

UNCOVERING THE VOICE ON FEMINIST URBAN PLANNING THROUGH PHOTOS

Uncovering the voice on feminist urban planning through photos is created by KULU in Denmark in 2025

KULU - Women and Development is a Danish cross-political development organization and umbrella organization for 16 women's organizations, equality committees, and other organizations in Denmark, along with a circle of individual members.

This method is part of the online trainers hub, which is one of the key adult education tools developed in the multi-year collaboration entitled: **"Gender and Climate Justice: Knowledge for Empowerment", in brief COPGendered**. This project builds up tools and knowledge for learners to upskill themselves (in groups, individually or with a teacher) in the relationships between gender inequality and the climate crisis. This includes providing tools for adult education providers. The project which lasted for three years ended in November 2025.

The associations involved are in this project: WIDE+ (Europe), GenderCC-Women for Climate Justice/LIFE e.V in Germany, WIDE in Austria, GADIP in Sweden, KULU Women and Development in Denmark, Mundubat in Spain and CSCD in Bulgaria.

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Bildung Umwelt
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für Frauenrechte und feministische Perspektiven



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UNCOVERING THE VOICE ON FEMINIST URBAN PLANNING THROUGH PHOTOS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Create awareness on how the planning and design of urban structures can contribute to gender equality, inclusion and environmental sustainability. Participants will become familiarised with urban planning and its connections with gender and climate justice. Urban planning is a domain in which people focus on the (re-)design of the physical environment and organisation of urban areas to improve living conditions and address societal and environmental challenges. Participants will also be stimulated to use their visual awareness and creativity to reflect on urban settings and their impact through photos.

SUMMARY

Have you ever thought about how urban structures impact different genders, our environment and the climate? In this workshop participants will explore this question.

The participants will be introduced to a feminist perspective to urban planning and then discuss their own experiences and observations of how different groups use the city. The facilitator will provide visual material for this discussion. Additionally, to prepare for the workshop, the participants can be invited to take photos of urban structures and add these photos to the visual material provided by the facilitator. The workshop should present ideas to the participants on how urban planning can be inclusive and eco-friendly.

Time needed: Ideally around three hours for a participatory workshop, especially with a big group; in the guide we plan for 90 minutes

Space needed: Room with table(s) – small groups will sit around a table where photos are placed

Number of participants: A minimum of 5 and a maximum of 30 participants

Age: 15+

Material needed: (additional) photos from urban structures and places – positive and negative examples

Material provided in this guide: guiding questions for group work

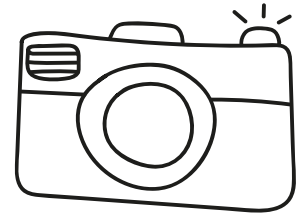
Citation: <https://kulu.dk/en/english/>

FACILITATION GUIDE

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

STEP 1: PREPARATION

A bonus to this methodology is that you can involve the participants before the workshop. For example, if you hold the workshop within an organization in which people register for an event, you could add a request upon registration and confirmation. The task for the participants would be to go out into the city and take photos of urban spaces, structures and transport solutions that they use in their everyday lives. They should take photos with the following question in mind:



- How do these structures correspond with my needs and the needs of other people (e.g. children, someone using a wheelchair, someone with a pushchair, etc.)?
- Which places do you especially appreciate, and for what reason(s)?

You can also encourage the participants to bring pictures from other sources (not just their own photos) especially if they feel that they are a particularly strong example.

As facilitator, it is important for you to collect enough photos and pictures so that you can ensure that there is enough visual material for the discussions in the workshop that follows.

We additionally recommend the following publication for your preparation, which contains concrete ideas on feminist urban planning: ["Cities Alive: Designing cities that work for women"](#) (Arup.com, October 2022)

STEP 2: INTRODUCTION OF CLIMATE AND GENDER IN URBAN PLANNING

Here we suggest a brief keynote presentation with Q and A that would take about 20 minutes.

Start the workshop by introducing the topics that you will discuss. The time you set aside for this part can vary greatly, as it can be done in different interactive ways. If you have a large group, you can plan this as a mini workshop, for which you develop a methodology within the activity, for example small group discussions. If you have limited time available, you can opt for a brief keynote introduction.

You can invite a person familiar with urban planning and its differential relationship with a variety of users. This workshop has been developed by an urban planner with gender expertise, and the information and links below can also help to further strengthen this introduction.

The purpose of this section is to familiarise participants with the role of urban planning and its connection to gender and climate justice. This workshop looks at urban planning from a feminist perspective. Feminist urban planners advocate for a holistic approach to urban planning, an approach that recognises the diverse needs of all urban dwellers and strives to create spaces that are accessible, safe and inclusive for everyone.

URBAN MOBILITY

There is a lot of research available on the different mobility patterns of men and women in cities – here are some of the core findings from research that we use, from Rambøll *“Gender and (smart) mobility.”* (2021):

- Women walk more than men.
- Women use public transport more than men. Public transport is climate friendly.
- Women cycle, if there is a good and safe cycling infrastructure.
- Men drive more than women. Women are often the passengers.
- Men use new mobility services more than women (which is about combining traditional mobility with digital tools, like car-sharing).
- Women travel shorter distances per trip than men.
- Women’s journeys have multiple stops to a greater extent than men, who generally have an A to B trip pattern.
- Women accompany children or other family members and/or carry bags and groceries to a greater extent than men.

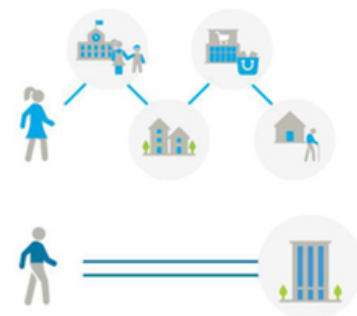


Illustration from “Gender and (smart) mobility” (2021)

STEP 3: REPRESENTATION IN DECISION-MAKING ON URBAN PLANNING

Present a case study that shows how different needs are/aren’t considered in urban decision making, depending on the representation of certain groups in the public decision-making process. You can add a brief reflection element to this example (see below), or/in which case you can plan this activity for five minutes. You might have your own example but if not, you can use the following:

“Snow removal in Karlskoga”

In the Swedish town of Karlskoga, there is typically snow in the winter. And that snow must be cleared away so that people can move safely on the streets and alleys. For many years, the snow removal took place in the following order, determined by the city council, which primarily had male members:

they started by clearing snow on the major roads so that the cars could get around the city quickly. They ended by clearing cycle paths, pavements and other footpaths used by pedestrians.

In 2011, Karlskoga’s city council revisited the snow removal processes. Data from northern Sweden (examining the accidents caused by snow and ice) showed that the accidents involved three times as many pedestrians as motorists. Other data showed that more



men than women drove cars, while more women than men cycled, walked or used public transport. And that 70% of the pedestrians who were injured in the winter due to snowy and icy pavements and paths, were women.

The city council decided to change the order of snow removal, so that priority was given to clearing paths and other areas used by pedestrians and cyclists first.

The result: the total cost for snow removal remained the same. But there was an overall decrease in accidents in winter. Fewer people were injured on slippery cycle paths, pavements and footpaths. In addition to this, it meant savings in the healthcare system and less lost productivity due to sick employees - savings that not only benefited the female residents, but the entire population of Karlskoga.

(Source: "Rebel Ideas: The Power of Diverse Thinking", John Murray Press, 2019).

Depending on the time and context of the workshop, you might choose to develop this into a mini activity in which you encourage participants to share examples relating to gender and climate justice. For example, you could suggest that people share an example with a neighbor they do not know (this could be a 10 minute activity).

STEP 4: SAFETY, SECURITY AND PSYCHOSOCIAL WELLBEING WITH GROUP DISCUSSION

Before you form the small working group discussion, you can demonstrate the exercise by sharing a few pictures of places that make you feel safe and welcome in public spaces. You can plan another five minutes for this reflection.

You can add to the introduction above that if we use a holistic approach to urban planning, listening to the specific needs of the different social groups of our societies (e.g. elderly persons, persons with disabilities, children, girls, youth...) and considering environmental sustainability, we will be able to develop inclusive, eco-friendly cities which are better for all of us.

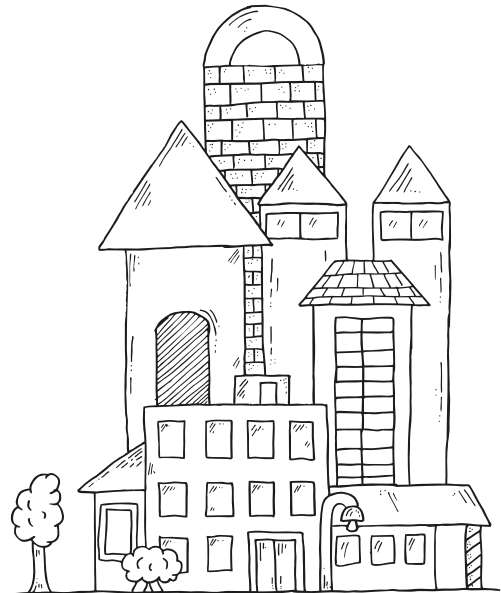
Use pictures like the ones below to explain aspects of feeling safe and welcome in public spaces.



GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND REFLECTION

Following this guide, you have 50 minutes for a small group reflection.

Seat the participants in groups of five to six around a table, with the assignment that they can share any pictures they have brought and provide (additional) visual material to each table. The participants are encouraged to use the pictures to discuss and reflect on their own experiences of how they use the city and how the layout of urban spaces has an impact on how they themselves and other citizens (all gender, ages etc.) use the city.



Here are guiding questions for the group discussion:

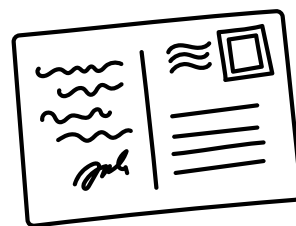
- Think about your favorite urban space
 - What do you like about it?
 - Is there something special about the decor that makes it attractive?
 - What activities does this urban space enable? One kind of activity or many different activities?
 - Do you think this urban space is also attractive to others? Who is in this space, who is not?
 - Do you think there are aspects to your identity that influence your attraction to this urban space?
- What is important to make a city attractive to all genders?
- Think about what means of transport you use in the city
 - Was it the most climate-friendly choice?
 - If not, why not?
 - Which means of transport do you use most often if you have to transport yourself less than 3 km?
 - Does the climate footprint affect your choice of means of transport?
 - Does your personal safety matter when choosing a means of transport?
 - Do you think it is easy to get around with a pushchair in your city?
- What is important to make transportation attractive/usable to all genders?



STEP 5: CLOSURE

YOUR POSTCARD FOR THE CITY COUNCIL

When the participants return to the plenary, you can ask one of them to write an imaginary postcard to the mayor of your city (or a local councilor), with one idea from the workshop. You can ask some people to share examples.



CONCLUSION

This workshop is in line with popular education principles. This is a participatory, democratic, non-hierarchical pedagogy that encourages creative thinking that breaks through embedded formats of learning. It values local knowledge and works collectively to produce knowledge. It implies all are experts, breaking through the boundaries of the traditional role of teacher and students. This workshop does not provide an answer but should help open the participants' eyes to the fact that urban planning is not gender-blind and can make a difference to the climate.