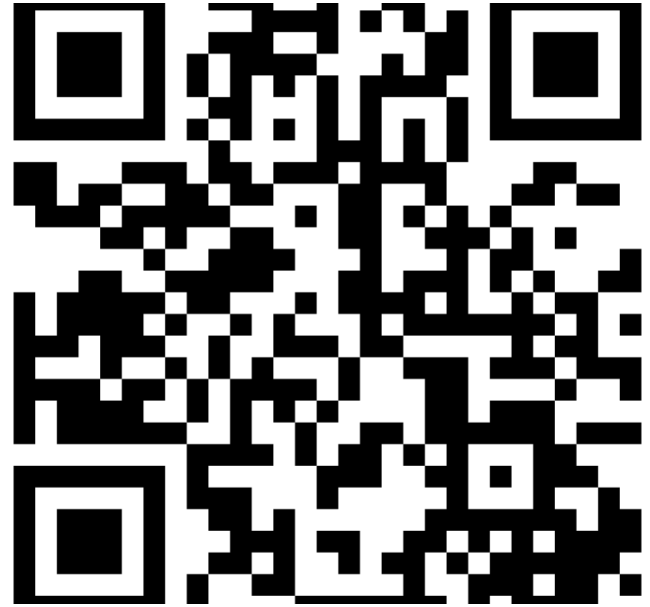
**Close your
eyes and
listen...**

 Share Your Thoughts

[https://www.menti.com/
al1bgeb4999o](https://www.menti.com/al1bgeb4999o)

Join at **menti.com**

Use code **38112360**



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Biases

- Assumptions
- Attitudes
- Beliefs

Our imagination is shaped by our experiences and the people we've encountered throughout our lives.

♀♂ Biases

- Age
- Race
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Belief
- Social Class
- Ability/Disability
- Profession, etc.



Sources

- History
- Language
- Universality of Man
- Absence

Understanding the **enablers of gender biases** is essential because they shape how cities are designed, who is prioritized in mobility planning, and whose needs remain invisible, reinforcing exclusion in everyday urban life.

History

- Restricted mobility and participation in public life.
- Flâneur vs. Flâneuse.
- Planning centered around a male "breadwinner" commuting to work.

Language

- Default to masculine terms, making women linguistically "Other".
- Strongly gendered languages correlate with greater gender inequality.
- If language ignores a group, they risk exclusion from solutions

Universality of Men

- Whiteness and maleness are seen as neutral, making other identities seem niche or subjective.
- The gender data gap reinforces the idea that male perspectives are the default.

Absence

- When some people aren't represented in data, they are framed as minor and irrelevant.

Female

Male

Intersex

Female

Male

Non-binary

Transgender

Broad spectrum

Effects



Have you ever felt excluded or challenged?

- 54.3% reported feeling excluded due to mobility barriers.
- 81.44% of the participants identify as female.
- Common reasons for exclusion:
 - safety concerns;
 - infrastructure barriers;
 - limited transport option;
 - higher costs.



Common Grounds of Exclusion

How Socio-Demographic Factors Influence Exclusion

- Mobility systems are not neutral—they reflect existing social inequalities. Various socio-demographic factors can increase barriers to safe, accessible, and affordable transport, making city movement more difficult for certain groups.



Common Grounds of Exclusion

Intersectionality: When Exclusions Overlap

- Intersectionality means that exclusion is not based on a single factor but is shaped by multiple overlapping identities (e.g., gender, race, disability).
- The more factors of exclusion a person experiences, the greater their mobility challenges.

Public Space Safety



Join at menti.com

Use code **38112360**

Public Space Safety

- A 2020 Plan International survey reported that two-thirds of girls had been sexually harassed in public spaces, and 35% had been hassled while wearing school uniforms.
- Fear of harassment is a substantial barrier for queer and trans mobilities.
- Queer women and non-binary participants raised the concept of “double victimization” as a basis for increased harassment due to their feminine presentation.

Infrastructure

- Women, especially those with disabilities, face compounded barriers in urban infrastructure, like inadequate accessibility in public transport, the lack of ramps or elevators, and poorly designed pedestrian paths.
- When caregiving responsibilities intersect with disability, the need for accessible facilities like adapted restrooms and easy-to-navigate spaces becomes even more critical.

Cost and Transport

- Pink-tax
- Eg. avoid (or impossibility of) walking or using public transport after dark and instead rely on taxis or ridesharing, often facing higher charges.
- Longer time for planning.



**How many
people does
it take to get
a baby onto
a bus?**



Transport



 **Transport**





Transport





Transport





**It takes a
village/city.**

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Personal Experience – arch. Oana Pavăl



[Watch the full video here.](#)



AI & Mobility: Amplifying Systemic Discrimination

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly used to optimize urban mobility, from predictive traffic models to automated public transport planning. However, AI systems often reflect and amplify systemic biases instead of eliminating them.

AI & Mobility: Amplifying Systemic Discrimination

Biased Datasets → Unequal Outcomes

AI learns from historical data, which means it reproduces existing inequalities in transport systems.

Example: **AI-driven transport planning** often prioritizes male commuting patterns (work-home routes), ignoring trip-chaining needs common for women (work, childcare, groceries, caregiving stops). (Source: Criado-Perez, 2019, Invisible Women)

AI & Mobility: Amplifying Systemic Discrimination

Algorithmic Discrimination in Navigation

The deployment of AI in public surveillance raises alarms within the transgender community. There is a fear that AI could intensify existing hostilities from law enforcement, leading to increased profiling and discrimination.

AI-powered navigation tools optimize routes based on traffic data, often pushing more congestion into marginalized areas that were historically excluded from urban planning. (Source: MIT Urban Mobility Lab, 2021)

♀♂ AI & Mobility: Amplifying Systemic Discrimination



The Social Model of Disability

The medical model defines disability as an individual impairment, focusing on the individual health status.

This approach expands the spectrum of “disability,” as anyone can experience exclusion due to temporary, situational, or permanent disability.

= mismatch between environment and abilities, gender, age, etc.



Accessibility as a Core Design Principle

- Intersections with age, disability, culture, and caregiving roles amplify exclusion.
- Poorly designed cities generate disabilities, limiting movement, safety, and independence.
- Exclusion is not about individual conditions but about how spaces fail to accommodate diverse needs.
- Instead of retrofitting solutions, accessibility must be a natural part of urban planning and design.



From Barriers to Solutions

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Checking Biases and Data Fairness

- <https://ai-fairness-360.org/>

An open-source toolkit that helps detect and mitigate bias in datasets and machine learning models.

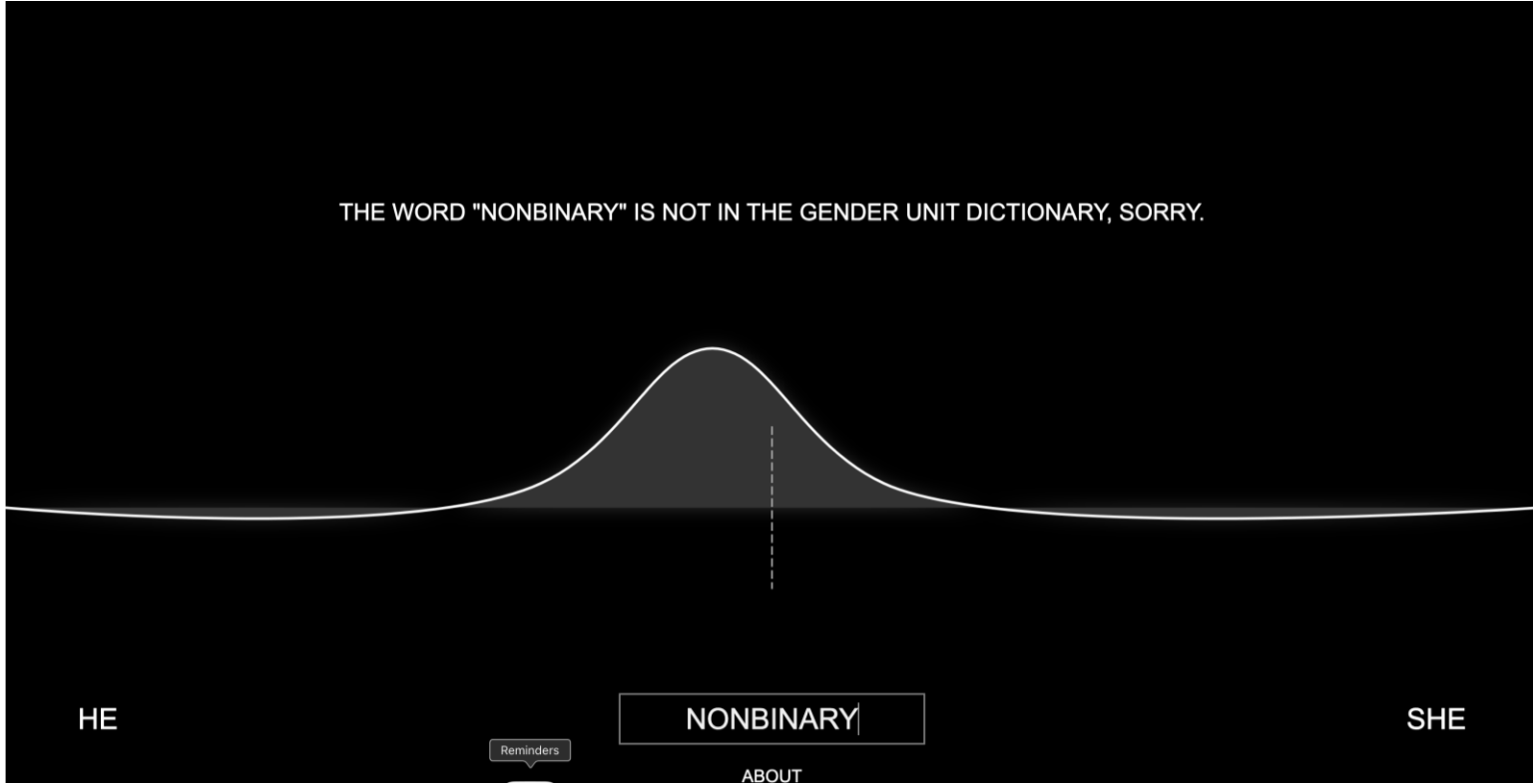
- <https://building-without-bias.co.uk/>

online dictionary designed to expose gender biases embedded within technology. It investigates how architectural language and design can perpetuate gender biases, particularly as automated technologies become more prevalent in the field.



Checking Biases and Data Fairness

THE WORD "NONBINARY" IS NOT IN THE GENDER UNIT DICTIONARY, SORRY.



♀♂ The Empathy Retreat - <https://include.amais.ro/>



Public Space Safety - Safetipin

- <https://safetipin.com/>

A social enterprise dedicated to enhancing public safety and inclusion, particularly for women.

My Safetipin App: safety audits based on predefined parameters such as lighting, walk paths, and public transport.

Safetipin Nite: nighttime photographs to analyze lighting, pavements, and other features in the city.

Safetipin Site: A location-specific tool for detailed assessments of public spaces like bus stops, train stations, and parks concerning safety and accessibility.

Public Space Safety – Safer City Maps

- <https://ubilabs.com/en/insights/safer-cities-map> (inactive)

The Safer Cities Map is an interactive tool developed by Ubilabs in collaboration with Plan International Deutschland to collect and visualize the safety experiences of girls and young women in urban areas. The map was active in four major German cities—Hamburg, Berlin, Cologne, and Munich—allowing users to mark locations they perceived as safe or unsafe. This initiative aimed to gather data on incidents such as sexual harassment, discrimination, or violence, providing insights into the safety concerns of young women in these cities.

Public Space Safety – Queering Public Space ARUP

- <https://www.arup.com/globalassets/downloads/insights/queering-public-space.pdf>

Challenges in Public Spaces: many LGBTQ+ individuals feel unsafe or modify their behavior in public spaces to avoid discrimination or harm.

Beyond 'Gayborhoods': while LGBTQ+ enclaves exist in some cities, there's a need to create inclusive public spaces beyond these areas to ensure safety and acceptance for all.

Recommendations: the report suggests strategies to make public spaces more welcoming, such as inclusive design practices and preserving queer cultural landmarks.

Transport and Participation – SeeYou by AMAIS

- <https://www.seeyou.ro/>

Facilitates connections between visually impaired users seeking assistance to reach specific locations and guides willing to help.

Beneficiaries can select gender preferences (same as them) and share live location. The app collects information on public space accessibility based on users' needs and activities.

Transport and safety – On-Demand Alighting

On-Demand Alighting on Paris Bus Routes After 10 P.M.

- Paris' RATP has introduced on-demand alighting for all bus routes after 10 p.m.
- Passengers can request to be dropped off at a specific location, enhancing safety, especially in poorly lit areas.
- The initiative aims to support women and vulnerable individuals, offering more flexibility and security.
- It expands on a pilot program and is now available on every bus route within the city after dark.

Networks and Resources – FEMACT-cities

- <https://urbact.eu/networks/femact-cities>

Is an initiative under the URBACT program to enhance gender equality in urban settings.

Focus Areas: develop integrated action plans to promote gender equality across various public policies, including education, urban planning, health, and economic development.

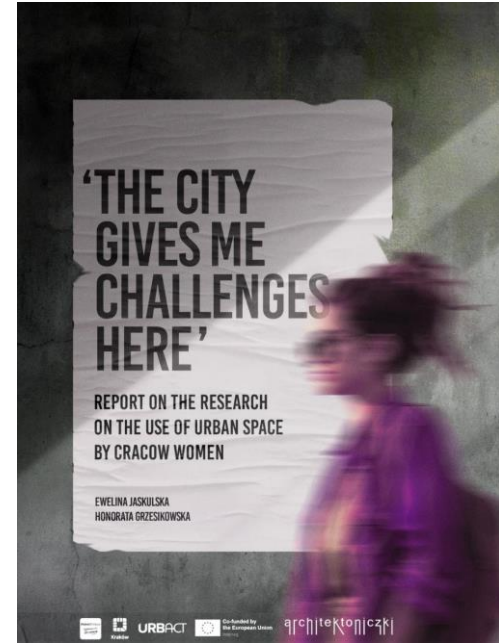
It tackles issues such as knowledge and data gaps, lack of dedicated personnel, insufficient political support, and resistance to gender equality initiatives.

♀♂ Networks and Resources – FEMACT-cities

- <https://rownosc.krakow.pl/zalacznik/489386>

Women face several challenges in urban environments that affect their safety, accessibility, and overall experience.

- Limited safe leisure spaces.
- Inadequate lighting.
- Insufficient or unclear signage
- Obstructive physical configurations.
- Underrepresentation in planning.



Networks and Resources – WomenMobilize

- <https://womenmobilize.org/>
- It is a global network empowering women in transport to create gender-equal mobility systems.
- Focuses on raising awareness about gender and transport, especially in emerging economies.
- Advocates for feminist, sustainable transport through campaigns like "Women Who Move the World."
- Offers training like the "Introduction to Gender and Mobility in Emerging Economies" course.

Networks and Resources – Gendered Landscape

- <https://genderedlandscape.umea.se/in-english/>
- <https://urbact.eu/networks/genderedlandscape>
- This network explores gender-based inequalities in urban landscapes.
- It highlights how urban design can be more inclusive and responsive to gender diversity.
- The network supports cities in implementing urban planning strategies prioritizing safety, accessibility, and inclusivity for all genders.

Infrastructure – Umeå's "Station of Being"

- https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/inspiring-projects-and-ideas/station-being_en
- Developed through field research, the bus stop caters to passengers' preferences, such as standing or leaning while waiting in cold conditions.
- It features rotating pods made from locally sourced wood that adjust s to shield passengers from wind, offering comfort and privacy.
- It incorporates a "smart roof" equipped with lighting and audio cues to inform passengers of approaching buses, reducing the need for constant vigilance and allowing for a more relaxed waiting experience.



Infrastructure – Umeå's "Station of Being"



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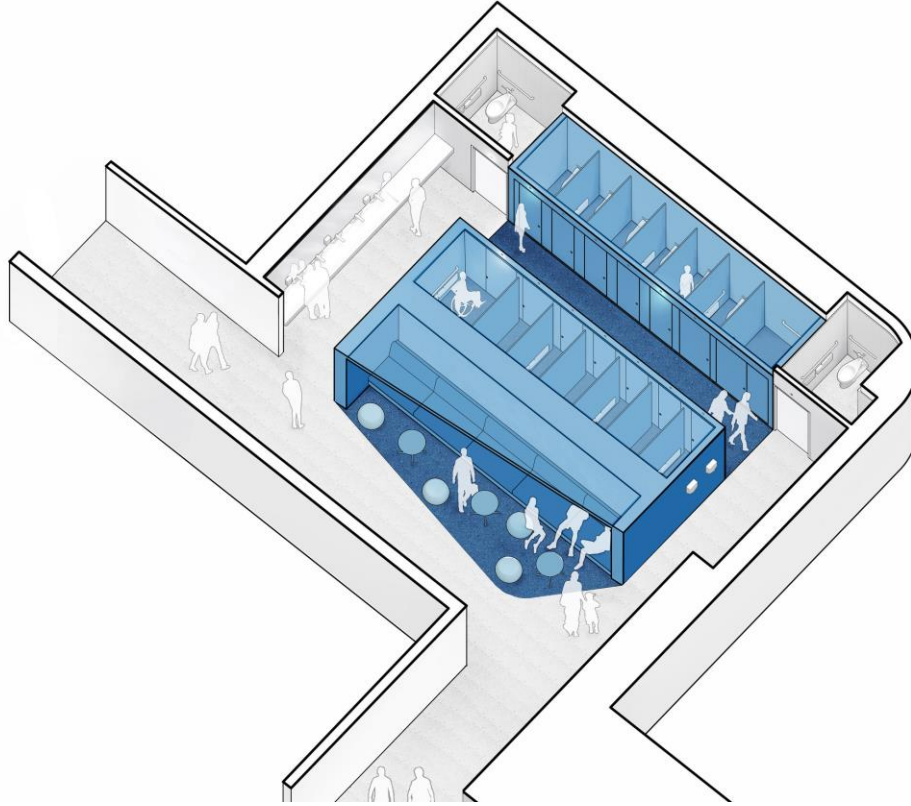
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Infrastructure – Stalled!

- <https://www.stalled.online/#video>
- Redesigning Public Restrooms for Equity: is an initiative that challenges the traditional design of public restrooms to make them more inclusive for all genders, abilities, and needs.
- Proposes open, multi-user, gender-neutral restrooms that ensure safety, privacy, and accessibility for diverse users, including transgender and non-binary individuals, caregivers, and people with disabilities.
- Features fully enclosed stalls, communal washing areas, and improved lighting to create a secure and comfortable environment for all users.



Infrastructure – Stalled!



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Infrastructure – Changing Places

- <https://www.changing-places.org/>
- Changing Places facilities essential restroom spaces for people with complex disabilities who require additional equipment and space.
- Each facility includes a height-adjustable adult-sized changing bench, a ceiling hoist, extra space for carers, and a non-slip floor, ensuring dignity and comfort.
- It enables people with severe disabilities and their families to participate in public life without being forced to change in unsafe or undignified conditions.



Infrastructure – Changing Places



Infrastructure – Make Space for Girls

- <https://www.makespaceforgirls.co.uk/>
- Highlights how parks and recreational areas are often designed with boys in mind, neglecting the needs of teenage girls.
- Pushes for parks, playgrounds, and public spaces that encourage equal participation by considering how girls use and move through spaces.
- Conducts studies and collects data on how teenage girls engage with public spaces, ensuring design solutions meet their needs. Works with local authorities, designers, and young people to create spaces where girls feel welcome, safe, and encouraged to participate.

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And make space for real stories

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Next Steps for Inclusive Urban Mobility

Challenge Your Own Biases

Reflect on how your own experiences shape your perspective on mobility. Question whether current transport systems work equally for all groups.

Engage in Empathy Exercises

Put yourself in the shoes of a caregiver, a person with a disability, or someone navigating the city at night.

Identify barriers that may not affect you directly but impact others.

Next Steps for Inclusive Urban Mobility

Involve Diverse People & Perspectives

Ensure urban mobility solutions reflect real-life needs beyond dominant perspectives.

Develop & Test Solutions Together

Co-design transport and public space improvements with affected communities. Pilot small-scale interventions, gather feedback, and adjust based on lived experiences.

It includes you.



hello@irispopescu.com

<https://irispopescu.com/>

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- Send us a message if you need extra info at: communication@urbact.eu

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