



The **HERCITY** Guide

Mainstreaming inclusion in
sustainable urban development through
gender-transformative innovation



UN-HABITAT



SHARED
CITY
FOUNDATION

Disclaimer

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations, or its Member States. Excerpts may be reproduced without authorization, on condition that the source is indicated.

Project managers: Elin Andersdotter Fabre, Tove Levonen

Project supervisors: Laura Petrella, Thomas Melin

Authors: Elin Andersdotter Fabre, Tove Levonen, Asmae El Rhazi, Katriya Bulutoglu
Contributors: Christelle Lahoud, Chiara Martinuzzi, Angela Mwai, Maia Smillie, Pontus Westerberg, Jose Chong, Daniela Chong, Bobae Lee, Laure Garel, Claudia Scheufler, Francesca Lionetti, Thuy Trang Nguyen, Sharon Ogoti, Samuel Gachohi Njuguna, Martino Miraglia, Sophie Lena Heuser, Nikita Sehmi, Joanna Muya, Xiaoqing Wang, Shamoy Hajare, Kate Cotty, Pinar Caglin, Mario Palomino, Avril Bundale, Ludovica Brambilla, Naomi Hoogervorst

External experts: Celine D'Cruz, Inga Björk-Klevby, Joe Mulligan, Kacper Pietruszk, Lovisa Burfitt, Marcus Nyberg, Mariann Eriksson, Ola Möller, Jordan Lane, Sara Ferlander, Tove Derner, Märta Westerberg, Moné Ukonu, Viktoria Walldin, Malin Jureit, Rebecca Sellei, Patrick Gustafsson, Giorgia Ziliani, Paris Song, Victoria Escobar

Design and layout: Malin Jureit, Chiara Martinuzzi, Asmae El Rhazi, Tove Levonen

All rights reserved

United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

P. O. Box 30030, 00100 Nairobi GPO Kenya

Tel: 254-020-7623120 (Central Office)

www.unhabitat.org

Shared City Foundation

www.sharedcity.se

Copyright © United Nations Human Settlements Programme & Shared City Foundation
Fourth edition 2025 (third edition 2023, second edition 2022, first edition 2021)

Cover photo © Shutterstock

ISBN: 978-91-88331-37-3

Her City is a joint urban development initiative developed and facilitated by UN-Habitat (the United Nations Human Settlements Programme) and the Shared City Foundation. Her City is the result of the Urban Girls Movement launched in 2017 with the purpose to map efficient methods and tools that contribute to increased equality and inclusion in urban development. Its setup was funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Swedish Innovation Agency (Vinnova) and the independent think tank Global Utmaning.

The **HERCITY** Guide

Mainstreaming inclusion in
sustainable urban development through
gender-transformative innovation





Table of Contents

Foreword UN-Habitat	8
Foreword Shared City Foundation	9
Introduction Mainstreaming inclusion through gender equality	10
User guide The process	11
Set-up phase	19
Block 0: Mainstreaming inclusion	20
<i>Tools in action: Multi-scale planning in Nepal</i>	29
Assessment phase	30
Block 1: Stakeholder engagement	32
<i>Tools in action: Mainstreaming inclusion in Nairobi</i>	36
Block 2: Citywide assessment	38
<i>Tools in action: Environment in Kampala</i>	45
Block 3: Site specific assessment	46
Design phase	54
Block 4: Analysing challenges	56
Block 5: Designing ideas	62
<i>Tools in action: Crisis in Mozambique</i>	68
Block 6: Recommendations for action	70
<i>Tools in action: Public-private partnerships in Botkyrka</i>	75
Implementation phase	76
Block 7: Plans and designs	78
Block 8: Sharing results	84
<i>Tools in action: Policy making in Palestine</i>	89
Block 9: Construction and maintenance	90
<i>Tools in action: Construction in Lima</i>	95
Follow-up phase	96
Block 10: Monitoring and evaluation	98
<i>Tools in action: VLR-based Monitoring & Evaluation in Costa Rica</i>	104
Lessons learned Building capacity for gender-transformative cities	105
Annex Tools overview	112



This is what many cities around the world look like: Too often cities do not work for girls, they are unsafe, dirty unwelcoming and inaccessible.



Illustration @ Lovisa Burfitt

Foreword

UN-Habitat



In 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action set forth a bold agenda for advancing women's rights and their place in society. As we mark its 30th anniversary with 'Beijing+30' this year, gender equality is being threatened and even pushed back in several parts of the world. As UN-Habitat prepares for next years' Quito+10 - the decade jubilee of the New Urban Agenda - we need to reaffirm that our global commitment to sustainable urban development of cities, is putting forward a shared vision for the equal enjoyment of cities for everyone, including all women and girls in their diversity. Now and in the future.

Over the past years, we have witnessed both progress and setbacks in the global fight for gender equality across regions, countries and cities. During this period the world has become more urban, and by 2050, 70% of the world's population is expected to live in cities. Cities that are yet to be built. The global housing crisis already affects 2,8 billion persons experiencing inadequate housing globally. If current trends continue, an estimated 1.05 billion women and girls will be living in slum-like conditions by 2050. This crisis poses major risks for women and girls and actions to address this cannot wait.

The joint progress of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 - to achieve gender equality - and SDG 11 - sustainable cities and communities - has been slow. The surge in anti-feminist culture and violence has increased inequality, fuelling exclusion and negatively impacting women and girl's 'right to the city'. More than 50% of the world's population are female but only 5% of the world's cities are led by women. The political gender gap is expected to take more than 145 years to close on its current trajectory.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are long-standing crosscutting issues and key priorities for UN-Habitat. We work to ensure that gender equality is systematically integrated into all activities, and that cities increasingly formulate and implement sustainable urbanization policies that promote gender equality at all levels. Based on our work across different countries and cities, we know that mainstreaming human rights, gender equality and social inclusion in cities' everyday planning, design and implementation processes is more important than ever. A city can only thrive when everyone in the city thrives.

This is why guiding cities to make a difference on the ground is a key part of our mandate at UN-Habitat. Together with our partners, we support urban actors in advancing gender equality at the local level regardless of push backs and political trends. Her City facilitates the mainstreaming of gender and intersectional dimensions at different scales of the urban development process, influencing the planning, design, management and long-term policy-making of cities.

As we launch this new and updated Her City guide, we hope it will equip cities with the tools required to embed community perspectives across different scales of the urban process. Urban development is a transformative force, including for women's empowerment. It can create more equitable, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable societies. Allowing cities to harness this potential is vital if we are to make sure that no one and no place is left behind.

Anacláudia Rossbach

United Nations Under-Secretary General
and Executive Director,
UN-Habitat

Foreword

Shared City Foundation



Urban development will make or break our pursuit of sustainable societies. Urbanisation brings enormous challenges, both in terms of social inequalities and for the environment.

Our cities already account for 70% of CO₂ emissions. The combined implications of gender inequality and the climate crisis are posing a threat to the safety, health and way of life for women and girls around the world. According to the [UN Women's Gender Snapshot report](#) from 2024, climate change threatens to push up to 158 million women and girls into poverty by 2050. Urban women and girls are acutely vulnerable to the multiple effects of climate insecurity, disproportionately bearing responsibility for food, water and fuel and more at-risk from the effects of extreme weather.

Poorly or unplanned urban areas are often followed by widened gaps between the city and rural areas, urban centres and outskirts, and between different groups in society. Compared to men, women are more dependent on adequate public transport systems for full participation in public life. At the same time, 3 in 5 women globally report experiencing sexual harassment on public transport.

In general, women and girls benefit less from urbanisation and urban spaces than men and boys. Among the most affected by inequalities are women in socioeconomically disadvantaged urban areas who experience oppression, lack of opportunities and social exclusion as a result. In fact, women and girls in cities will face a range of specific barriers and vulnerabilities in the form of gender based discrimination. This vulnerability further increases when gender is coupled with other grounds for discrimination such as age, economic status, disabilities, minorities, ethnicity or sexual orientation.

At the same time UN Women report that women drive change across sectors by leading behavior change and consumer attitudes. According to [UN News in 2025](#), investing 1\$ in girls and their education has shown to give an almost triple return for the global economy.

Women and girls are systematically excluded and deprived of basic infrastructure, services, and opportunities. Women and minorities are unequally represented in decision-making processes, which in turn inhibits women's participation in important processes such as policy-development, climate-related urban planning and overall city planning including access to public spaces.

Research as well as our experience show that participatory urban development with groups in risk of marginalisation, local actors, as well as multi-level decision-makers, creates opportunities for more inclusive, equal and sustainable urban development.

Thus, Her City provides an opportunity to build capacity on a larger scale. Her City provides municipal professionals, urban actors and local decision-makers with a solid toolbox for mainstreaming youth, gender and socioeconomic perspectives by strategically involving girls and young women in urban planning and design.

Cities are powerful arenas for real change. It is on the local level that global agendas meet reality and are put to the test. Bold policy and strategic priorities on a local level has the potential to encourage behavior change, reducing emissions as well as social gaps in a time and cost efficient manner. Cities have to take the lead to ensure sustainable and prosperous futures.

Thomas Melin

Chairman of the Board,
Shared City Foundation

Introduction

Mainstreaming inclusion through gender equality

The first edition of the 'Her City Guide' was published in 2021, as a written version of the Her City online platform <http://hercity.org>. It had evolved from the urgent need to address a fundamental gap in urban development.

Cities are not designed with the needs of girls and women in mind, often making public spaces feel unsafe, inaccessible, and unwelcoming. One main reason is that they are rarely given the opportunity to influence the planning and design of their surroundings, leaving their voices unheard in decisions that shape their daily lives.

Her City is our answer. By offering a transformative alternative to conventional urban planning approaches, the methodology challenges exclusion and asks a simple yet powerful question - 'If girls designed cities, how different would they be?' This approach not only empowers girls but fosters cities that are better for all.

More than 7 years after the first Her City project in Botkyrka, Sweden, we know that when given the opportunity, women and girls plan with sustainability, inclusivity and accessibility in mind, developing infrastructure and making decisions which benefit all. In 2025, Her City has reached 1500 registered users in 540 cities, 430 independent initiatives and 30 UN partnership projects delivered, impacting over 800,000 people. 'Beijing+30' is a timely moment to reflect on the impact of Her City and see how the methodology can be improved and scaled.

Acknowledging the role gender plays in urban spaces, there is a need to mainstream a gendered approach into any urban development process.

In this sense, this fourth edition is broadening its scope to mainstream inclusion in urban development, with gender from an intersectional perspective across age, race, ethnicity, abilities or socio-economic status as a starting point.

This opportunity to broaden the toolbox has also allowed Her City to expand on several areas which ensure sustained impact. The updated guide includes a wider range of guidance and tools for monitoring and evaluation; planning across urban scales; construction, management and maintenance; policy-making, mainstreaming strategies, and scaling; and inclusive urban development for humanitarian and emergency situations.

These additions build on the needs on the ground expressed by our implementing colleagues and partners in the field, and their practices have informed these new additions making Her City even more relevant. We have put special attention into adding case studies illustrating these new applications.

An inclusive city is a stronger city. The Her City Guide is more than a toolbox; it is a roadmap for transformation. We invite policymakers, planners, and communities to embrace this approach and work together to shape cities that truly serve everyone.



**stakeholders
are informed**



**stakeholders
are participating**



**stakeholders
are leading**

Users guide

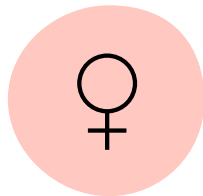
The process

Taking a gender transformative and participatory approach to urban development will make the city better for everyone. If we let inhabitants that are rarely heard be the experts, our cities and communities will become more inclusive, equal and sustainable.

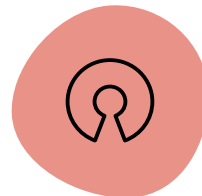
The purpose of this initiative is to make methods and tools available to urban actors and cities globally. We support cities to scale up and mainstream gender-transformative participation in planning as a part of their long-term strategies to build sustainable cities and societies.

Together with experts and stakeholders in urban development, we have created a toolbox for a cost-efficient process to mainstream gender transformative urban planning within cities and communities. Her City guides urban actors to implement projects with a unique and step-by-step methodology through an open and digitally accessible platform for all.

Split across 5 phases, the toolbox illustrates the urban development process: The set-up, followed by the assessment, design, and implementation phases, and finally the follow-up phase. Each phase consists of blocks that lead you through a number of activities with detailed steps to follow in order to deliver on your Her City project.



Support urban development from a girl's perspective



Provide an open and digitally accessible platform for all



Guide urban actors to implement projects through a step-by-step methodology



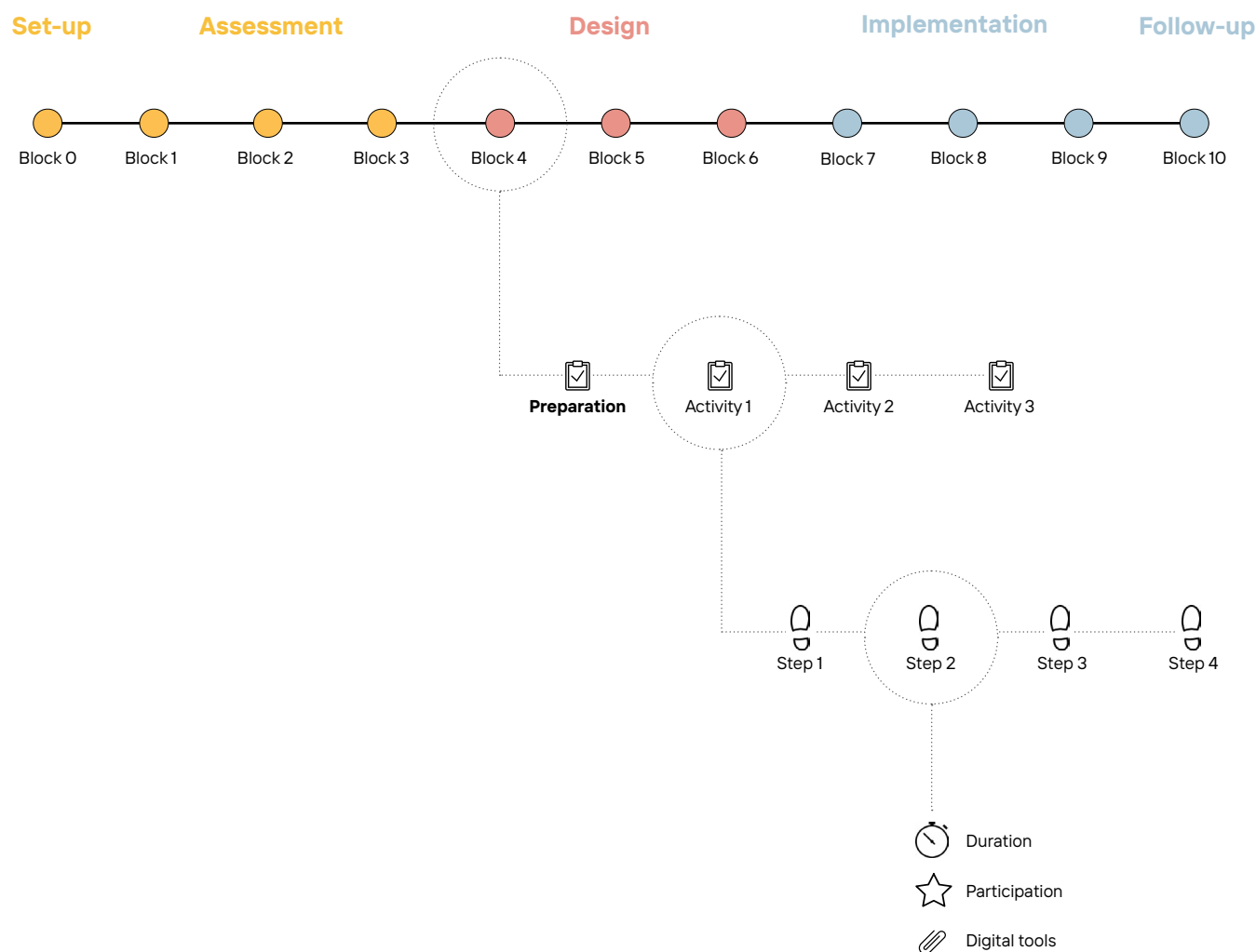
Facilitate an ongoing dialogue between professionals and citizens

Each step contains digital tools such as checklists, agendas, manuals, forms, boards, apps, templates, surveys and visualization services that will help you on the way to reach the expected results.

As guidance, the majority of the toolbox is intended for the local project team. As an indication for the involvement of stakeholders, all participants are expected to be actively involved in block 4-6, while smaller groups will participate in block 2-3 and 7-9. The level of participation is indicated with stars: one star means that the local team is leading the activity, two stars indicate that stakeholders are involved (participating) in the activity, and three stars is when they are taking the lead in an activity.

In this edition, we have added inspirational case studies with examples from an increasingly wide range of contexts in which Her City has been applied. These 'Tools in action' illustrate how the toolbox has been applied, tailored, further developed in specific contexts to guarantee the contribution of the groups most in need of being heard. These cases also illustrate the new additions to this version of the toolbox, and how you can use them in similar contexts.

To make maximum use of this guide, you should register an account in the Her City Toolbox through <https://hercity.org/register> and be logged in to view all the tools.



Set-up



Block 0



Block 0

Mainstreaming inclusion



Duration
4 weeks

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Desk review



Steps
23

Activity 2 | Multi-scale planning

Activity 3 | M&E framework

Assessment

Block 1

Block 2

Block 3



Block 1

Stakeholder engagement



Duration
4 weeks



Steps
10

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Stakeholder mapping

Activity 2 | Engaging participants



Block 2

City wide assessment



Duration
7 weeks



Steps
15

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Data gathering training

Activity 2 | Collecting data

Activity 3 | Analysing data



Block 3

Site specific assessment



Duration
7 weeks



Steps
17

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Data gathering

Activity 2 | Producing maps

Activity 3 | Quality scoring

Design

Block 4

Block 5

Block 6



Block 4

Analysing challenges



Duration
2 weeks



Steps
17

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Define current situation

Activity 2 | Understand challenges

Activity 3 | Define joint vision

Activity 4 | Generate ideas



Block 5

Designing ideas



Duration
5 weeks



Steps
16

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Installation and practice

Activity 2 | Block by block workshop

Activity 3 | Presentations



Block 6

Recommendations for action



Duration
1 week



Steps
11

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Prioritising

Activity 2 | Realising proposal

Activity 3 | Adopting action plans

Implementation

Block 7

Block 8

Block 9



Block 7

Plans and designs



Duration
4 weeks

Preparation | Setting-up



Steps
15

Activity 1 | Expert design meeting

Activity 2 | Finalising plans

Activity 3 | Design validation



Block 8

Sharing results



Duration
2 weeks

Preparation | Setting-up



Steps
11

Activity 1 | Gathering results

Activity 2 | Public presentation



Block 9

Construction and maintenance



Duration
–

Preparation | Setting-up



Steps
13

Activity 1 | Participatory construction

Activity 2 | Quality control

Activity 3 | Management and maintenance

Follow-up

Block 10



Block 10

Monitoring and evaluation



Duration
4 weeks



Steps
17

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Monitor and measure impact

Activity 2 | Evaluate and share impact

Activity 3 | Policy-making and scaling



SET-UP

phase

Block 0 | Mainstreaming inclusion



Block 0



Mainstreaming inclusion



Duration
4 weeks



Steps
23

The purpose of Block 0 is to establish the gender transformative framework from which the project will develop. By taking the time to identify and map the primary aims, target groups, and interconnections between the project and different scales of governance and decision-making, the programme will be more effectively tailored to achieve intended outcomes.



It is used for:

Setting up a clear project framework including work plan, budget and communication.

Gathering contextual knowledge to understand local conditions and influencing factors.

Developing a framework for monitoring and evaluation (M&E) based on a theory of change with clear goals, outcomes and indicators.

Mainstreaming inclusion into various urban scales by defining levels of intervention and engagement strategies.



The result:

A clear project plan based on effective stakeholder engagement, along with a measurable impact framework, addressing the complexity of the issues at stake.



The activities:

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Desk review

Activity 2 | Multiscale planning

Activity 3 | M&E framework



Preparation

Duration

🕒 1 week

Setting-up

In order to run a successful project, it has to be carefully planned. As a project owner you need to identify the project team members and their roles, discuss objectives and plan the work ahead in detail. You also need to set up the necessary infrastructure to roll out the project, including funding and budget, documentation and communication.



Step 1 | Project team

The project will be led by a project team of professionals usually represented by the project owner. Identify the members of the project team, their roles and gather their contact details. Select a suitable team leader. Make sure that the team is as diverse as possible, ensuring gender parity, but if possible also representing marginalised groups (for example persons with disabilities, refugees, migrants, internally displaced persons, older persons, youth, etc.). Add your team members one at a time. Click submit and then 'submit another response' to add a new stakeholder.

[List stakeholders](#)



Step 2 | Project overview

Organise a first project meeting with the project team to define the framework for the project. Write a short overview of your project and analyse which Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets and indicators, and the New Urban Agenda principles are most relevant.

[Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\)](#)

[New Urban Agenda](#)

[Project overview](#)



Step 3 | Project funding

Secure funding sources to ensure the project's successful implementation and long-term sustainability. Identify potential funding streams, including grants, local government support, private sector partnerships, local savings groups or crowd-funding. Gender budgeting is the tool to ensure that public funds benefit women. Participatory budgeting is another inclusive process that gives inhabitants of the city a say in how public funds are spent. If applicable, you can advocate for including your proposal as part of your city's mechanisms for participatory budgeting.

[Gender transformative budgeting](#)

[Participatory budgeting](#)



Step 4 | Work plan & budget

Here is a list of all activities that you will need to include in your project. Set dates and book locations for all the activities throughout the project. Develop a budget that outlines key expenses such as trainings, materials, compensation of stakeholders, construction etc. In addition, specific support systems might have to be put in place to ensure a truly inclusive process (childcare, transportation, bundles etc). Establish financial oversight mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability in fund allocation.

[Work plan & budget](#)

Step 5 | Communication

Set up a communication strategy and create social media accounts or a Hashtag for the project to communicate the latest updates with the community and decision-makers. You may wish to use the #HerCity hashtag in your posts, as well as the location of your project.

Step 6 | Documentation

In order to gather and access your data throughout the project, visit your personalised online results page. You can also create a shared drive that is accessible to all project team members (for agreements, budgets, project plans etc). Be careful to always make sure that the data stored is safe and you're working in line with your local and or national privacy guidelines.

 [My results](#)





Activity 1

Duration

🕒 1 week

Desk review

This activity will provide the necessary background knowledge. It will help you to review the existing planning frameworks and urban policies in place. It will finally guide you through the gathering of basic spatial and statistical data about the local context.



Step 1 | Intersectional analysis

As you gather the necessary background knowledge, review planning frameworks, urban policies, spatial and statistical data, a gender-analysis is key. An intersectional approach will shed light on unseen perspectives, challenging social norms. It will ensure an evidence-based understanding of the specific context leaving no one behind. It will make you aware of some of the key dynamics mapping stakeholders at risk of exclusion. This will inform more efficient and adequate decision-making. Throughout the activity, keep the following questions in mind:

- General studies about women might not tell you about the diversity of the female experience.
- Make sure to include sources that portray a variety of female perspectives related to urban space
- Consider how the lived experience differs between women from different demographics such as indigenous women, trans women, refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs)
- Specific groups face systematic exclusion, some women lack identity documents, or other permissions, without which they cannot participate in public life
- Other women are culturally excluded and we are unaware of their existence



Step 2 | Literature review

Conduct a literature review of key transdisciplinary and crosscutting topics such related to gender and social inclusion in sustainable urban development. Key concepts include gender equality, inclusion, mainstreaming, innovation, acceleration, sustainable urban development, SDG localization, cities for all etc. Visit the Her City Library to explore relevant publications to start with.

 [Her City Library](#)



Step 3 | Policy review

Review urban policies, urban institutional structures, governance and the planning frameworks currently in place. Learn how the planning system is structured, which level of government and institutions are responsible for planning, what are the existing participatory mechanisms in place and who they impact.

- Explore existing gender-disaggregated data, including spatial data if existing, from official public sources
- Key laws, regulations and policies to consider throughout the project
- Understand the governance ecosystem and institutions involved in shaping and implementing these policies
- Explore the current place and role of women and youth within these practices
- Add people centred smart cities guidelines
- Institutional and human resource structure, with gender-disaggregated information

Step 4 | Statistical and spatial data

Gather any available open data related to spatial and statistical information about the place. Make sure to use gender and other disaggregated data where this applies.

- Maps - Historical, updated and interactive maps at various city scales
- Infrastructure - Geo-referenced data of public space networks, road networks and green-blue infrastructure
- Census - Recent census or household surveys
- Urban studies - Recent studies about specific urban issues (flooding, traffic congestion, crime, etc)
- Social studies - Recent studies about social issues such as the culture and the role of women in society (newspapers, articles, media, etc)

Step 5 | Navigating through crisis

Setting up local participatory projects in a crisis setting presents a specific set of challenges. Understanding the intricate context will help the project to tailor strategies that mitigate risks and leverage opportunities. It establishes a contextual foundation that bridges broader urban objectives with local needs and challenges. By evaluating these particularly complex situations related to extreme inequality, conflict, crisis or emergencies, the project can identify strategic opportunities and ensure interventions are well-integrated within the larger urban fabric:

- Poverty and informal settlements
- Migration (refugee camps, internally displaced populations, host communities)
- Natural disasters and climate emergencies
- Conflict and post-war reconstruction
- Disease outbreaks

 [Her City in Crisis](#)



Activity 2

Duration

🕒 1 week

Multi-scale planning

This activity focuses on identifying the appropriate scale of the project. By studying these different scales, the project can identify strategic opportunities for gender-transformative and well-integrated interventions within the larger urban fabric. Based on the geographical boundaries of the project, select the adequate scale below. Independent of scale, note that the Her City stakeholder engagement in Block 1 is your tool to mainstream inclusion throughout your initiative.



Step 1 | Public space

The Her City's people-centred approach to urban development initially focuses on the immediate surroundings closest to people's homes - the public space. If public space is the focus of your project, proceed step-by-step with the Her City Toolbox Block 2 or Block 3.

📎 [Global Public Space Toolkit](#)

📎 [Her City Library](#)



Step 2 | Neighbourhood planning

To strengthen a neighbourhood scale planning within your Her City project, examine the My Neighbourhood framework. It provides a comprehensive checklist of urban design principles for various cultural and geographical contexts, ensuring an integrated approach.

📎 [MY Neighbourhood Framework](#)

📎 [My Neighbourhood Methodology](#)

📎 [Our City Plans for Neighbourhoods](#)



Step 3 | City-scale planning

To complement the city-wide scale, you can explore the Our City Plans Toolbox. This participatory guide allows you to develop different types of plans at the city scale (strategic development plan, spatial plan, land management plan), considering thematic areas to focus strategies and interventions around the priority areas of your city.

📎 [Our City Plans for City-scale](#)



Step 4 | Regional planning

For an additional regional scale, explore the framework for spatial development. This supports strategic decision-making for metropolitan, regional, subnational, national, and transnational governments, guiding where, what, why, and how to prioritise investments for the spatial implementation of development policies and strategies.

📎 [Spatial Development Framework](#)

Step 5 | Across scales planning

For a holistic urban development focus across scales, The Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities brings together key urban actors to build a shared knowledge base, strengthen global capacity, and support cities in advancing proximity as a powerful accelerator for socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable urban development.

-  [Sustainable Proximities Methodology](#)
-  [Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities](#)

Step 6 | Synthesise findings

Compile insights into a coherent report that outlines the relationship between scales and suggests pathways for integration into the project plan. These findings will inform decisions in subsequent activities, ensuring a holistic approach that considers regional, city-wide, or local scales.



UN-Habitat facilitator and data collectors testing the tool in a public space in Sharjah, UAE
© Sharjah Urban Planning Council



Activity 3

Duration

🕒 1 week

M&E framework

This activity will support you in establishing the framework to follow up on programme outcomes and impacts. It will guide you through the process of establishing intended objectives, mapping the route to achieve them and setting indicators to measure progress. It will also provide you with a set a baseline from which to monitor changes.



Step 1 | Sustainability impact

The 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets and indicators is the global official framework for sustainability impact, hence the basis for monitoring and evaluation of change. You might also be interested in exploring the Urban Monitoring Framework (UMF).

- 🔗 [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDG\)](#)
- 🔗 [The New Urban Agenda](#)
- 🔗 [The Urban Monitoring Framework](#)



Step 2 | Sustainability diagnostic

To evaluate which goals, targets and indicators that are most relevant for your project, you can use existing tools for SDG and UMF diagnostics developed to support cities in identifying acute challenges to accelerate progress towards the SDG.

- 🔗 [SDG Cities](#)
- 🔗 [City Scan Data Tool](#)
- 🔗 [Governance - SDG Diagnostic Tool](#)
- 🔗 [Planning - SDG Diagnostic Tool](#)
- 🔗 [Mobility - SDG Diagnostic Tool](#)
- 🔗 [Safety - Urban Safety Monitor](#)



Step 3 | Theory of change

Revisit the project overview to develop a Theory of Change. Connect the project aim, objectives and activities with SDG indicators. Use the template to map change pathways by working backwards from the desired change and asking what needs to change for the desired outcome to occur.

- 🔗 [Her City Theory of Change](#)



Step 4 | M&E Framework

Select or develop a framework for monitoring and evaluation, in addition to local indicators. Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) can be a useful system for cities to officially track local progress related to the SDGs. It is a way to align project outcomes and activities with global sustainability agendas and feed into the city's broader sustainability reporting.

- 🔗 [Action-oriented Voluntary Local Reviews](#)
- 🔗 [Voluntary Local Reviews overview](#)
- 🔗 [SDG Localization: Planning for change with SDGs](#)

Step 5 | Indicator selection

Specific indicators set up for the project helps to monitor progress of the project at a granular level, and gender and other disaggregated data are specifically relevant to track inclusion. In addition to local project indicators, we encourage you to select relevant SDG indicators that your project will contribute to. This is a great way of keeping track of how your project relates to the SDGs. The SDG indicator selection, baseline data, and eventually the progress of your project, can be shared with your city to feed into their VLR SDG reporting contributing to your country's national reporting to the United Nations.

-  [Action-oriented gender-transformative VLRs](#)
-  [Gender-transformative SDG indicators](#)

Step 6 | Create baseline

Collect available data on identified indicators. Make sure data is disaggregated at least by gender and age. Where you can, use multiple data sources to triangulate and validate evidence on the current situation. If the data for your selected indicators is currently unavailable, you collect additional SDG related baseline data, ensuring a human rights-based approach, in Block 2 and Block 3, together with community members.

-  [Measure public space](#)



Stories of change

Tools in action

MULTI-SCALE PLANNING IN NEPAL

Location: Dhangadhi sub-metropolitan city, Lamkichuha municipality, Birendranagar municipality, Sunwal municipality, Tansen municipality, Chandragiri municipality. Nepal

Time: August 2024 – ongoing

Partners: EU, USAID, UNOPS, UN-Habitat, Cities Alliance

The 'Cities 4 Women' project, funded by the EU and USAID and implemented by UNOPS, UN-Habitat and Cities Alliance, aims to enhance the demand for gender-responsive, climate-resilient public spaces through participatory urban planning and design. By evaluating community-prioritized open spaces based on risk and accessibility, the project focuses on co-designing these areas. Engaging a diverse range of stakeholders including children, youth, senior citizens, local leaders, and women's groups, the project emphasises inclusivity and collective ownership throughout the design process. The co-design workshops facilitate collaboration among these stakeholders, allowing them to share ideas and develop context-specific solutions that meet community needs in public open spaces. The project also aims at policy guidance at national level.



[+ Read more](#)



Co-design workshops with girls and young women
© UN-Habitat



Collective mapping with multi-stakeholders
© UN-Habitat

The project shows how Her City can be operationalised and tailored to fit an across the scales approach ranging from nation-wide municipal strategies, to city-wide planning and public space interventions. It has informed the development of the across the scales guide in this edition capitalising on the rich experience of UN-Habitat in urban planning across different urban scales.

ASSESSMENT

phase

Block 1 | Stakeholder engagement

Block 2 | City wide assessment

Block 3 | Site specific assessment



Block 1



Stakeholder engagement



Duration
4 weeks



Steps
10

The purpose of Block 1 is to identify and recruit stakeholders and target groups to participate in the project. Stakeholders and target groups will be key in carrying out data collection, assessment, visioning planning and design process.



It is used for:

Setting up the groundwork for the stakeholder mapping activity.

Mapping relevant stakeholders, secondary and primary target groups.

Gathering knowledge about important stakeholders and analysing their roles.

Inviting participants and defining terms of engagement for the relevant scale.



The result:

A representative multi-stakeholder team to mainstream inclusion throughout the entire process.



The activities:

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Stakeholder mapping

Activity 2 | Engaging participants

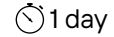


Preparation

Participation



Duration



Setting-up

This activity sets the groundwork for the stakeholder mapping activity, ensuring the right people are in the room to map local networks, partners and dynamics.



Step 1 | Documentation

Make sure you have uploaded all collected data and documentation in the platform, for everyone to easily access through the results page.

 [My results](#)



Step 2 | List stakeholders

Make a preliminary list of stakeholders related to the project. This activity is crucial to ensure the participation of key actors from different sectors and the representation of groups at risk of marginalisation. Be mindful to consider the entire process ahead, including all relevant stakeholders from the start. Mainstream inclusion throughout your project, by ensuring gender parity and concentrating a wide range of expertise in the primary target group. Ensure intersecting perspectives by including multiple human rights dimensions (age, economic status, disabilities, minorities, ethnicity and sexual orientation etc). It is recommended to specifically reach out to representatives of organised constituent groups. With stakeholders we intend all necessary actors with links to the current area or project. They should include:

- Project team and internal key professionals
- Primary target group (the core group of participants you want to involve)
- Secondary target group (external public, private, research and civil society representatives, grassroots and community organisations, including key decision-makers)

 [List of stakeholders](#)



Step 3 | Start-up meeting

Arrange a workshop for activity 1, at which the whole project team can be present. Ensure that the members of the team have knowledge of the local area and community dynamics. Review the project overview and relevant documentation together.



Activity 1

Participation



Duration

🕒 2 weeks

Stakeholder mapping

The diversity of stakeholders will be crucial to execute the project successfully and particularly guaranteeing that gender, age and perspectives of those marginalized are mainstreamed throughout the process. A stakeholder mapping exercise should be conducted to identify who the relevant stakeholders are, their power, relations, interests, mandates and links to the project.



Step 1 | Social network

When you have a draft list of stakeholders, map their relations to each other, the space and the project. List women representatives where possible. Position each stakeholder considering their level of power and affinity. If useful, draw lines and arrows between stakeholders to represent their relations, using different colours for each type of relation (a green line to identify collaborative relations, a red line for conflict relations etc.). The term "power" refers to the institutional, financial and/or social influence of an actor on the decision-making process of the project. The term "affinity" refers to the political, financial and/or social interest and commitment of an actor to the project.

[Stakeholder mapping](#)



Step 2 | Target groups

Identify the target groups, ensuring there is a balance in terms of gender, age, ability, and other factors that could lead to marginalization related to the context.

- The primary target group is typically a selection of approximately 20-40 participants (selected from an intersecting gender lens) that will participate in the project and work collaboratively with the secondary target group. The size of this group is approximately 3/1 of the secondary target group.
- The secondary target group is a selection of professionals (around 10) that are key actors to implement the project. They will participate in the project, cooperate with the other participants and support the process. The size of this group is approximately 1/3 of the primary target group.



Step 3 | Shortlist participants

Make a final list of selected stakeholders specifying their roles in the project. Collect their details and prepare an e-mailing list. Ensure the following criteria are respected:

- The list contains at least 30 people ensuring a majority from a gender and intersectional perspective
- The primary target group is in the majority
- All implementing actors are present



Activity 2

Participation



Duration

⌚ 2 weeks

Engaging participants

This activity helps you to invite the participants based on the level of participation in each activity. As an indication, the entire group is expected to participate actively in block 4-6. In addition, smaller groups will participate in block 2-3 and 7-9.



Step 1 | Draft invitation

Draft an invitation including the following elements:

- What is the objective of the project?
- Why is participation important for the project?
- Which activities will be conducted?
- Will the participants be compensated for their participation and how?
- How will the project be communicated?
- Where and when will the activities take place?



Step 2 | Send invitation

Send an official invitation early including all activities of the project. In order to reach out and engage a more diverse group of participants, also consider the possibility to communicate using alternative languages, information formats, sign-language, closed captioning or tactile models. Depending on the context and target group, consider the most useful and accessible platform for communication. Educational institutions and grassroots organisations representing the target group might help facilitate the recruitment. Arrangements to facilitate participation should also be considered and communication such as support with childcare, transport, accessibility, translation etc.

 [Confetti meetings](#)



Step 3 | Secondary engagement

If you realise that the main target group is not represented among participants, be prepared to conduct a secondary engagement phase targeting specific communities. Reaching out to specific organisations which represent or work with the communities you are struggling to engage is recommended here.



Step 4 | Agreements

To clarify expectations, set up agreements between participants, stakeholders and the project team. It formalises the different roles and clearly states the responsibilities throughout the project. Participants should also sign a consent form for participating in the project, engaging with the initiative, and giving you and your team permission to document the process. For minors, parents need to sign. The agreements should cover the following:

 [Terms of service](#)
 [Consent form](#)

Stories of change

Tools in action

MAINSTREAMING INCLUSION IN NAIROBI

Location: Dunga road and Dundori road,
Industrial Area, Nairobi County, Kenya

Time: June 2021 – December 2023

Partners: GoDown Arts Centre, UN-Habitat,
Global Utmaning, Planning Systems, White
Architects

'Her City - Her Streets' by the GoDown Arts Centre aims to improve the Dunga and Dundori streets around the upcoming New GoDown Cultural Arts Complex in Nairobi together with UN-Habitat and partners. It aims at more accessible streets and inclusive public spaces, accommodating a diversity of shared commercial, social, and cultural activities and inviting all Nairobians to become a part of the new cultural hub. 100 multistakeholders contributed to 1 site, potentially impacting 5,000 daily lives.



[+ Read more](#)

The project shows how Her City can mainstream inclusion beyond young women, girls and intersectionality. The project successfully involved county and city officials, a range of different private actors, representatives in the informal economy, educational institutions, along with a wide range of citizens and professionals.



Children giving their vision of Her City in Nairobi industrial area
© UN-Habitat



The new Godown designed in Minecraft by the participants
© UN-Habitat



Collecting data with girls on the state of the space
© UN-Habitat



Block 2



City wide assessment



Duration
7 weeks



Steps
15

The city-wide public space assessment aims to assess the state of urban spaces at the city scale and to identify which areas are in most urgent need of improvement. It gathers geo-referenced information about public space accessibility, distribution, network and quality, using data collected by a diverse group of participants.



It is used for:

Gathering information about the city-wide public space network and its quality.

Training and supporting the participants to use KoBo Toolbox application to collect data.

Analysing the data collected and identifying key challenges of the public spaces.

Prioritizing public spaces that are in need of great, moderate or smaller improvement.



The result:

A city level analysis based on participants' observations and a list with their top priority spaces to be improved.



The activities:

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Training

Activity 2 | Collecting data

Activity 3 | Analysing data



Preparation

Setting-up

Participation



Duration

🕒 2 weeks

This activity aims to organise the public space citywide assessment for networks of urban spaces and areas on a city scale, learn about digital data gathering tools and prepare the required material, such as the questionnaire that will be used by the participants to gather information with KoBo Toolbox.



Step 1 | Send reminder

Don't forget to send a reminder to the participants with all the activities related to the city wide public space assessment (training, data collection and data analysis).



Step 2 | Explore KoBo

KoBo Toolbox is an open source and offline application that allows to collect georeferenced data by filling questionnaires, uploading pictures and quickly visualising the statistical results. KoBo can be downloaded on phones or used on the website and allows participants to download the data in different formats. Create a KoBo Toolbox account, install the app, and learn how to use it.



[KoBo Toolbox account](#)



[KoBo Toolbox app](#)



Step 3 | Prepare base map

QGIS is a free and open-source cross-platform desktop Geographic Information System (GIS) application that supports viewing, editing, and analysis of spatial data. Download the most suitable version of QGIS for your computer and install it. Consult the training manual to learn how to use QGIS. Create a public space base map with QGIS, if not already available:

- Create a file in QGIS, add layers and upload the data collected during the desk review.
- Draw polygons representing the open public spaces not mapped.
- Classify the public spaces considering the typology (park, playground, riverbank, square, etc).
- Identify areas for survey, dividing the city into smaller zones.



[Download QGIS](#)



[QGIS training manual](#)



Step 4 | Review questionnaire

At the city scale, the assessment analyses the public space network according to the public space surface, the distribution, the network, and the quality (including usage, accessibility, environment, amenities, safety, etc.). Review the questionnaire below to gather information about each space or area of the city. Questions could be open ended, closed or in the form of interview questions to other users on the site. Go to your account on Kobo and click 'view Kobo toolbox questionnaire'. Click 'upload an XLSForm' and use the following:



[Kobo Toolbox questionnaire](#)



[XLS form](#)

You might also want to conduct a specific safety audit or a more gender and youth specific exploratory walk. You can use questionnaires such as:

-  [Urban Walk \(group\)](#)
-  [Urban Walk \(individual\)](#)
-  [Safetipin](#)
-  [Safecity](#)

Step 5 | Prepare agenda

Prepare the agenda for the session and list participants as they register:

-  [Agenda template](#)
-  [List participants](#)



Exploratory walks in Sharjah, UAE © Sharjah Urban Planning Council



Activity 1

Participation



Duration

🕒 1 day

Data gathering training

Before the data collection begins, participants are trained on how to configure and use the KoBo Toolbox application to gather information about the public space. This session is also an opportunity to brief them about the importance of public spaces, key principles and main issues. As this is a safe space it is also a good opportunity to have an open discussion on their thoughts and ideas around inclusion and exclusion in the city.



Step 1 | Introduction

Welcome the participants and introduce the session with a presentation describing:

- What is the agenda of the training?
- What is the objective and scope of this activity?
- What is a sustainable city?
- What is gender equality?
- What is the international agenda for sustainable development?



Step 2 | Installation

Explain how to download and install KoBo Toolbox on a mobile phone and help the participants in the configuration process. Share the questionnaire with the participants and revise the list of questions, making sure they understand the questions, know when they should engage with other users in the space and how.

 [KoBo Toolbox](#)

 [City-wide public space assessment questionnaire](#)



Step 3 | Field visit

Run a field test with the participants in a public space. The participants should answer the questions, interview other users in the space when needed and submit the questionnaire. Then, the results and questions could be clarified in an open discussion.



Step 4 | Groups

Divide the participants into smaller groups of 3-5, considering their home location and assign teams to a geographical area of the city to collect data.



Activity 2

Participation



Duration



Collecting data

Data collectors are sent out into the field to gather information about selected spaces or areas, the built environment, housing, facilities and services. This activity is crucial to assess the quality of the public space network and the participants play the primary role. Each public space takes an average of 30 minutes to complete. Once completed, participants submit their answers in KoBo Toolbox and move to the next public space.



Step 1 | Data collection

The technical team should remain available during the data collection in case the participants encounters any problem in the field. They should be recommended to:

- Have their phones charged.
- Be at the centre of the site while taking the coordinated for the site on GPS.
- Keep the GPS on while capturing the data.
- Respond to the questions based on the current observations rather than previous knowledge.
- Respond to all the questions with red asterisks (*).
- Take at least five pictures for each public space. Photos should be taken from different angles showing different activities and characteristics of the site.
- Interview users when it is requested, capturing the point of view of different users.
- Be polite and careful while interviewing strangers.
- Not put themselves in any dangerous situation.



Step 2 | Questionnaire submission

Request the participants to submit the questionnaire while they are still on location and to wait until it is properly submitted before moving on to the next public space. The project team should verify the submission of the answers in KoBo.



[KoBo Toolbox account](#)



KoBo toolbox application





Activity 3

Analysing data

Participation



Duration

🕒 3 weeks

This activity aims to clean and analyse the data collected with QGIS, in order to identify main gaps and challenges in the public space network and prioritise among the public spaces that need interventions.



Step 1 | Data cleaning

Proper data cleaning is needed to remove typos, repetitions, inconsistent wording or capitalisation. This is crucial to generate statistics and compare public spaces at the city scale. Follow these instructions:

- Access to KoBo Toolbox and click on your city's project.
- Click on "view data" or on "view in map" to visualise your data.
- Download the questionnaire results as a CSV file.
- Edit any mistakes of the data collected in excel and save it.
- Download photos and media.



Step 2 | Data merging

To merge the questionnaire results with the public space map developed during the preparation activity, it is suggested to use QGIS and follow the instructions below. In case this is new to you, consult the manual again.

- Open the public spaces map QGIS file.
- Import the CSV file containing the questionnaire result and save them as a layer.
- Create "points" by selecting the coordinates in the questionnaire results layer and save it as a new layer, this will keep the information of the questionnaire results.
- Open the "attribute table" of the points layer and create a new field called "CODE".
- Compare the public space layer and the points to correlate each public space with the correct questionnaire results.
- Write the public space ID code in the "CODE" field of the points layer.
- Use the command "join" to merge the attribute tables of the points layer with the public space layer.
- Now your public space layer has embedded the data collected from the questionnaire.



[QGIS training manual](#)

Step 3 | Map analysis

Once the data collected has been integrated with the public space map, it is possible to compare the public spaces and analyse the condition of the network at the city scale. A spatial analysis should cover the following aspects:

- Accessibility (considering pedestrians, bikes, public transport, disabilities, care givers, etc).
- Distribution (considering a catchment area of 5 and 10 minutes walking distance).
- Surface (per inhabitants and ratio with city surface, comparing with national and international standards).
- Network (relation between public spaces, considering road network connecting the public spaces).
- Quality (in terms of use, variety of users, comfort, safety, environment, amenities)

 [City-wide public space assessment technical guide](#)

Step 4 | Prioritisation

The analysed maps highlight the city's key challenges (in terms of accessibility, distribution, quantity, network, quality) and which public spaces require urgent intervention.

- Overlap the maps and identify spaces and areas with multiple challenges.
- Make a list of issues for each public space.
- Review the municipality intentions for each public space and identify which would have the most impact at the city-scale (including on housing adequacy and access to infrastructure, facilities and basic services).
- Classify the spaces and areas that need the most, moderate and least improvements. Typically, public spaces with averagely poor conditions on all the dimensions require the most attention.

Stories of change

Tools in action

ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE IN KAMPALA

Location: Kamwanyi settlement, Kampala, Uganda

Time: April 2023 - December 2023

Partners: Holistic Action for Development and Empowerment, Dreamtown, CISU, Footmarks Initiative Uganda, Saromio Foundation, African Fibre Innovation Hub, Psychological Resilience Services, Center for Green Cities, UN-Habitat, Shared City Foundation, DANIDA

HADE and Dreamtown create spaces with and for women and girls using Her City Toolbox. They co-designed a new space for women in Kamwanyi including community spaces, safe green rooftops, market-places and improving livelihood and economic opportunities, combining productive social meeting spaces and income generating opportunities for women. 100 multi-stakeholders contributed to 1 multi-function site, impacting 5,000 daily lives.



[+ Read more](#)

"Kobo toolbox played a major role in gathering data directly from the people of Kamwanyi from identifying challenges to documenting daily life."

Ronah, from HADE



Ronah from HADE on the co-designed urban roof garden
© UN-Habitat



Her City mural in Kampala during the project activities
© UN-Habitat

The project shows how Her City is used to develop solutions for any thematic priority. Here it was operationalised and tailored to build community resilience with a focus on livelihoods, marketplaces, urban agriculture and greening. Besides showcasing how the approach can be used in particular emergency situations, it bears witness to the invaluable knowledge of local communities in developing climate responsive local solutions.

Block 3



Site specific assessment



Duration
7 weeks



Steps
17

Block 3 provides a methodology to assess and measure the quality of a selected open public space and its five minutes walking radius (equivalent to 400-meter distance). It describes a participatory and incremental process to gather and analyse information by and with participants through a series of activities and tools.



It is used for:

Gathering qualitative and quantitative information about a selected public space

Scoring quality of public space through the five spatial dimensions and twenty indicators

Informing the following phase related to visions and solutions



The result:

Detailed quantitative and qualitative data collected by participants on the state of the space that is considered a top priority for improvement.



The activities:

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Data gathering

Activity 2 | Producing maps

Activity 3 | Quality scoring



Preparation

Participation



Duration

⌚ 2 weeks

Setting-up

Before starting the site-specific assessment, take some time to learn about the five dimensions of public space quality, define the walkable radius, organise the activities and prepare the materials required during the sessions.



Step 1 | Send reminder

Don't forget to send a reminder to the participants with the activities related to the site-specific assessment (data collection, data analysis and quality scoring) along with instructions such as the following:

- Define turns for data collection sessions and assign smaller teams considering availability of stakeholders.
- Bring a phone charged with available storage, as well as a meter, pen and notebook.
- Use different tools such as mapping, note taking, photography, video, sound, counting people, etc. to gather information about the quality of the public space in terms of physical conditions, level of use and perception.
- Listen patiently, experience the space actively and interact with users, asking about their perception of the public space.



[Agenda template](#)



[List participants](#)



Step 2 | Explore the 5 dimensions

The quality of public spaces is assessed by 5 dimensions and 20 indicators, related to use & users, accessibility, amenities & furnitures, comfort and safety, and environment. Learn about these dimensions to support the questionnaire preparation. Gender sensitivity can vary from context to context. Integrate or avoid certain dimensions if not culturally appropriate.



[Public space site-specific assessment guide](#)



Step 3 | Review questionnaire

Get familiar with KoBo Toolbox by checking Block 2. Review the list of questions in KoBo Toolbox. Another option is to use some innovative apps to gather your data collectively. Inhabit Place is an intuitive smartphone application with a user-friendly interface for data collection to assess the quality of public spaces.



[General site specific assessment form](#)



[The Inhabit place toolkit](#)

You might also want to conduct a specific safety audit or a more gender and youth specific exploratory walk. You can use questionnaires such as:



[Urban Walk \(group\)](#)



[Urban Walk \(individual\)](#)



[Safetipin](#)



[Safecity](#)

Step 4 | Create base map

This map aims to define the perimeter of analysis around the site, the so-called “walkable radius” and the spots and walking routes for the data collection activity. Consider these variables and review the perimeter of analysis:

- Prepare a scaled base map of the site, which could be a satellite image or a copy of an official document from the municipality.
- Make a buffer of 5-minute walking distance centred around the public space, equivalent of a 400 meter radius, as it is considered the most practical and realistic threshold for walking
- The walkable radius could be slightly reduced or expanded considering the location (urban vs rural areas) the target users (children, disabled or elderly people vs adults) and the road connectivity (presence of barriers, rivers, no road connection, etc.)
- Add some routes for exploratory walking and observation, ensuring that the routes pass through the key elements of the neighbourhood and does not last longer than 30 minutes of walking.
- Define 3-5 stops for each route, to facilitate observation and the questionnaire compilation, possibly located in a shaded area and safe from vehicular traffic.

Step 5 | Prepare equipment

Install, test and distribute to participants the measuring and recording instruments:

- Purchase data bundles to data collectors if there is no wifi around.
- Gather equipment materials such as pens, notebooks, meters, cameras, etc.
- Prepare an observation template to take notes and map the public space.
- Define a simple coding system with colors, arrows and icons to map amenities, activities, movements and conditions of public space (e.g. red means bad conditions, while green means good conditions). Be mindful of who is using the space, is it men/women, old/young, people with disabilities etc.
- Prepare measuring and recording by reviewing the spreadsheet for monitoring design parameters. Also review national and local design standards and policies regarding design parameters.

-  [Observation template](#)
-  [Measuring and recording checklist](#)
-  [Sound meter](#)
-  [Weather forecast](#)
-  [Thermometer](#)
-  [Light meter](#)
-  [Air quality](#)
-  [People counter](#)

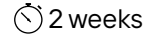


Activity 1

Participation



Duration



2 weeks

Data gathering

The purpose of this activity is to observe and analyse daily life, to get an understanding of users' activities and behaviours. It uses different tools such as mapping, note taking, photography, digital measuring, etc. to collect a variety of qualitative data considering the five dimensions of the public space quality.



Step 1 | Observation

Divide the participants into groups and provide each group with the observation template. Women may feel more at ease interacting with other women. Consider having a majority or solely women data collector during interaction. Ensure that tone, wording and information requested, do not carry any bias or disrespect the targeted respondents. Focus on the following during the observations:

- Focus on perception and map emotion in the public space.
- Note down main activities, key features and peoples' movements in the space.
- Describe sensorial experience (sound, smell, view, taste).
- Interact with users and ask them to map their routine movements and their perceptions.
- Be mindful of who is using the space, is it men/women, old/young, people with disabilities etc.
- Write down short quotes and key words heard in the space.



[Observation template](#)



Step 2 | Photography

Focus on the following when you take photos:

- Use a camera or smartphone with good resolution.
- Ask for permission to take pictures of people and make sure to take special care when photographing children.
- Take landscape pictures without up close obstacles.
- Pin the pictures on a map and give them a number.
- Video may also be useful to record specific activities and sounds
- Take a few pictures from an elevated point. This will be useful to compare the current situation with the design proposal and final implementation.



Step 3 | Measuring and recording

Use the measuring and recording checklist and focus on the following while measuring and recording:

- Measure the parameters with the suggested tools, at least the ones with the asterisk (*) and compile the second column of the spreadsheet.
- Also use critical observation. Quality of public space is usually more related to user's perception rather than actual numbers (e.g. noise, air quality, water quality must be well-perceived rather than respect the parameters).
- Compare the recommended value and the measured value and tick the verified values.
- Pin the map with any critical value that does not respect the recommended parameters.



[Measuring and recording checklist](#)



Step 4 | Counting people

Use the app click counter and focus on the following while counting people:

- Use the smartphone application to count people.
- Define categories of people to monitor such as children, girls, boys, women, men, older persons, people with visible disabilities, cyclists, etc. The categories of people can be divided between groups.
- During the observation, draw an imaginary line in front of you and count every person to cross that line for a period of 10 minutes.
- Count people in two or three strategic points in the site.



[People counter](#)



Step 5 | Exploratory walks

Use the KoBo toolbox questionnaire and follow these instructions for the exploratory walks where the participants are supposed to take the lead followed by the professionals:

- Share the link to the questionnaire.
- Explain the type of questions and how to answer (open ended, closed and multiple choice).
- Explain the route map, the time needed (45 minutes) and the stops.
- Divide participants into smaller groups of 5 people and assign routes for each.
- Stimulate participants' observation, asking questions and giving attention to specific features.
- Document the activity, capturing pictures of the participants using the tools.
- Stop in the designated areas and give time for the participants to observe and compile the questionnaire.
- Ensure participants complete the questionnaire and submit it.



[General site specific assessment form](#)



How to define a walkable radius for site specific assessment. © UN-Habitat



Activity 2

Participation



Duration

🕒 2 weeks

Producing maps

Curate the gathered data and organise it into five spatial maps that highlight the key findings of the area.



Step 1 | Organise data

Review the collected data and organise them considering the 5 dimensions.



Step 2 | Sketch spatial analysis

Once the data is organised, the project team should analyse, overlap and interpret the different findings. This is a working session, requiring open discussions and critical thinking.

- Use different colours and symbols to represent various components of the public space and their conditions (e.g. red means bad condition, green good condition etc)
- Use the list of indicators to divide findings into five maps, one for each dimension.
- Integrate the sketches developed during the observation session.
- Represent movement flows, sound, smell, and feelings (insecurity, frustration, peace, heat, etc)



Step 3 | Digitalise maps

Use any software available (autoCAD, Illustrator, SketchUp) to digitalise the maps. Find examples of digital maps here:

 [5 dimensions digital maps](#)



Step 4 | Validate spatial analysis

Share the results or conduct a meeting with key stakeholders from the primary and secondary groups to review the finding maps and validate the outputs. If needed, review the maps based on the comments. You may also want to draw social spatial maps together with the participants.



Activity 3

Participation



Duration

🕒 2 days

Quality scoring

This activity aims to evaluate the quality of the public space by scoring the five dimensions and their indicators.



Step 1 | Score indicators

Distribute the scoring templates among key stakeholders and request to rank the public space quality. You may also want to make a specific safety scoring based on the participants' perceptions. Additionally, these questions can be asked to public space users, directly or by putting up a QR in the space. This way data is gathered beyond the defined list of stakeholders.

[Quality scoring](#)



Step 2 | Final scoring

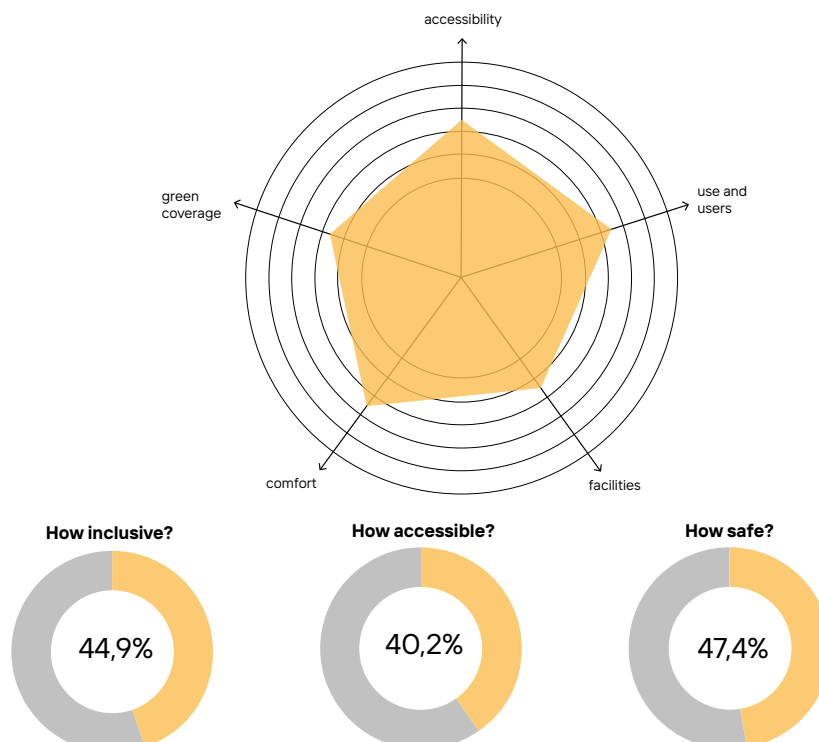
The project team ranks the indicators and sets the final scoring based on the results gathered from the stakeholders and from the previous activities.

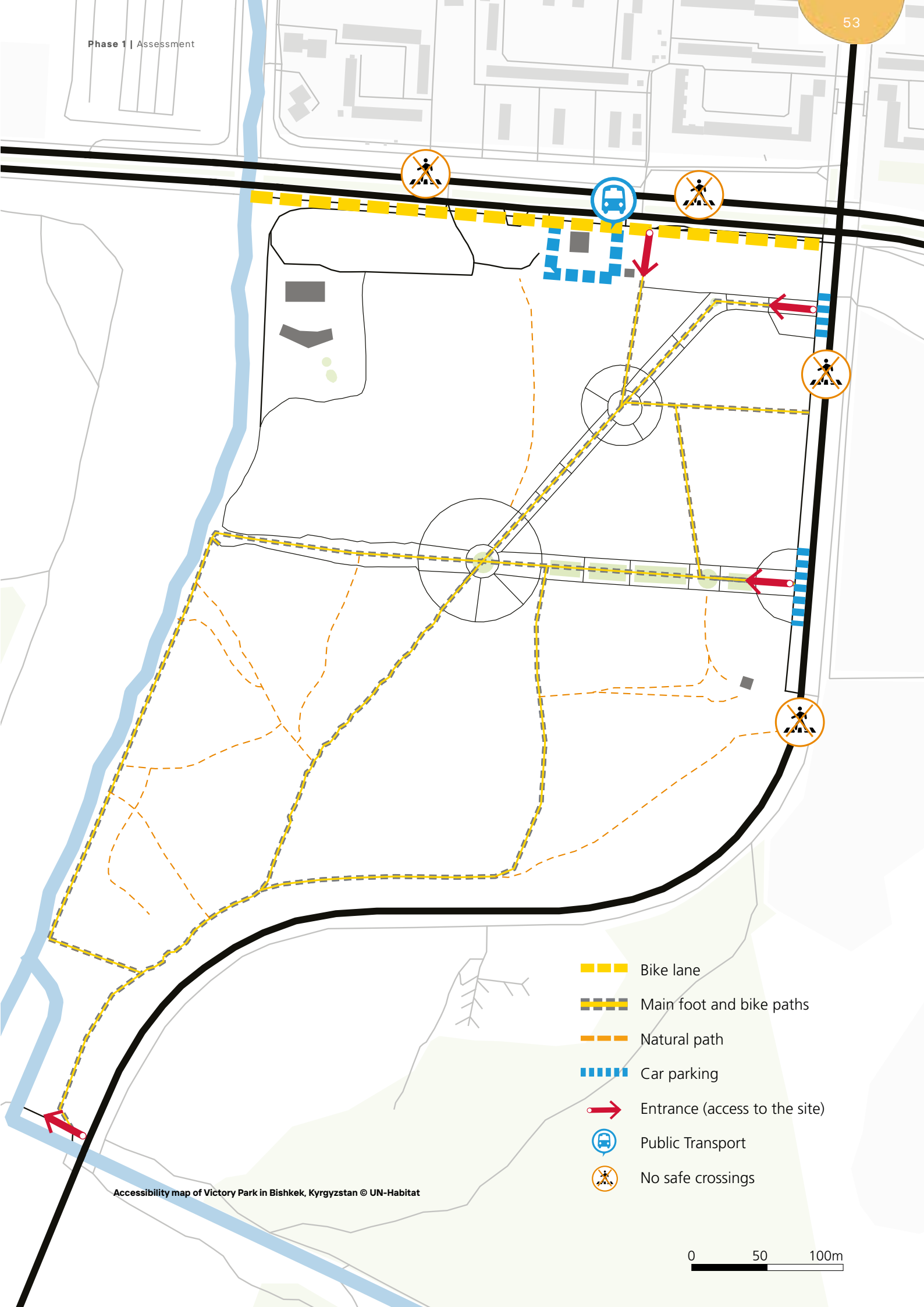


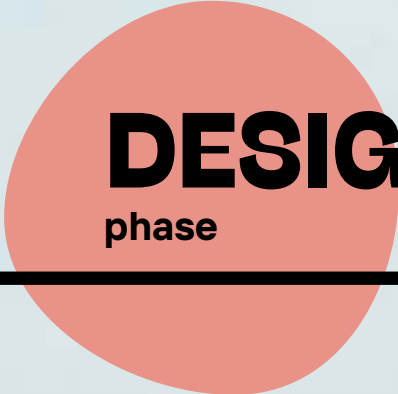
Step 3 | Update stakeholders

Depending on which scale and space you are selecting as your priority you might have to update your list of stakeholders and participants. Visit the results page and review the last version of your stakeholder list and adjust according to the selected scale, area and space for intervention.

[My results](#)







DESIGN

phase

Block 4 | Analysing challenges

Block 5 | Designing ideas

Block 6 | Recommendations for action



Block 4



Analysing challenges



Duration
2 weeks



Steps
17

Block 4 formalises brainstorming and is particularly suitable when professionals are working together with non-professionals. It is a way for multiple stakeholders to discuss complex issues in a constructive way and to work towards joint visions for a specific space. It teaches participants to “think like an architect” and gives professionals new knowledge from the user perspective.



It is used for:

Defining and understanding the place as it looks today.

Understanding the main challenges in the place but also the potentials for change.

Defining what functions the place should include in the future.

Facilitating the development of ideas and transforming them into concrete suggestions, testing and prioritising to move towards concretisation of a joint vision.



The result:

A joint vision for the space based on a detailed analysis of the participants’ needs and current privileges in the space.



The activities:

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Define current situation

Activity 2 | Udenstand challenges

Activity 3 | Define joint vision

Activity 4 | Generate ideas



Preparation

Participation



Duration



Setting-up

Before starting the design thinking workshop you will need to compile the results from the previous workshops, get an overview of the MethodKit approach and prepare the material needed.



Step 1 | Send reminder

Send a reminder for the next workshop to all participants. List the participants as they confirm.



Step 2 | Review materials

Get familiar with Methodkit - a design thinking tool for formalising brainstorming. Depending on your project set-up, either choose between the in-person or digital workshop format. Register to the website to get access to the Her City related material.

- [MethodKit - Registration](#)
- [MethodKit - The place today](#)
- [MethodKit - Place exclusion canvas](#)
- [MethodKit - The place tomorrow](#)
- [MethodKit - Generating ideas](#)
- [MethodKit - Idea description](#)



Step 3 | Prepare tables

If you are organising a physical workshop, prepare the physical tables. You will need a long rectangular table and 2-3 smaller tables depending on the number of participants. Each table should have 6-10 participants.

To set up the long rectangular table:

- Cover the table with roll-out paper.
- Divide into four lateral sections with coloured sticky tape.
- Spread out MethodKit for Places cards along the middle line.
- Distribute pens in four different colours.

To set up the smaller tables:

- Provide all small tables with pens and printed material.
- Print one 'Place exclusion canvas' for each table.
- Print one 'Generating ideas board' for each table.
- Print worksheets for idea description for each table.

If you are organising a digital workshop, prepare a Miro or Mural board, and import the digital versions of the tables. The free version is a light workshop format.

- [MethodKit - Prepare tables](#)



Step 4 | Prepare agenda

Prepare a detailed agenda for the workshop and list registered participants. Go through the results from previous blocks and prepare a mood board or a short presentation with the site specific data.

- [Agenda template](#)
- [List participants](#)

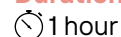


Activity 1

Participation



Duration



Define current situation

The first activity will help to define and understand the place as it looks today, from a range of different perspectives.



Step 1 | Introduce workshop

Welcome participants and tick off the registration list as they join the workshop. Introduce the workshop agenda. Divide the participants into two groups, professionals in one and participants in the other. Before starting with step 2, let all participants take a 2-3 minute walk around the table and get familiar with the cards.

 [My results](#)



Step 2 | Reflect on the place today

To start defining the place today, participants move from one MethodKit-card to another alone. Commenting on each before moving on to the next. Each card highlighting a different way to look at the place. Participants note their reflections on the table. They either share something new, expand on an idea, or comment on someone else's opinion. Put a time limit for the step, approximately 20 minutes, and tell people to move along if they get stuck.

 [MethodKit - The place today](#)



Step 3 | Defining the place today

Turn to the person beside you and move around the table again. Reflect on the cards together and write it down.



Activity 2

Participation



Duration

🕒 0,5 hour

Understand challenges

The second activity will help to understand the challenges in the place.



Step 1 | Group reflection

Participants are divided into smaller groups – participants and professionals work separately – on smaller square tables (6-10 people at each table).



Step 2 | Exclusion analysis

Participants brainstorm together to understand if the place is inclusive or how the place is inaccessible. By evaluating the space from the perspectives of gender, age, religion, class and economic situation, ethnicity, physical function, skin colour, gender identity and sexual orientation, the participants better understand how discrimination takes place.

 [MethodKit - Place exclusion canvas](#)



Step 3 | Summarise discussions

Let all groups share their reflections shortly to get an overview of the place today.



MethodKit workshop: Analysing challenges in Botkyrka, Sweden © Shared City



Activity 3

Participation



Duration

🕒 1 hour

Define joint vision

The third activity will help to define what functions the place should include in the future, considering the space, greenery, built environment, housing, facilities and basic services.



Step 1 | Imagining the place tomorrow

Participants move a third round from card to card on the big table, with professionals on one side and participants on the other. Based on the earlier reflections they brainstorm around their ideas for the place in the future. What should the place look like tomorrow? Use different colour pens from previous activity to differentiate when commenting on each card.

 [MethodKit - The place tomorrow](#)



Step 2 | Summarise joint vision

Summarise the reflections on the table by reading some out loud and let the participants comment on them. A short reflection all together will clarify that joint vision. Make sure to document the summary.



Step 3 | Document tables

Save the result from activity 1-3 as a pdf (if online) or a series of photos (if on-site). AI Transcription of handwriting can easily be used to collect a dataset with the result from both the table/boards and the worksheets.





Activity 4

Participation



Duration

🕒 1 hour

Generate ideas

The fourth activity will start idea generation based on the analysis done in previous activities.



Step 1 | Generating ideas

The participants go back to the smaller groups for a last group session. Based on the earlier reflections, participants start brainstorming ideas. To get the ideas flowing, explore the topics on the board.



[MethodKit - Generating ideas](#)



Step 2 | Next level

Ideas are noted on the board. They should vary between crazy to realistic and should not be too detailed. Take the idea to the next level by flipping, combining and improving it.



Step 3 | Idea description

Each group summarises the best idea on the description sheet. Name and describe your solutions and the intended target group. Make a sketch like drawing to remember any specific features that are important in the coming design process.



[MethodKit - Idea description](#)



Step 4 | Present ideas

Present the ideas to the group at large before ending the workshop.



Block 5



Designing ideas



Duration
5 weeks



Steps
16

Block 5 turns the ideas into designs for the new public space using a participatory digital tool. In this way, professionals and local authorities can more easily understand the community's needs and how they wish to change the public space. The designs are also used as a basis for further plans and architectural drawings.



It is used for:

Building capacity among participants through the use of digital and participatory tools to have a stronger say in urban planning and design processes

Empowering non-professionals to design and communicate ideas and solutions to professionals, without barriers and gaps of expertise

Identifying priorities to integrate in the final design proposal



The result:

A rough design of the new space made by the participants and professionals based on the solutions identified throughout the process.



The activities:

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Installation and practice

Activity 2 | Block by Block workshop

Activity 3 | Presentations



Preparation

Setting-up

Participation**Duration**

⌚ 4 weeks

Before starting the design workshop, it is important to organise the session and prepare all the materials required.



Step 1 | Send reminder

Send a reminder for the next workshop to all participants. List the participants as they confirm.



Step 2 | Prepare technical equipment

Make sure you have computers available for all participants (3 to 4 people per computer).

Materials required:

- Short presentation with images and videos.
- Pens, markers, cards, notebooks, sticky notes, etc.
- Minecraft License.
- Minecraft model of the site.
- Laptops.
- 1 mouse per computer.
- Keyboards (if you have desktops).
- Cords, electricity connections, extension wires.
- Projector & screen.
- HDMI or VGA cable.

Software prerequisites:

- CPU: Intel Pentium D or AMD Athlon 64 (K8) 2.6 GHz
- RAM: 2GB
- GPU (Integrated): Intel HD Graphics or AMD (formerly ATI) Radeon HD
- Graphics with OpenGL 2.1
- GPU (Discrete): Nvidia GeForce 9600 GT or AMD Radeon HD 2400 with OpenGL 3.1
- HDD: At least 200MB for Game Core and Other Files
- Java 6 Release 45



[List of commands](#)



Step 3 | Prepare Minecraft model

Reach out to a Minecraft community in your city/country or email any of the developers from the list below to help you building a model of the space:



[Minecraft Forum](#)



[Builder's Refugee](#)



[Planet Minecraft](#)

Commercial services:



[Fiverr](#)



[Unity's Minecraft Forum](#)



[Builtbybit](#)

Minecraft Developers on Freelance Job sites, e.g.:



[UpWork](#)



[Gigster](#)



[Codementor](#)



[Microsoft Partner Program](#)

Build the model yourself:

- Save the coordinates of the site or share location via Google Maps
- Trace the area to be modeled
- Take picture of the site and document the area
- Build the Minecraft model of the public space



Step 4 | Prepare agenda

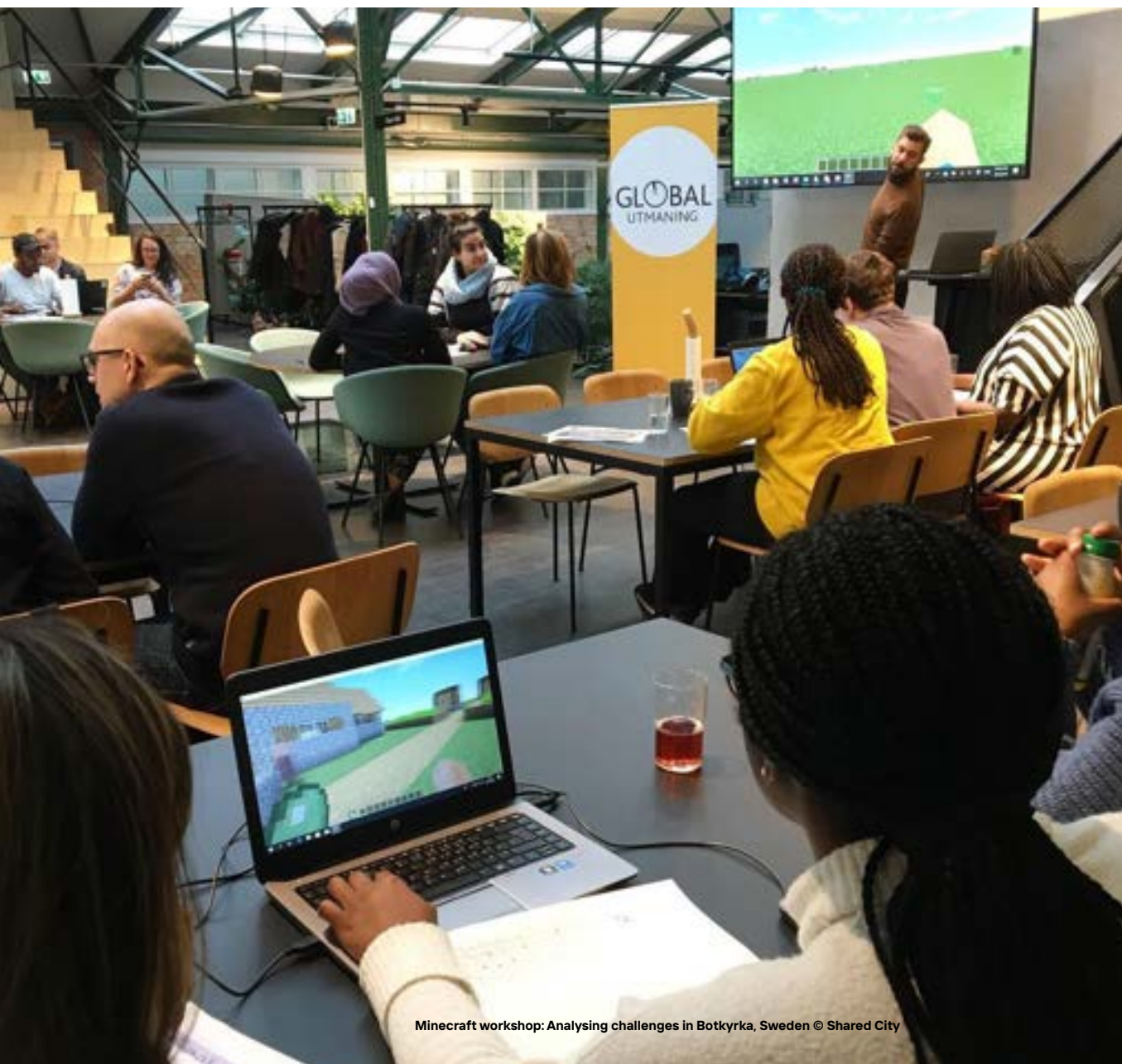
Prepare a detailed agenda for the workshop. Don't forget lunch, snacks and water. List participants as they register:



[Agenda template](#)



[List participants](#)



Minecraft workshop: Analysing challenges in Botkyrka, Sweden © Shared City

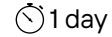


Activity 1

Participation



Duration



Installation and practice

The workshop starts with installing Minecraft on the computers. This might take a while depending on the internet connection. Involve the participants in this activity as it is an excellent opportunity to gain technical skills.



Step 1 | Introduce workshop

Welcome and register participants as they join to the workshop. Introduce the workshop and go through the agenda.



Step 2 | Install Minecraft

Download the Minecraft game: Java Edition. Launch Minecraft and create your own account.

-  [Minecraft: Java Edition](#)
-  [Create Minecraft Account](#)



Step 3 | Upload model to Minecraft

Add your public space model to the Minecraft game:



Step 4 | Practice playing

For Windows:

- Copy the model of the public space received by the developer
- In the search/command box type `%appdata%` and press `enter`
- Go to the folder `.Minecraft`
- Paste the model folder into `saves`

For Mac:

- Copy the model of the public space received by the developer
- Use `go` to the folder and type `~/Library/Application Support/minecraft`
- Go to the folder `.Minecraft`
- Paste the model folder into `saves`

Organise the participants into small teams of 3 to 4 people:

- Open Minecraft and press 'play'.
- Click on 'Single Player'.
- Click on 'create new world'.
- Change the game mode to 'creative'.
- Press on 'more world options'.
- Change the world type to 'super flat'.
- Click 'done' then 'create new world'.
- Before practicing, click on 'esc' button and go to options.
- Change the difficulty to 'peaceful'.
- Click done and go back to the game.
- Go through the basic commands and explain every function

 [List of commands](#)

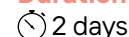


Activity 2

Participation



Duration



Block by Block workshop

In this activity participants communicate the vision and solutions using 3D models instead of architectural drawings. By navigating a three-dimensional world, the participants are able to express themselves in new ways, and to negotiate the most adequate and feasible solutions.



Step 1 | Good practices

At one point of the process it is of value for participants to explore other good practices and examples of youth and gender sensitive public space planning and design. Invite a person or two from other cities to explain how they have worked with similar approaches and what that resulted in. Also discuss other examples where Minecraft has been used in urban planning. You can find interesting cases here:

 [Her Cities around the world](#)



Step 2 | Brainstorming session

Visit the results page to study the findings from previous blocks, particularly the concept sheets. Discuss briefly the ideas for the space within the teams. If the workshop is done in person, leave all sheets on a long table for all participants to get inspiration from while starting designing.

 [My results](#)



Step 3 | Designing ideas

Let this design phase take time.

- Go back to the main page on Minecraft.
- Click on single player and select your public space model.
- Groups can now construct their ideas and redesign the space in the 3D model.
- Facilitators goes around the groups to stimulate design thinking and to help with technical issues.

At the end of the workshop, make sure that the participants record a flyover of their Minecraft design in the game. Use the following instructions to screen record on Mac:

- Open QuickTime Player
- Click "File"
- Choose "New Screen recording"
- You can choose whether to record parts of the screen or the full screen. Adjust to fit the game window
- Click the record button
- To end recording, click the Stop button in the menu bar, or press the Command+Control+Escape keys

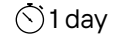


Activity 3

Participation



Duration



Presentations

In this activity you will create a platform for the participants to present their ideas to the wider group, and the project team.



Step 1 | Upload to SketchFab

Upload the final Minecraft to SketchFab in order to visualise them, sharing them with others and giving them the possibility to comment on them.

- Download Mineways following the link below and open on your computer
- Open Mineways on your computer
- Open your Minecraft World in Mineways by clicking on File → Open World.
- Select an area of your world (Right-click + drag)
- Go to File → Publish to **SketchFab**
- Enter API Token, model title, description, tags, and mark it as 'draft'
- Click 'upload' to see your model on Sketchfab

 [Mineways](#)



Step 2 | Describing solutions

Draft ideas descriptions for each Minecraft design component based on the MethodKit - Idea description. Then, create annotations and upload descriptions to SketchFab.

 [MethodKit - Idea description](#)



Step 3 | Presentation

The annotations in SketchFab creates a virtual "guided tour" of the area. Each group presents their Minecraft design proposal to the other participants, either using SketchFab, the Minecraft designs, the idea description sheets or a power point.

 [SketchFab](#)



Step 4 | Prioritise ideas

Take note of the features that the various designs include. Count each time a feature is proposed by the participants. Organise into a list of priorities according to the most common elements.

 [Prioritisation template](#)



Step 5 | External input

Share the SketchFab model digitally (for example on social media) with the wider community and ask them to add their input and feedback in the comment section.

Stories of change

Tools in action

CRISIS CONTEXT IN MOZAMBIQUE

Location: Mahate neighbourhood, Pemba, Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique

Time: July 2022 –April 2025

Partners: UN-Habitat, International Organization for Migration, High Commission of Canada in Mozambique

In Her City Pemba, UN-Habitat's country office in Mozambique is fostering inclusion and cohesion among internally displaced people (IDPs) and host communities in the Mahate neighborhood in Pemba. The upcoming Mahate Action Plan will transform this neighborhood, with a special focus on women and girls fostering locally-owned infrastructure, by empowering local communities, IDPs and host communities. 100 stakeholders contributed to 1 site, set to impact 5,000 people.



[+ Read more](#)

The project shows how Her City can be operationalised and tailored in complex crisis settings. The experience has informed the 'Her City in crisis' guideline included in this guide as well as country-specific toolkits in countries such as Mozambique and Ukraine accessible in Portuguese and Ukrainian.



Mahate neighborhood before Her City project
© UN-Habitat

"We are capable and we make a difference, we always respect everyone, and it works."



Participant in the Mahate Her City project in Mozambique



Gender-focused active observation of public space walks resulted in identifying 52 potential areas of intervention
© UN-Habitat



Block 6

Recommendations for action



Duration
1 week



Steps
11

Block 6 prioritizes among the designs, crafts guidelines and develops recommendations in multi-stakeholder groups. It collects the main findings from a project and outlines ways forward in terms of implementation. Participants develop policy recommendations for local, regional and national decision-makers and guidelines for implementing actors.



It is used for:

Overviewing project results

Making sure most alarming challenges are met while prioritizing among designs

Developing a tailor-made action plan that outlines actors, partnerships, timeframes and resources needed in order to address the prioritised challenges

Overcoming conflicting interests and agreeing on ways forward



The result:

A joint action plan for the space where participants and professionals negotiate ways forward for implementation and potential impact of the project.



The activities:

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Prioritising

Activity 2 | Realising proposal

Activity 3 | Adopting action plan



Preparation

Setting-up

Participation



Duration

🕒 1 day

Before starting the prioritisation workshop it is important to prepare the material you will be using and set an agenda.



Step 1 | Send reminder

Don't forget to send a reminder for the next workshop to all participants.



Step 2 | Prepare material

Prepare the forms, presentation and technical equipment you will be using during the workshop. Make sure you have computers, iPads or smartphones available for participants to fill out the digital surveys. Review the surveys you will use during the workshop:

📎 [Prioritise outcomes](#)

📎 [Realise proposal](#)



Step 3 | Prepare agenda

Prepare a detailed agenda for the workshop:

📎 [Agenda template](#)

📎 [List participants](#)



Recommendations for action workshop in Botkyrka, Sweden © Shared City



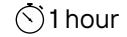
Activity 1

Prioritising

Participation



Duration



The first activity helps to prioritise among project outcomes and designs.



Step 1 | Introduce workshop

Welcome participants and tick off the registration list as they arrive at the workshop. Introduce the workshop and go through the agenda.

 [My results](#)



Step 2 | Overview project result

Provide all participants with an accessible overview of the results so far. Make sure to remind the participants of the joint vision for the space agreed on during previous workshops as well as the design elements. Divide participants into groups of maximum 5 people. It is recommended to let stakeholders from the same level of authority, same implementation capacity, or organisations work together. The participants are divided into groups to mirror the secondary target groups.



Step 3 | Prioritise outcomes

This activity helps to prioritise among project outcomes and designs. Discuss in the group which outcomes are the most important in order to improve the space. Remember to write in a clear and simple way, in order to allow the entire group to understand. Filling out the survey should take approximately 20 minutes.

 [Prioritise outcomes](#)



Activity 2

Participation



Duration

🕒 1 hour

Realising proposal

The third activity helps to get an overview of your priorities and prepare an action plan in order to realise your proposal.



Step 1 | Review your priorities

Review the results, discuss briefly and amend if necessary.



Step 2 | Realise proposal

This activity helps to get an overview of your priorities and prepare an action plan in order to start realising your proposal. Filling out the survey should take approximately 40 minutes.



[Realise proposal](#)



Prioritization workshop in Diepsloot, South Africa © UN-Habitat



Activity 3

Participation



Duration

🕒 1 hour

Adopting action plans

The last activity helps to overcome conflicting ideas and jointly agree on ways forward.



Step 1 | Review action plan

Review the results, discuss briefly and amend if necessary.



Step 2 | Present action plan

Each group presents their action plan to the other participants. The details are discussed, overlaps and conflicting features are handled, necessary adjustments are made and a final joint version is approved.

 [My results](#)



Step 3 | Final proposal

All proposals are merged into a comprehensive action plan for the space.



Stories of change

Tools in action

PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP IN BOTKYRKA

Location: Fittja, Botkyrka, Sweden

Time: December 2017 – November 2019

Partners: Global Utmaning, Botkyrka municipality, UN-Habitat, Mistra Urban Futures, Iteam, Swedish Union of Tenants, White architects, Changers Hub, Kungsvåningen, Botkyrkabyggen and Vinnova

The project #UrbanGirlsMovement was instrumental in developing the global Her City methodology, toolbox and digital platform. Global Utmaning and UN-Habitat co-facilitated the project with the municipality, which resulted in an outdoor living room developed together with young girls and renovation and lightening of the mall building on the main square. Plans and designs were also developed for the new library area, the bus station, and the underground station. 100 multi-stakeholders contributed to a wider regeneration approach of 4 sites, impacting 15,000 daily lives. The process, designs and the girls' solutions continue to influence actors' ways of working and are spreading in the area.



[+ Read more](#)

The project clearly shows how Her City can facilitate and promote gender transformative public-private partnerships. The experience has informed our approach to engage the private sector in the development of private and semi-private developments, but also when working with contracted developers and constructors in public projects. It emphasises the cost-benefit of the model, and how engaging the private sector can be a win for everyone.



Before the Her city pilot project
© Shared City

"We simply cannot afford to fail."



Ebba Östlin, Mayor
of Botkyrka, Sweden



Inauguration of the outdoor living room after the project
© Botkyrkabyggen



IMPLEMENTATION

phase

Block 7 | Plans and designs

Block 8 | Sharing results

Block 9 | Construction and maintenance



Block 7



Plans and designs



Duration
4 weeks



Steps
15

In this block the plan for the space is set through a participatory process similar to a client-architect meeting. Starting from the results gathered throughout the process, the technical team and a group of participants develop a feasible design proposal. The proposal will then be further detailed to reach a final implementable plan for construction and maintenance.



It is used for:

Transforming challenges and opportunities into feasible and implementable design solutions

Building capacity of participants in urban planning and design skills with specific software

Defining cost estimation, participatory construction and maintenance plans



The result:

Detailed plans collaboratively developed by the participants and professionals for the construction phase including cost estimations and maintenance plans.



The activities:

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Expert design meeting

Activity 2 | Finalising plans

Activity 3 | Design validation



Preparation

Participation



Duration

🕒 2 weeks

Setting-up

Before starting the site-specific assessment, take some time to learn about the five dimensions of public space quality, define the walkable radius, organise the activities and prepare the materials required during the sessions.



Step 1 | Send reminder

Don't forget to send a reminder to a selected group of participants and the professionals for the expert design studio and another to all the participants to the Her City process for final validation of design.



Step 2 | Prepare meeting

The professionals (urban designers, architects, planners, engineers) leading the design studio should take this meeting seriously and prepare themselves as if for any other regular client meeting.

- Avail a quiet room with a big desk, a projector and a laptop.
- Collect equipment such as pens, post-its, flip-charts, tracking paper, etc.
- Avail lunch, snacks and water.
- Make sure participants have adequate transport options to reach the place.
- Prepare a presentation with the outputs of the previous activities and some case studies of good practices.
- Print base maps.
- Review results from previous blocks
- Prepare Sketch-up base model of the area

 [Download SketchUp](#)



Step 3 | Prepare agenda

Prepare the detailed meeting agenda.

 [Agenda template](#)

 [List participants](#)

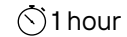


Activity 1

Participation



Duration



Expert design meeting

This activity aims to develop the first feasible design proposal based on the earlier outputs together with 3-5 participants. The output of this activity will be further developed by the experts, to finalise an implementable plan.



Step 1 | Introduction

Welcome participants and tick off the registration list as they arrive at the workshop. Introduce the meeting, go through the agenda, and show around the office.



[My results](#)



Step 2 | Output review

The experts together with the participants' review all the outputs of the previous activities, especially the list of challenges, joint vision, Block by Block models and action plan. Then, the expert showcases some national and international case studies and good practices that might inspire the design studio.



Step 3 | Software introduction

The professionals present some of the software to the participants and train them on some basic commands (e.g. SketchUp). This would give them a good understanding of the process and some new design and IT skills.



Step 4 | Design studio

This step is the substantial part of the meeting. The expert will develop the final plan based on the result of this exchange. Document the session capturing pictures and short quotes. Ensure to cover the following:

- Define the new layout of the area to accommodate ideas gathered in the previous activities.
- Focus on the details and discuss materials, constructive details and related costs to ensure a good quality public space.
- Develop a timeline to implement the project by prioritising the most urgent actions.



Step 5 | Next steps and roles

Define next steps and deadlines, select which are the final outputs of the plan to develop and assign tasks to the team:

- 1 master plan at the walkable radius scale
- 1 plan at the site scale
- 1 section
- 3D visualisations



Activity 2

Participation



Duration



1 week

Finalising plans

Based on the results of the expert design meeting, the professionals digitalise the feasible design proposal and draft a cost estimation, a construction plan and a maintenance plan, keeping the participants updated daily for consultation and approval to ensure consistency with the project deliverables so far.



Step 1 | Final proposal

The experts develop the final design and plans based on the result of the expert design studio.



Step 2 | Budget

Develop a cost estimation sheet that identifies the different public space components, quantity, materials and potential suppliers. Make sure that the budget also includes possible amendments to the space after construction is finalised and the new space has been tested by the community. This should include the initial upfront cost as well as an estimate of costs to sustain the intervention over time.



[Bills of quantities template](#)



Step 3 | Construction and maintenance plan

Based on the timeline drafted during the expert design studio, develop a construction and maintenance plan, with clear phases, deadlines and roles. Consider the involvement of participants in both construction and maintenance.



[Construction and maintenance plan](#)



Activity 3

Participation



Duration



Design validation

Validate the final outputs with all the stakeholders that have been participating throughout the entire process and revise if necessary. This can be a physical or a digital meeting.



Step 1 | Present final outputs

Present the plan for implementation:

- Starting from the Minecraft models, present the outputs of the meeting and the final version of the plans
- Explain in detail the costs estimation and how participation may reduce labour costs
- Explain any changes done due to budget limitations and get consensus
- Describe implementation timeline and maintenance plan, explaining when involvement of participants would be ideal and for which activities



Step 2 | Open discussion

Open the floor for questions and comments about the final design. This is also a good occasion to discuss if you would like to prepare an exhibition, any tactical urbanism small scale project, a temporary pop up, or any other type of activation of the space. Take note of the participants engagements for the next steps and make a list of volunteers with specific tasks.



Step 3 | Revise outputs

If necessary make final changes to the design, the cost estimation and the implementation timeline based on what was agreed during the validation session. Share the final version with the participants.



Step 4 | Construction and maintenance agreement

You now have all the information to actively involve the contractor for the construction phase. Also draft a second agreement of engagement with the participants that expressed interest in participating in the construction and the maintenance phase. Use the following template and adjust as needed.



[Terms of Service](#)

ANGIRLSMOVEMENT



EMENT

I AM PART OF
#URBANGIRLSMOVEMENT

"YOU FEEL THAT YOU HAVE
INFLUENCE, YOU FEEL LIKE YOU
CAN DO SOMETHING BIGGER."

#URBANGIRLSMOVEMENT

EQUAL AND JUST CITIES; WHERE EVERYONE,
NO MATTER SOCIAL CATEGORIZATION, CAN
FEEL INCLUDED, WELCOMED AND PRIORITIZED
EQUALLY.

#URBANGIRLSMOVEMENT

Block 8



Sharing results



Duration
2 weeks



Steps
11

Block 8 communicates the results with the responsible decision-makers, community and a wider audience. It will update on the final results in order to start implementation. It will give the community the possibility to engage in the evolution of their local environment. And it will help you to share the results with other interested actors as a way to spread knowledge, highlight good practices and build capacity.



It is used for:

Documenting the results on a good practices portal to be shared digitally

Presenting to an extended group of decision-makers from the municipality, relevant stakeholders as well as the wider community

Setting up a long-term strategy and mainstreaming results

Providing a certification of the participation of the primary target group



The result:

Approval to move forward and start construction from decision-makers, community's buy-in and spreading of knowledge gained throughout the project.



The activities:

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Gathering results

Activity 2 | Public presentation



Preparation

Setting-up

Participation



Duration

🕒 1 day

This is what you need to do to prepare for the activities in the block.



Step 1 | Invite participants

Make sure all relevant actors and the community is invited to the presentation. Go back to the stakeholder mapping to make sure you include all important actors. Don't forget to send a reminder to all the participants and asking some of them to present the results.



Step 2 | Prepare meeting

Book a room that can host a large number of participants and avail a computer, screen and sound to show your presentation, as well as an agenda for the meeting:

 [Agenda template](#)



Participant sharing the results of public space project in Botkyrka in Swedish national tv © Shared City

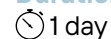


Activity 1

Participation



Duration



1 day

Gathering results

The purpose of the first activity is to produce a short article explaining the results of your project outlining challenges, solutions, good practices, lessons learned and relations to the SDGs. It will provide a basis for communicating your results on social media and can function as a basic presentation to a wider audience of community members and decision-makers.



Step 1 | Fill out good practice form

Access this good practice form where you can enter your project results and share them with us to be included in our interactive map of global good examples.

 [Her City Stories of Change](#)



Step 2 | Prepare presentation

You already have all necessary materials to make your presentation:

- Use your article in the interactive map as a way to present your results
- Use the new designs in Minecraft shown in SketchFab
- Use the plans and drawings prepared by the architects



Step 3 | Share on social media

Share the result on social media asking for input and suggestions from the community.



Step 4 | Practice presentation

Make sure all presentations are ready and that presenters are well prepared.

 [My results](#)



Activity 2

Participation



Duration

🕒 1 day

Public presentation

Make sure all presentations are ready and that presenters are well prepared. Ideally some of the participants present the results to the audience.



Step 1 | Register participants

Register participants as they arrive at the meeting. Make sure that all responsible decision-makers and implementing actors that have been part of the process are present. They are important to involve as they will be key to realising your proposal.

📎 [List participants](#)



Step 2 | Present results

Present your results to the wider public, decision-makers and implementing actors using the good practice article, nodes and descriptions in Sketchfab, plans and drawings. Ask decision-makers to commit to parts of your plan and try to get a statement from them on how they plan to support moving forward into the construction phase.



Step 3 | Collecting feedback

Take some time after the presentation to gather feedback from the participants as well as key stakeholders and decision-makers about the process. Distribute a digital questionnaire distributed among the participants

📎 [Evaluation form](#)



Step 4 | Awarding

Make sure to reward all participants for their contribution. A fun and appreciated way of doing it is by a ceremony after the public presentation.

📎 [Certificate of participation](#)

📎 [Letters of recommendation](#)



Step 5 | Share on social media

Share the result of the meeting on social media. Photos and quotes from decision-makers show commitment to the process and the implementation of your results. Remember to tag @hercitytoolbox and #hercity

Stories of change

Tools in action

POLICY MAKING IN PALESTINE

Location: Jericho, Jenin, Nablus, Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour, Al Doha on the West Bank and Khan Younis, in Gaza, Palestine

Time: April 2018 – December 2024

Partners: UN Women, UNFPA, UNODC, UN-Habitat, Ministry of Local Government, Palestinian Housing Council, Municipalities of the targeted cities and Canada

In the Haya joint program, UN-Habitat Palestine, UN Women and partners address and contribute to preventing violence against women and girls in targeted cities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Local authorities and multi-stakeholders including women and girls, promoted youth leadership and proposed recommendations for a nation-wide strategy informing the world's first 'Public Space Policy for Local Government Units'. So far 100 participants contributed to 8 analysed and rebuilt sites, impacting over 300,000 women and 300,000 men.



[+ Read more](#)

The project shows how a Her City approach taking its departure in the most local settings, when being brought to scale across several municipalities in a country can inform nationwide policy-making. The project informed and contributed to the world's first national policy for inclusive public space.



Group of children play in HAYA promenade in Khan Younis
© UN-Habitat

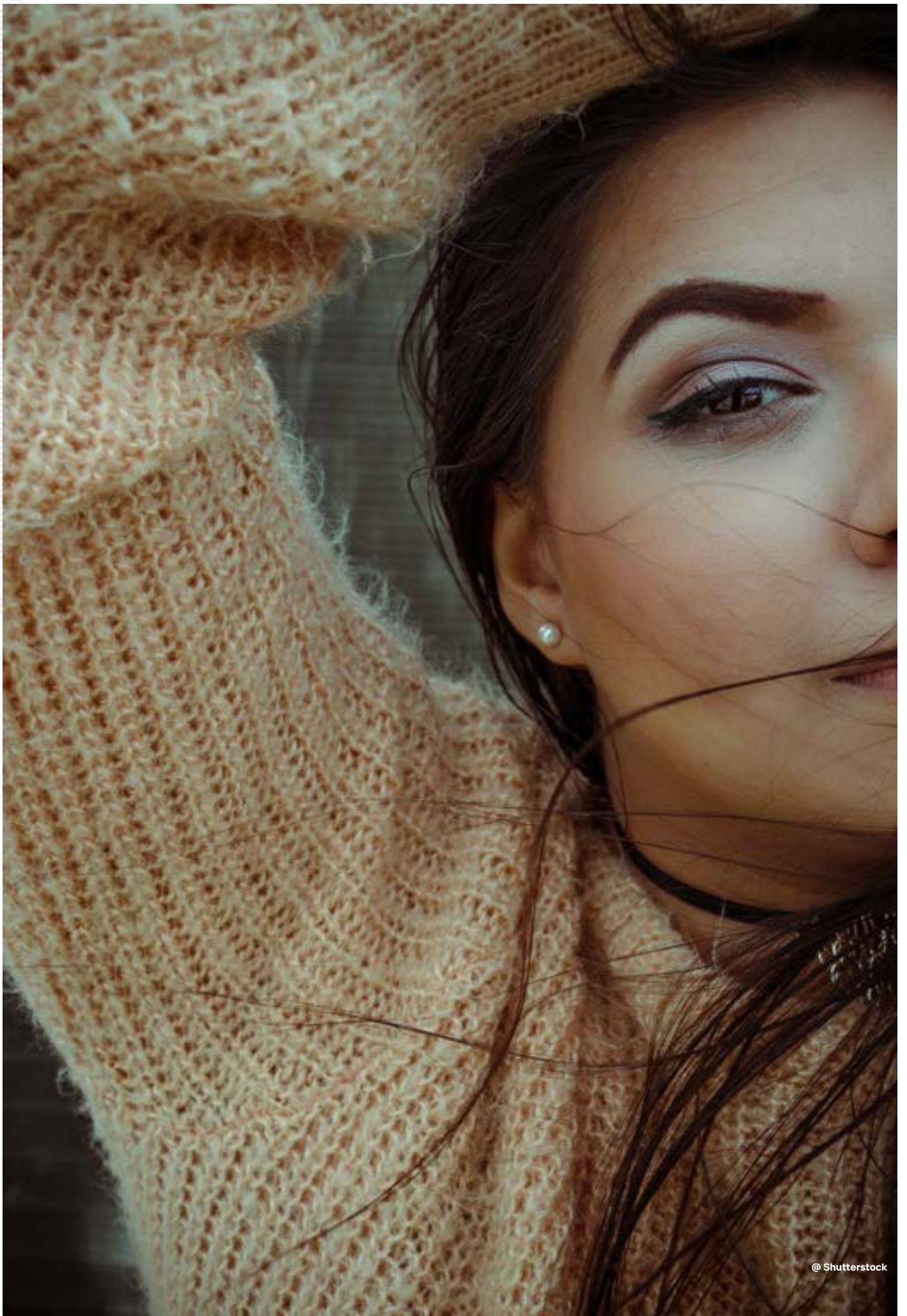
"Today I discovered I have a passion for design. When I grow up, I want to be an architect to design nice spaces in my neighbourhood."



A 15-year-old participant



Young girls and women overlook the implementation process
© UN-Habitat



Block 9



Construction and maintenance



Duration



Steps
13

This block aims to ensure the efficient delivery of a high quality public space intervention, involving community members in the construction phase and establishing a clear plan for the sustained enjoyment of the public space once the project has been completed.



It is used for:

Ensuring the timely delivery of the agreed intervention.

Following up and controlling the quality of the implementation particularly the construction phase.

Managing the long-term strategy for protection and upkeep of the public space.

Providing local communities with opportunities for skills building and employment.



The result:

A high quality, efficiently delivered and sustainable public space which has benefitted from local knowledge and involvement from residents.



The activities:

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Participatory construction

Activity 2 | Quality control

Activity 3 | Management and maintenance



Preparation

Participation



Duration



1 week

Setting-up

In order to finalise the project delivery and ensure a well managed construction and implementation phase.



Step 1 | Engaging the contractors

Collaborate with contractors to guarantee that the delivery timeline with clear targets, expectations and conditions are met. It is important to make sure that the contractor and construction partner has a human rights track record and that they provide a safe work environment and adequate wages for workers.



Step 2 | Workforce recruitment

Based on the terms of the construction and maintenance agreement, work with contractors to segment work streams and identify tasks where participants and community members could be recruited to undertake.



Step 3 | Peer-to-peer training

Support knowledge-sharing among participants by organising peer-to-peer training sessions. Skilled workers, local artisans, and contractors should mentor and train community members in relevant construction techniques, ensuring local knowledge transfer and skills building. Sessions should cover safety procedures, sustainable building methods, and maintenance strategies. This approach fosters collaboration, builds confidence, and enhances community involvement in the delivery and construction process.



Activity 1

Participation



Duration



Participatory construction

The purpose of this activity is to consider the possibility of involving participants and community members in the construction of small-scale or pop-up agreed public space interventions.



Step 1 | Assess suitability

Participatory construction can be a powerful method for engaging local communities in shaping their environment. It enhances ownership, develops practical and transferable skills, supports employment—especially for youth and women—and promotes the use of local knowledge and materials. However, there are also important considerations and potential risks, including health and safety, legal compliance, and fair labour practices. To determine whether participatory construction is appropriate for your context, use the tools below.

 [Key questions](#)



Step 2 | Health and safety

Develop a clear health and safety plan before beginning any on-site work. This includes:

- Providing safety equipment (e.g. gloves, helmets, goggles)
- Conducting safety briefings and tool-use training sessions
- Ensuring proper hydration, rest breaks, and first-aid supplies
- Assigning trained supervisors or skilled workers to guide the process
- Ensuring age and skill appropriate roles for participants



Step 3 | Prepare the site

Liaise with contractors, city officials, and landowners to:

- Clear and secure the space for construction activities
- Mark zones for different tasks (e.g. materials, storage, assembly areas)
- Confirm material deliveries and availability of tools
- Assign team roles and responsibilities (e.g. safety officer, lead builder, documenter)
- Ensure all necessary permissions and protocols are in place

 [Construction and maintenance plan](#)



Step 4 | Building

Oversee the building of the final site, ensuring that all construction workers have necessary tools, protective equipment, guidance and clear instructions to enable a smooth and safe build. Document the progress through regular photographs and consider obtaining quotes from any community builders.



Activity 2

Participation



Duration

🕒 1 week

Quality control

This activity aims to follow the implementation process and assure the quality of the construction phase.



Step 1 | Document work in progress

During construction, conduct weekly visits to monitor progress of the construction work. This activity could also be done by the participants autonomously:

- Take pictures, notes and small quotes of workers and visitors while monitoring
- Regularly update via your communication channels



Step 2 | Monitor quality

Monitor the construction process. Tick the box when an activity is completed and assess the status of its quality (poor, fair or good) during observation at the site visits. This exercise will help you to address issues when they emerge on the construction site and help fix them straight away.



[Construction and maintenance plan](#)



Co-construction With girls in Diepsloot, South Africa © UN-Habitat



Activity 3

Participation



Duration



Management and maintenance

This activity aims to establish a clear plan for the management and maintenance of the site following the completion of the construction phase.

Step 1 | Select management model

There are several management models associated with urban spaces. Each model offers unique strengths and particular challenges regarding effective management. Work with participants to identify which management model may be most appropriate for this context, and identify next steps, stakeholders and governance structures required to enable the implementation of this model.

 [Management model matrix](#)

Step 2 | Additional funding

Based on your budget, if necessary develop a sustainable financing plan to support the long-term management and maintenance of the public space. Explore potential funding sources such as local government budgets, public-private partnerships, crowdsourcing funds, and land-based financing instruments. Maintaining a balance between securing a sustainable financing mechanism and ensuring the public space remains open and accessible for all users is crucial.

Step 3 | Community involvement

Educate and involve local communities on the benefits of the public space and the ways in which it can be used to ensure civic stewardship, whereby residents help oversee and protect the space. Secure buy-in from community members through:

- Co-creating maintenance timelines;
- Providing employment opportunities to local skilled and unskilled labourers;
- Delivering regular activities in the public space.

Step 4 | Activate the space

The project team and professionals facilitate the development of an activity programme managed by the city or a civil society organisation in collaboration with the participants. Form a committee responsible for the organisation and the management of an activities calendar in the new public space covering the entire year.

Stories of change

Tools in action

FEMALE CONSTRUCTION IN LIMA

Location: La Ensanada and Pamplona Alta, Lima, Peru

Time: October 2021 – December 2022

Partners: Avina Foundation, Ocupa tu Calle, Mano a Mano, Funded by Block by Block Foundation, Global Utmaning and UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat, partners Ocupa Tu Calle, Mano a Mano, AVINA, and donor Block by Block Foundation, co-implemented the Her City Women Builders Initiative. It has catalysed urban regeneration and promoted female financial independence in the districts of La Ensanada and Pamplona Alta. Over 140 women joined forces to improve the conditions of 4 public spaces, integrating areas for green and urban agriculture and enhancing accessibility of the neighbourhoods, impacting 30,000 inhabitants.



[+ Read more](#)

The project shows how Her City can be used beyond the visioning, planning and design, while opening spaces where women are traditionally excluded or under-represented, such as the construction sector, for women to participate and lead, thereby creating a sustainable culture shift towards gender equality.. It further creates opportunities for the local economy and well-being for the families and community at the same time as it brings new perspectives into the building sector.



Female builders' construction work during the project
© UN-Habitat

"I feel more independent now; it's easier to move around or for my parents to help me. Before, they had to carry my chair up the stairs."



Mariela, a resident with a physical disability



A vibrant community space after the project
© UN-Habitat

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a city, likely Rio de Janeiro, showing a dense urban area with various buildings and a large hill in the background. A semi-transparent blue circle is positioned on the left side, partially overlapping the text.

FOLLOW-UP

phase

Block 10 | Monitoring and evaluation



Block 10



Monitoring and evaluation



Duration
4 weeks



Steps
17

This last block focuses on assessing and amplifying the project's long-term impact. It involves monitoring how the site is used after the intervention, evaluating the outcomes of the programme, reflecting on lessons learned, and translating successful practices into policy recommendations for scaling up inclusive urban development.



It is used for:

Gathering and organising all project results to understand progress and shape best practices.

Measuring the impact of spatial improvement both from a social, economic and environmental perspective through community observations and interviews.

Evaluating lessons learnt and synthesising key findings to share and inspire for broader impact.

Informing local and national policies by integrating successful practices and advocating for inclusive urban development



The result:

A final report including an evaluation of the overall impact of the site on the local area.



The activities:

Preparation | Setting-up

Activity 1 | Monitor and measure impact

Activity 2 | Evaluate and share impact

Activity 3 | Policy-making and scaling



Preparation

Duration

🕒 1 week

Setting-up

In order to evaluate the process and the impact on the space and the community, the project team will have to allocate some time to a range of tasks.



Step 1 | Gather results

Compile the results from the entire process to inform the following activities. Packaging it in a structured way will help to gain support and funding for scaling-up the process and adopting city-wide strategies. It is easiest done by downloading all data you have entered in the Her City toolbox by visiting the Results page and clicking the Download all files button. You can also use your good practice form as a short summary of your project.

📎 [My results](#)



Step 2 | Review sustainability framework

Go back to the sustainability framework you produced in Block 0 and assess how relevant it still is. Identify whether the process has highlighted any additional indicators or SDGs relevant to your work, or demonstrated different groups that require focus to make progress on a particular SDG

📎 [Gender-transformative SDG indicators](#)



Step 3 | Review ToC

Review the project's Theory of Change to ensure it accurately reflects the expected outcomes and impact pathways. Identify any areas where stakeholder feedback or programme circumstances have changed project scope.

📎 [Her City Theory of Change](#)

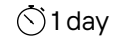


Activity 1

Participation



Duration



Monitor and measure impact

It is important to understand the impact of spatial improvement both from a social, economic and environmental perspective. This is easiest done by observations and interviews with the community in the public space. Approximately six months after construction, revisit the site to monitor and measure the impact of the spatial improvement.



Step 1 | Monitor community impact

Observe and conduct interviews with the community during your field visit. Make sure to cover the following:

- Observe changes in terms of number and variety of users, and types of activities.
- Conduct some unstructured interviews in the public space to gather users' perspective on the new space (functionality, housing quality and affordability, aesthetics, greenery, safety etc).
- Note down some representatives quotes.
- Take some pictures to compare changes before and after the intervention.



Step 2 | Rate site quality

Re-conduct the quality scoring exercise previously done during the site specific assessment, based on observations and the community's perception of the new public space.

 [Quality scoring](#)



Step 3 | Post-implementation assessment

Collect new data based on the same indicators framework as in your baseline study.

 [Gender-transformative SDG indicators](#)



Step 4 | Measure change

Review all data, pre and post implementation, comparing indicators gathered in the baseline, city-wide and site-specific assessment with the data gathered post-intervention. Identify key trends in change of use of the site, the way users feel in the space, and any other social changes. Use both qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the findings.

 [Action-oriented gender-transformative VLRs](#)



Activity 2

Participation



Duration

🕒 2 weeks

Evaluate and share impact

The aim of this section is to provide a point for reflection and learning. By taking the opportunity to review programme learnings, key findings can be synthesised and shared. This provides the opportunity to inspire broader impact and allow the project to have influence more widely.



Step 1 | Lessons learnt

Review the challenges and successes across the project, in particular those regarding stakeholder engagement, ease of implementation and sustainability of the project. Document insights and explore effective strategies and areas for improvement. The good practice form helps you draft an impact story as a short summary of your project.



[Her City Stories of Change](#)



Step 2 | Final Report

Organize and categorize the analyzed data into key themes. Identify patterns and actionable insights that highlight opportunities for scaling up interventions. The results from the entire process should be gathered in a report to present to the city. It will help to gain support and funding for scaling-up the process and adopting city-wide strategies. Access your results page and 'download all data' as a basis for your report.



[My results](#)



Step 3 | Communications

In order to support the mainstreaming of the process and share programme impact we suggest the following actions:

- Share the Her City certificate on social media along with new pictures of the site.
- Disseminate the final report and influence decision-makers.
- Actively seek appearance in tv, radio, newspapers and magazines, to inspire new projects. Don't forget to use @hercitytoolbox and #hercity.



Activity 3

Participation



Duration

🕒 2 weeks

Policy-making and scaling

The aim of this section is to guide the integration of gender-transformative approaches into strategies, policies and legislation in place. By mainstreaming and scaling successful practices, the impact of the project can be sustained and expanded across communities and institutions.



Step 1 | Leverage project experience

Capitalise on existing project experience to identify gaps and opportunities in terms of policy-making and governance. Use the gathered results and learnings to get an overview of potential gaps and opportunities, and then move to the relevant sections depending on the conclusions:

- How can you ensure the implementation of recommendations from the final report and identify how the Her City process can inform the design of future interventions?
- How can additional resources be allocated and budget be increased to inclusive urban development in alignment with your commitments to equity, the New Urban Agenda, and the SDGs?
- How can you systematically implement mechanisms for meaningful public participation?



[Mapping gaps and identifying opportunities: Section 1](#)



Step 2 | Local replication

Return to the public spaces map produced during the city-wide assessment. Review the list to identify additional sites to benefit from development. If there is financial capacity and enthusiasm from participants, return to Block 3 to conduct additional site-specific assessments. Revisit Block 1 as well to ensure that the right stakeholders are involved at the new site. Focus on:

- Which sites were not chosen for this project and why?
- How has learning from this Her City process impacted potential interventions on other sites?
- Which sites are at the top of the priority list to come next?



[Mapping gaps and identifying opportunities: Section 2](#)



Step 3 | City-wide strategies for scaling

Explore how the city can mainstream similar processes and show how to scale up and apply the process to other areas and spaces across the city in need of improvement. Involve local authorities in this activity.



[City-wide public space strategy guidebook](#)



[City-wide public space strategy compendium](#)



[Mapping gaps and identifying opportunities: Section 3](#)

Step 4 | National mainstreaming policies

Whilst the Her City model tends to focus on the hyper-local, when being brought to scale across several municipalities in a country, it can inform nationwide policy-making.

For example, previous Her City projects have informed and contributed to the world's first national policy for inclusive public space. This is done in collaboration with national government.

-  [Public Space Policy for Local Governments](#)
-  [National Urban Policy](#)
-  [Mapping gaps and identifying opportunities: Section 4](#)

Step 5 | Legislative opportunities

In addition to national urban policies, recommendations from Her City projects may enable you to identify additional gaps or limitations in current legislation within the context of participatory urban development, inclusion and rights. Review current relevant legislation, identify whether any of these pose a challenge to delivery and what legislative change is required. This step will involve collaboration with the legislator, elected MPs, political parties, civil society, and government representatives.

-  [Guidelines for the Scrutiny of the Quality of Urban Legislation](#)
-  [Mapping gaps and identifying opportunities: Section 5](#)

Step 6 | Global reporting

Based on the selected indicators framework, your baseline data and post-implementation data, you have been capable to compare data to measure your progress. You should report this to both local and national statistical authorities to include in Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) and Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of the SDGs to the High Level Political Forum of the United Nations.

-  [Gender-transformative SDG indicators](#)
-  [Action-oriented gender-transformative VLRs](#)
-  [Voluntary National Reviews \(VNRs\)](#)

Step 7 | Build advocacy

Support participants in developing key messages and advocacy strategies based on the overall project findings including any identified opportunities for social or legislative change. To do this you could:

- Facilitate capacity-building workshops on public speaking, advocacy and stakeholder engagement.
- Write to policymakers and legislators.
- Organise discussions with policymakers, and community leaders to explore gaps in current legislation and discuss where change could be made.

-  [Template letter to policymakers](#)



Finish!

You have successfully built Her City!

Stories of change

Tools in action

VLR-BASED MONITORING & EVALUATION IN COSTA RICA

Location: San José, Costa Rica

Time: December 2024 - ongoing

Partners: UN-Habitat, UN Women, UCLG, Municipality of San José, SDG Fund

The SDG Cantons Network is a Costa Rican national initiative that seeks to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs at the local level and includes 53 out of the 84 cantons of the country. Seeking to strengthen the Network, UN-Habitat in collaboration with IFAM, MIDEPLAN, and the Resident Coordinator's Office of Costa Rica, has partnered with UNDP, UN Women, and UNODC and to accelerate the localization of the SDGs through digital transformation with a gender perspective.

Ongoing efforts are focused on bridging the digital divide, empowering women, and embedding gender-transformative governance models at the local level. Under the project "Accelerating SDG Localization Through Digital Transformation", supported by the Joint SDG Fund, the agencies aim to collaboratively position Costa Rica as a regional champion for SDG localization.



[+ Read more](#)

The project clearly shows how Her City can enhance M&E processes by embedding gender perspectives into SDG localization. It provides a replicable model for cities aiming to incorporate participatory tools in their urban strategies. By leveraging the VLR methodology, the project demonstrates how inclusive approaches can foster transparent governance, empower marginalized voices, and ensure that urban policies address diverse community needs.



Group discussions during workshop in San José
© UN-Habitat



Participants presenting their work
© UN-Habitat

Lessons learned

Capacity building for gender-transformative cities

Her City was initiated with the conviction that we could not continue business as usual if we were to make the necessary transition meeting our ambitious global agendas. Initially, it was a hypothetical test; 'What if girls planned our cities instead?' Almost ten years later, we have sufficient knowledge and experience to draw some conclusions and share our lessons learned. Projects implemented around the world have informed this new Her City Guide for the coming generation of innovative change makers.

Based on these experiences we have made some adjustments, improvements and developments. We have expanded the scope of the toolbox to more context specific needs to enhance 'the end-user's perspective'. We have multiplied the toolbox' use by bringing in a stronger multi-scale planning perspective, improving the usefulness from 'the urban planner's perspective'. Finally, we hope that this Guide will be better adapted to help you scale and mainstream the Her City approach, strengthening strategy and policy-making to better meet the 'the leaders perspective'.

Mainstreaming inclusion and gender equality in urban planning, design and implementation processes is an underutilised tool for policymaking and sustainable development. However, it is an apolitical and democratic tool and should be used as such. Mainstreaming is – as any contemporary governance practice – influenced by power and representation. It requires a multidisciplinary approach and must challenge existing expertise as the only valid knowledge. Facilitating the engagement and critical reflection of all actors, sectors and levels involved, is therefore key. Everyone has a role to play, and everyone has the right to engage in the decision-making that impacts their daily experiences.

The Her City lessons learned ranges from a set of key messages outlining the very problems and solutions; the key implementing actors for women-led cities; key actions to take to build cities for all; the principles to guide the gender-transformative city; and the range of thematic entry points and their possible policy implications.

Key messages

The joint experience from the Her City approach has highlighted a set of key problems and their root causes. At the same time, the applied methodology has presented relevant solutions responding to these issues. These are aligned with our priority SDGs' 5, 10, 11, 16 and 17, accelerating the localization of other SDGs and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

In a predominantly urban world, with over a billion in unplanned informal settlements, women and girls are the most marginalized and excluded. They are rarely engaged nor heard, and we fail to meet their needs when we plan and design the cities of tomorrow.

- *Gender equality* is acknowledged as a part of all major global agendas and agreements and not being subjected to discrimination based on sex and gender is a key human right, hence a duty to be integrated in all activities, every time, everywhere, without any exception. However, gender equality mainstreaming and gender-transformative approaches are still highly overlooked in practice.
- *A consolidated universal toolbox* is still needed to assist urban actors in efficiently mainstreaming gender and intersectional perspectives into current sustainable urban development practice, no matter where in the world, or at what stage of the process. However, without a consolidated, universally applicable tool box, urban actors continue to waste resources and capacity on developing similar tools over and over.
- *Any actor involved* in urban decision-making, governance, assessment, planning, design, construction or management has a role to play and can integrate gender and intersectional perspectives by using our tools to contribute to a more inclusive, prosperous and sustainable urban environment. Still, this is far from becoming the norm and being considered an integrated necessity.

- *Cities for girls are cities for all*, because they indirectly benefit a larger population than the primary target group. They are more likely to provide improved accessibility, mobility, air quality, well-being, social inclusion, conditions for economic activities, digital competence, resilient ecosystems, reduced distances and a strengthened local communities. Still, most believe that a gender perspective only benefits the female population.

An intersectional gender-transformative approach helps to understand, engage and give agency, by collecting disaggregated data to make well-informed decisions guiding urban governance, planning, design and management.

- *There are a range of actions* that urban actors can take to implement gender-transformative cities. Simply integrating and mainstreaming it into everyday work and processes is not difficult nor requires considerable additional resources. Above all, it needs a change in mindset among professionals.
- *Practical experience shows* that mainstreaming gender and intersectional perspectives is applicable worldwide, in any urban context. It is a most efficient way to produce inclusive and sustainable visions, plans and designs for sustainable cities.
- *The growing body* of knowledge on the application of gender and intersectional perspectives in practice, shows that the method improves green areas, urban agriculture and ecosystem services, public transport and mobility, safe and social meeting places, water and sanitation, and marketplaces.
- *Multi-level, multi-sector* and multi-stakeholder cooperation is key for gender-transformative planning, design and implementation. It is more likely to lead to long-term inclusive and sustainable local, regional, national and global environments and societies.

Implementing actors

The identified problems and solutions need to be addressed by a range of multi-level, multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholders, acting in accordance with their mandate, role and competence. They are all essential in delivering successful futures for any sustainable society, and together they can form an alliance of women-led cities.

Global governance

From climate change responses to poverty reduction, there is much to gain from allocating attention and resources to the world's urban women and girls. In line with the growing number of countries adopting feminist foreign policies, gender equality and equal distribution of power and resources should also apply to publicly owned but unevenly distributed spaces and infrastructures in our cities. Her City is a way to practice democracy and overcome potential conflicts of interest in a visible and empowering way. We encourage international development cooperation to step up support to feminist urban development as a measure for more inclusive and sustainable societies aligned with the Pact for the Future and the 2030 Agenda.

Central government

Central governments have pledged to a variety of international targets covering social, environmental and economic dimensions and have committed themselves to human rights obligations that ensure gender equality. The national government is accountable for responding to gender-based discrimination and any uneven resource allocation, hence ensuring decision-making targets gender equal priorities. An understanding of gender-transformative approaches to liveability and distribution of services, and the sub-national role to play in it is of utmost importance. The strong placemaking emphasis in the Her City solutions, resonates with the new urbanism principles that are increasingly influencing the field. National urban policies can increasingly show the direction and decentralised public institutions with mandates to operate, can deliver on clear expectations.

Regional government

Policy opportunities for regional governments lie in the cooperation between neighbouring municipalities and central government. Different levels of government can together improve the aggregated social, environmental, and economic sustainability and attractiveness of both city and region. This calls for alignment of regional strategies and municipal plans and a shared overall vision guided by long-term central priorities. Such a vision needs gender equality as a shared point of departure towards overarching sustainability and prosperity for all.

Local governments

Mayors and local governments are key in setting long-term visions and strategies for urban development. With the Her City framework, gender and intersectional perspectives are mainstreamed in long-term strategies for a more sustainable development of the public space, neighbourhood and city levels. It is a method to assure that the right priorities are agreed upon, money is spent in a way that reflects the needs of all, basic needs are met, local economy can bloom and that the community embraces and safeguards the new spaces. This is an opportunity for municipalities to incorporate local expertise into their own planning schemes to assure a long-term sustainable urban everyday life for all.

Public sector

Public administration and civil servants provide an understanding of local frameworks in use, and bridges the gap between the community, civil society, and local government. Her City guides civil servants and professionals in public administration in how to facilitate participatory development processes.

Academia

Academia and researchers contribute with a research-based approach to the process. Researchers participation in a Her City project provide insight into a multitude of models for planning and designing inclusive and functional urban spaces. They continue to build on the shared body of knowledge and provide a better understanding of the interplay between urban development efforts.

Private sector

Private sector provides an understanding of urban challenges and opportunities from a risk and business perspective, and is often key in implementation and construction. Private actors can use the Her City Toolbox to improve the local environment where they are active, and in turn creating a more profitable

business environment with positive impact on property and land value, as well as business opportunities.

Civil society

Civil society provides important experience-driven expertise to the process and is also in a position to include and share with often overlooked societal groups. As a civil society organisation you can use the Her City platform to engage members of local communities to provide input to decision-making processes and the planning and design of cities.

People and grassroots

Inhabitants, communities, people and grassroots are key for understanding the challenges, needs and priorities on the ground. With the Her City Toolbox, people that are rarely heard become the experts and are able to influence the function and form of their city in a more inclusive and sustainable direction.

Key actions

The above key implementing actors for women-led cities, need to take some initial key actions to start building cities for all, starting at the local level:

1. *Gender considerations across the urban space.* Start with analysing key considerations in making city spaces gender-transformative catering for the needs of women and girls. How do the different urban features impact different genders? Always adopt an intersectional perspective.
2. *Key infrastructure across different city scales.* While understanding gender and intersecting forms of discrimination in terms of urban development, it is important to highlight the different scales of its implication. Explore the different scales across which planning process and practice must operate in order to promote gender-transformative cities.
3. *Principles for gender responsive cities.* Based on the urban planning experience, knowledge and international practice gathered, a number of principles that underpin a gender-transformative city have been defined. Use these principles to inform the participatory process, planning, design and implementation of your project.

4. *Guidelines for gender-transformative urban planning* We have suggested that there are five key dimensions of public space planning and design that also apply to gender-transformative cities. They include use and users, accessibility, amenities, comfort and safety and the green environment. Key is understanding how different groups of people experience the current urban environment differently.
5. *Neighbourhood level recommendations* UN-Habitat has developed a set of guiding principles to further support urban managers, practitioners and stakeholders to promote integrated and inclusive planning at the neighbourhood level. Neighbourhood level planning approaches can help foster gender-transformative communities which can be scaled up across the broader urban environment.
6. *Key interventions to particularly engage women and girls* There are a range of practical interventions to undertake such as fostering an inclusive mindset; recognizing and understanding the diversity of cities and women and girls differing urban experiences; promote women leadership in key roles through role modelling, mentorship; using certain technical urban planning interventions to promote gender-transformative cities; engaging women and girls in the urban design processes; and promoting female participation in construction, management, maintenance and evaluation.
7. *Tools for gender-transformative planning and design* Women and girls should be invited to take part in the various components and steps of the urban planning, design and implementation process in order to achieve a gender-transformative outcome. Achieving this demands multi-level, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement.
8. *Digital tools for gender-transformative cities* With the new Her City toolbox we offer a comprehensive overview of digital tools for gender-transformative cities. Use it as a flexible digital guide for any urban development project to ensure inclusion and sustainability. We are engaged to constantly improve the methodology and include new tools under one universal umbrella.

Principles

The key actions starting at the local level should build on the understanding of the gender-transformative city and be guided by its main principles. However, these should never replace a participatory bottom-up process, as context, scope and priorities differ from case to case.

- *Ability of everyone to express opinions and influence* the planning decisions that affect them through appropriate processes and mechanisms.
- *Access for all to a clean, unpolluted environment* that supports both physical and mental health and freedom of movement.
- *Accessible and relevant essential services for all*, such as adequate housing, basic services and facilities, accessible and within close proximity to home.
- *Equitable access to infrastructure and basic services* for an adequate standard of living, including water and sanitation, such as public toilets.
- *Capacity to participate and opportunity to influence decision-making* in family, cultural and community life, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or ability.
- *Natural flow of people and presence of authorities* around the public space encourages positive behaviour and adds to the perception of safety, such as increased visibility.
- *Flexible spaces and urban elements* meet several purposes and functions, attract different audiences at different times of the day. A place can at the same time cater for walking, including mobility for people with a variety of physical prerequisites, to sit, being a meeting place, a training venue, a playground, a stage for performances, etc.
- *Good lighting and visibility* make a place less threatening during dark hours and enable women's presence during all hours of the day.

cleaning service theatre
accessibility playground
sidewalks economic activities
digital competence
air quality bikes cafe inclusion
socializing art installation health & well-being
shades orchard political participation
basic services
safety benches
marketspace lighting games
zebra crossing cctv
fences bus public transport
park beehives security toilets kiosks housing wifi
colours stairs books resilient ecosystems
water & sanitation
united waste bins sport
community stage
meeting place sculpture library
greenhouse cinema
greenery entrance mobility
renewable energy arts signage

- *Green spaces* in the urban built up environment such as green walls and roofs, bushes, trees, plants, urban agriculture and bodies of wetlands and water have positive effects on both the environment and the physical and mental health.
- *Human scale design* is a well-adapted design and urban form to the user. A human-scale design automatically becomes an attractive meeting place as it imposes feelings of a public living room blurring the frontiers between the home and the city.
- *Integrated urban neighbourhoods* which are designed so all key services are within proximity, promote productivity, time management and overall inclusion.
- *Manifestation of local features* contribute to a sense of pride, belonging and well-being. A place that is beautiful and differs in design from the majority of the city is less likely to be vandalised and will strengthen the conception of safety.
- *Open access*, semi-public or semi-private spaces, such as parks, libraries and museums should be free access without any fees or restriction. Places that are not open access for free, systematically exclude parts of the population.
- *Places accessible for women, children, and older persons to loiter* or 'hang out' increase the presence of these groups. Women are usually limited to having a purpose when using the urban public space, in comparison to men that are allowed to loiter to a higher extent. For example, seating facing each other makes it easier to talk to one another.
- *Representation* contributes to a feeling of safety, being welcomed and authority to utilise the space. To attract girls and minorities to use a space, other girls need to already be present

Thematic entry points

Eventually, cities characterised by the main principles for gender-transformative cities, will have important policy implications related to the specific thematic entry points and priorities in a specific city context. Results of the Her City approach and our projects show that the girls plan and design places that would have impact on the following challenges:

Basic services

In the long run, provision of better access to adequate housing and shared basic services in public space, would have a general impact on the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living, health, employment and safety. In particular provision of services such as access to clean and efficient sources of energy, have an important impact in public facilities in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Environment and climate change

Public space can further help areas adapt to the effects of climate change by acting as a sustainable drainage system, moderate solar heating, act as cooling corridors, provide wind shelter and act as a wildlife habitat. Women and minorities are unequally represented in decision-making processes, which in turn inhibits women's participation in climate-related planning and policy-making processes as well as women's possibilities to respond to the effects of the climate crisis.

Economy

Well designed and managed public spaces add economic value to places which can positively influence the local economy, employment opportunities, business investments, tourism, etc, especially for women. It is essential as women's economic empowerment as an important aspect towards gender equality. As climate change adaptation has become a large cost for society, investment in ecologically sustainable public space oriented infrastructure can be a way to reduce spending. Building compact cities with a focus on public spaces for walking and cycling will also reduce public service costs.

Health and well-being

Safe drinking water and adequate sanitation infrastructure such as public toilets and washing facilities do not only improve the lives and health of urban dwellers but also reduce pollution from open waste. Well-connected public spaces can reduce stress by providing a calm environment for people to better their physical and mental health. Child friendly public spaces are important in a child's cognitive, social and physical development.

Mobility

Cities and neighbourhoods planned and designed based on principles of proximity, simultaneously reduce the need for travel and improve non-motorised collective mobility. This is at the core of the "15 minute city" concept gaining terrain in different cities around the world. Pollution levels are reduced by enhancing the mobility options for bicycles and pedestrians.

Political participation

Public space, and inclusive participatory public space planning and design as an instrument, presents a framework for social and cultural interaction which may lead to an increased sense of belonging, responsibility and pride. Applying an intersectional analysis on civic engagement and public space planning and design processes by challenging power structures, norms and excluding practices gives urban actors a better chance to make informed decisions about how to navigate and improve the complex structures that make a city.

Safety

Dynamic and active public spaces that provide mixed use and design, while serving a mix of users will reduce risks of violence and feelings of insecurity. Redesigning current public spaces and overseeing the management structure of the space can help to allay fears of crime and violence. Carefully planned public spaces that invite a large cross-section of people at all times of the day play an important role in reducing insecurity.

Social inclusion

Access to good service, public transport, recreational areas, meeting places and culture promotes urban health and well-being and provides good conditions for integration and social cohesion. Inclusive urban planning and a good living environment are therefore the most important tools for counteracting social exclusion and segregation.

We really hope you have enjoyed our guide. If you weren't already convinced why our future cities should be developed inclusively, we hope you are now. From here, it is up to you to make it happen by starting where you stand, but eventually creating a vast impact. We look forward to seeing you among the Her City community members.

Join us!
The Her City team
@hercitytoolbox
#hercity

Annex

TOOLS





Block O | Mainstreaming inclusion

- ✂ [Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- ✂ [New Urban Agenda](#)
- ✂ [Gender transformative budgeting](#)
- ✂ [Participatory budgeting](#)
- ✂ [Work plan & budget](#)
- ✂ [Her City Library](#)
- ✂ [Her City in Crisis](#)
- ✂ [Global Public Space Toolkit](#)
- ✂ [MY Neighbourhood Framework](#)
- ✂ [My Neighbourhood Methodology](#)
- ✂ [Our City Plans for Neighbourhoods](#)
- ✂ [Our City Plans for City-scale](#)
- ✂ [Spatial Development Framework](#)
- ✂ [Sustainable Proximities Methodology](#)
- ✂ [Global Observatory of Sustainable Proximities](#)
- ✂ [The Urban Monitoring Framework](#)
- ✂ [SDG Cities](#)
- ✂ [City Scan Data Tool](#)
- ✂ [Governance - SDG Diagnostic Tool](#)
- ✂ [Planning - SDG Diagnostic Tool](#)
- ✂ [Mobility - SDG Diagnostic Tool](#)
- ✂ [Safety - Urban Safety Monitor](#)
- ✂ [Her City Theory of Change](#)
- ✂ [Action-oriented Voluntary Local Reviews](#)
- ✂ [Voluntary Local Reviews overview](#)
- ✂ [SDG Localization: Planning for change with the SDGs](#)
- ✂ [Action-oriented gender-transformative VLRs](#)
- ✂ [Gender-transformative SDG indicators](#)
- ✂ [Measure public space](#)

Block 1 | Stakeholder engagement

- ✂ [List stakeholders](#)
- ✂ [Stakeholder mapping](#)
- ✂ [Confetti meetings](#)
- ✂ [Terms of service](#)
- ✂ [Consent form](#)

Block 2 | City wide assessment

- ✂ [KoBo Toolbox account](#)
- ✂ [KoBo Toolbox app](#)
- ✂ [Download QGIS](#)
- ✂ [QGIS training manual](#)
- ✂ [KoBo Toolbox questionnaire](#)
- ✂ [XLS form](#)

- ✂ [Urban Walk \(group\)](#)
- ✂ [Urban Walk \(individual\)](#)
- ✂ [Safetipin](#)
- ✂ [Safecity](#)
- ✂ [Agenda template](#)
- ✂ [List participants](#)
- ✂ [City-wide assessment questionnaire](#)
- ✂ [City-wide assessment technical guide](#)

Block 3 | Site specific assessment

- ✂ [Agenda template](#)
- ✂ [List participants](#)
- ✂ [Public space site-specific assessment](#)
- ✂ [General site specific assessment form](#)
- ✂ [The Inhabit place toolkit](#)
- ✂ [Urban Walk \(group\)](#)
- ✂ [Urban Walk \(individual\)](#)
- ✂ [Safetipin](#)
- ✂ [Safecity](#)
- ✂ [Observation template](#)
- ✂ [Measuring and recording checklist](#)
- ✂ [Sound meter](#)
- ✂ [Weather forecast](#)
- ✂ [Thermometer](#)
- ✂ [Light meter](#)
- ✂ [Air quality](#)
- ✂ [People counter](#)
- ✂ [5 dimensions digital maps](#)
- ✂ [Quality scoring](#)

Block 4 | Analysing challenges

- ✂ [MethodKit - Registration](#)
- ✂ [MethodKit - The place today](#)
- ✂ [MethodKit - Place exclusion canvas](#)
- ✂ [MethodKit - The place tomorrow](#)
- ✂ [MethodKit - Generating ideas](#)
- ✂ [MethodKit - Idea description](#)
- ✂ [MethodKit - Prepare tables](#)
- ✂ [Agenda template](#)
- ✂ [List participants](#)

Block 5 | Designing ideas

- ✂ [List of commands](#)
- ✂ [Minecraft Forum](#)
- ✂ [Builder's Refuge](#)
- ✂ [Planet Minecraft](#)

-  [Fiverr](#)
-  [Unity's Minecraft Forum](#)
-  [Builtbybit](#)
-  [UpWork](#)
-  [Gigster](#)
-  [Codementor](#)
-  [Microsoft Partner Program](#)
-  [Agenda template](#)
-  [List participants](#)
-  [Minecraft: Java Edition](#)
-  [Create Minecraft Account](#)
-  [Her Cities around the world](#)
-  [Mineways](#)
-  [MethodKit - Idea description](#)
-  [SketchFab](#)
-  [Prioritisation template](#)

-  [Quality scoring](#)
-  [Action-oriented gender-transformative VLRs](#)
-  [Her City Stories of Change](#)
-  [Mapping gaps and identifying opportunities](#)
-  [City-wide public space strategy guidebook](#)
-  [City-wide public space strategy compendium](#)
-  [Public Space Policy for Local Governments](#)
-  [National Urban Policy](#)
-  [Guidelines for the Scrutiny of the Quality of Urban Legislation](#)
-  [Voluntary National Reviews \(VNRs\)](#)
-  [Template letter to policy-makers](#)

Block 6 | Recommendations for action

-  [Prioritise outcomes](#)
-  [Realise proposal](#)
-  [Agenda template](#)
-  [List participants](#)

Block 7 | Plans and designs

-  [Download SketchUp](#)
-  [Agenda template](#)
-  [List participants](#)
-  [Bill of quantities template](#)
-  [Construction and maintenance plan](#)
-  [Terms of Service](#)

Block 8 | Sharing results

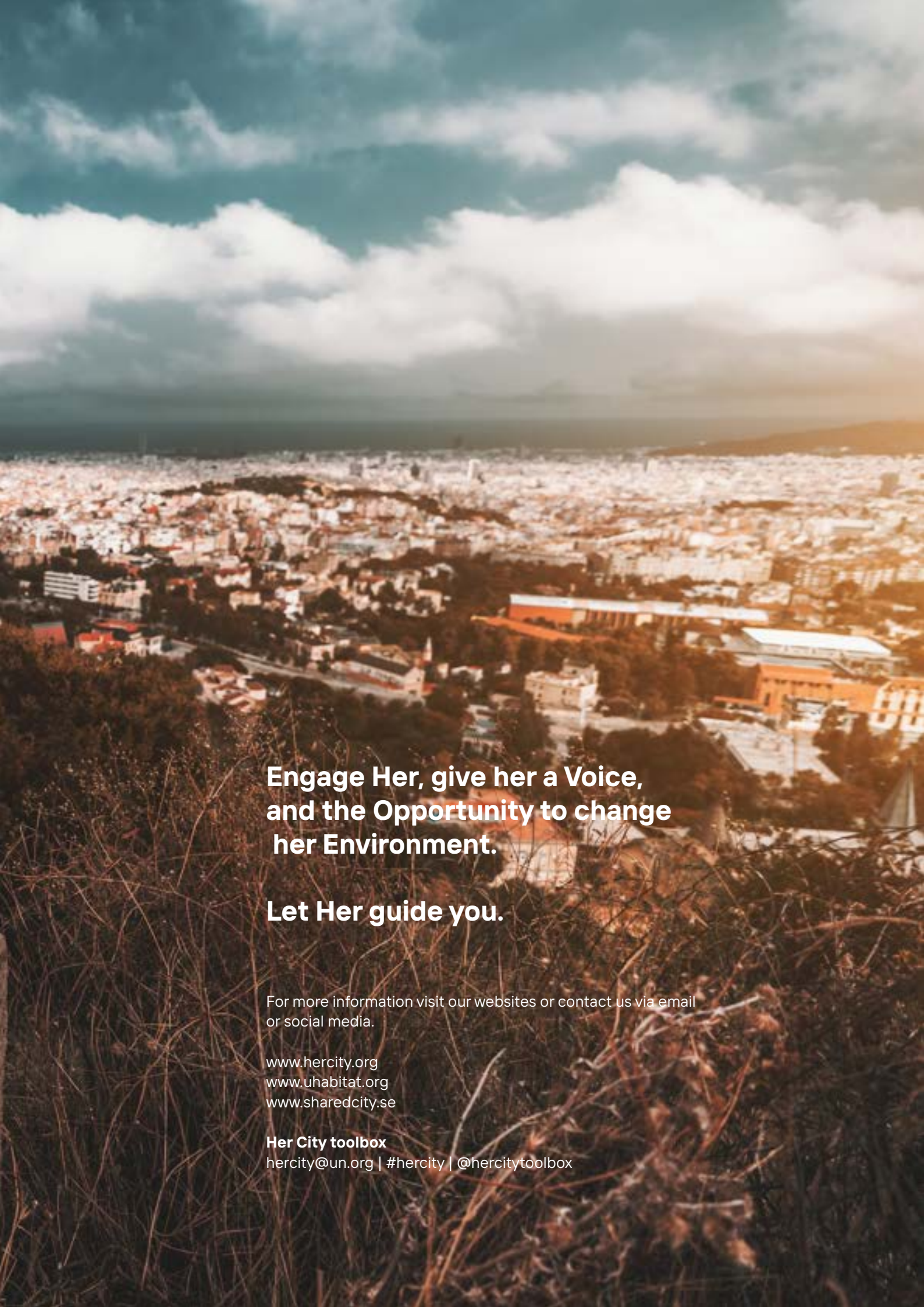
-  [Agenda template](#)
-  [Her City Stories of Change](#)
-  [Evaluation form](#)
-  [Certificate of participation](#)
-  [Letters of recommendation](#)

Block 9 | Construction and maintenance

-  [Key questions](#)
-  [Construction and maintenance plan](#)
-  [Management model matrix](#)

Block 10 | Mainstreaming inclusion

-  [Gender-transformative SDG indicators](#)
-  [Her City Theory of Change](#)

An aerial photograph of a sprawling city, likely Istanbul, viewed from a high vantage point. The foreground is filled with dark, dry, tangled branches. The city below is a dense mosaic of buildings, with a prominent orange-roofed structure in the middle ground. The sky is filled with large, white, billowing clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow over the city.

**Engage Her, give her a Voice,
and the Opportunity to change
her Environment.**

Let Her guide you.

For more information visit our websites or contact us via email
or social media.

www.hercity.org
www.ushabitat.org
www.sharedcity.se

Her City toolbox

hercity@un.org | [#hercity](https://twitter.com/hercity) | [@hercitytoolbox](https://twitter.com/hercitytoolbox)