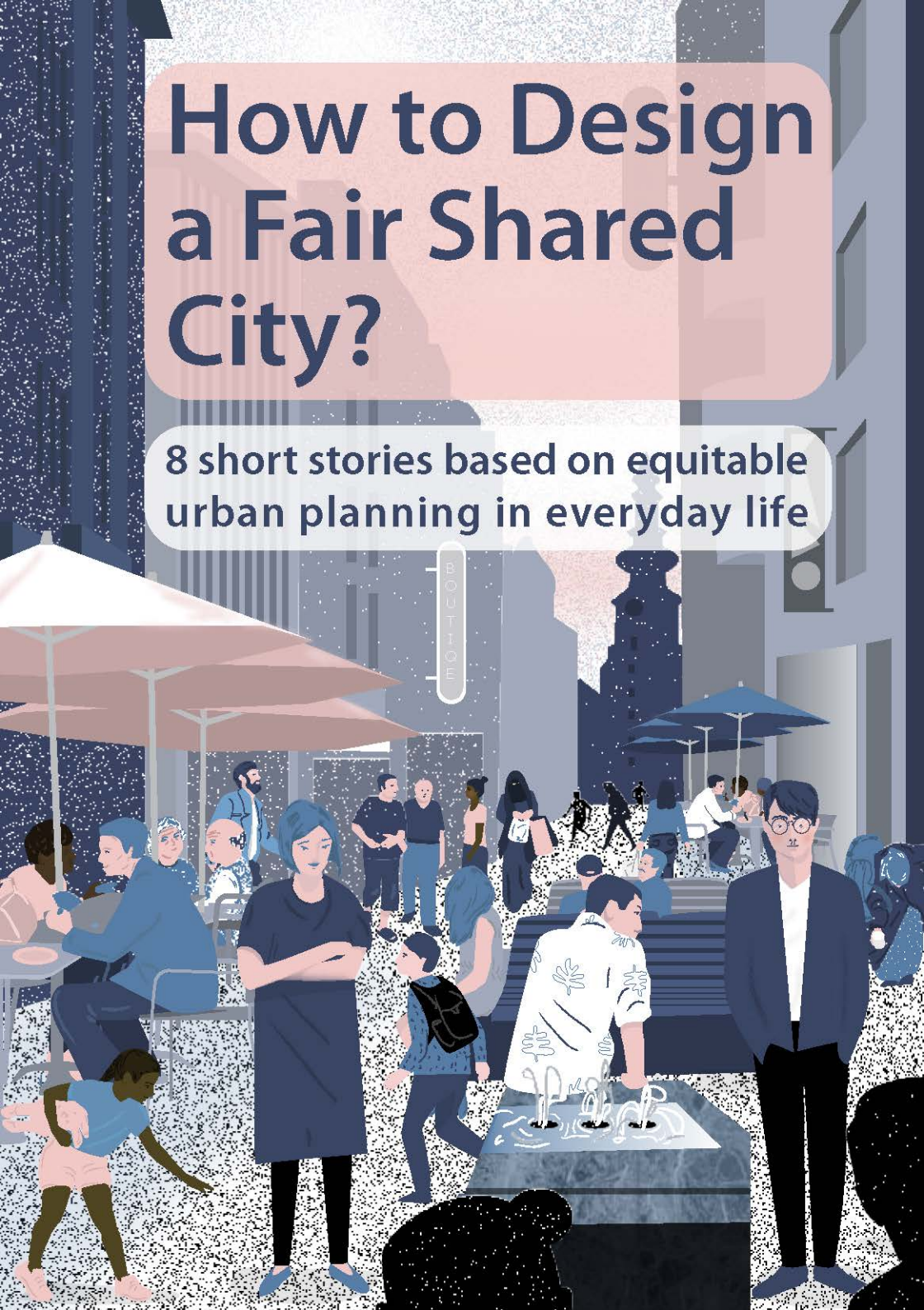


# How to Design a Fair Shared City?

8 short stories based on equitable  
urban planning in everyday life



# What is a Fair Shared City?

In Central Europe, architectural and urban planning practice usually serves well those who are healthy and economically active. But when we consider demographics, working and economically active people only make up just over half the urban population. Senior citizens and young people under 18 years of age constitute the rest. Trends also show that our population is ageing, and when we overlay gender, profession and cultural background the user groups significantly diverge. Each has different needs, but all of them should have the opportunity to be present and to enjoy the public space.

## How do we ensure that a city offers a fair share to everyone?

Social sensitivity is essential in ensuring the quality of urban living for the future. We have to create resilient urban structures that provide open-ended possibilities and scope for action in inner cities and new urban development zones.<sup>1</sup> This is a challenge not only for those responsible for planning and designing the city. Experience has taught us that good political leadership is crucial in order to implement such measures.

How to Design a Fair Shared City? offers 8 simple and captivating stories

of different heroes representing the wider user groups of our population. Two fictional architects, *Sophia and Eric*, will guide us through stories of a girl, a parent an elderly woman, a couple, kids and common visitors using different urban areas to remind us of daily situations in which design by default can be a significant obstacle. On the other hand, it offers solutions for how thoughtful design can significantly improve the quality of urban life - at no extra cost.

This publication is intended for architects, urban planners, politicians, anthropologists and the wider public with an interest in urban design. We hope it will spark a deeper understanding of design impacts in our everyday lives. We also hope that while reading it you will have fun, find an interest and pass it on.

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# 1 More girls in parks

# 1



**A Girl**

9-12 years old

*Have you ever wondered why there are so few girls of this age in parks and playgrounds?*




## **Reference:**

This story was inspired by a gender mainstreaming study of the needs of young girls and follows the design of Einsiedler Park in Vienna.




*This looks like a trap. If I enter, will I be able to leave?  
Maybe I should wait for my friends, oh... I don't know...*



*In many parks they don't even have a place to play.*

*In a series of workshops with young girls, we found that they don't feel safe going into the ball cage. Imagine a space with only one exit, full of strangers in a constantly occupied playground.*



*Sophia: We redesigned the fencing so that there are always at least three ways to leave the playground.*

*Eric: Girls often need more time to start playing; first they have to observe, chat and feel safe. Only then will they start to play. The platform in the middle creates a zone for their informal activities.*

*Sophia: Last, but not least, we divided the space into two separate areas – a formal one for football and basketball (sports mostly played by boys) and one without design. Many young girls like informal games more than formal ones. This space is less attractive for football players, but perfectly suited for informal ball games.*

Girls and boys play differently. Girls tend to spend time in smaller groups and engage in verbal games, talking and socialising. Most boys play in larger groups, which lend themselves more to physically active games, such as football.<sup>2</sup>

Girls often like games that include rhythm, full body coordination, and chanting or singing (for example, jump rope, hopscotch, and clapping games), while boys generally select games involving physical strength and skills in throwing and hitting targets (baseball, marbles, wrestling, archery). Boys' play is often congenial to a large group, whereas girls' games work well for smaller groups.

In the school yard, where many children of a similar age and skill level are gathered, boys and girls often segregate themselves into separate play areas. Boys tend to take over a larger, more central space, leaving the girls to play on the periphery. Boys take up to 10 times the amount of space on the playground as do girls,

and they often disturb girls' activities.<sup>3</sup>

## DESIGN CHANGE

- doubling and opening the fence of the playground to create more exits
- creating a platform for sitting and girls' informal activities
- creating a second play area without horizontal lines to support the informal ball games more often played by girls

## 2 Anxiety point

# 2



A Woman  
of any age

*Walking in the evening is quite a stressful experience, especially if you find yourself in front of a dark corner, not knowing what is around it...*

### Reference:

Inspired by gender mainstreaming in different German and Austrian cities.





*This looks dangerous.  
What if somebody is hiding  
around the corner?*





*She's right - it looks dangerous. She's alone and returning home in the dark.*

*I feel the same way.*

*Really?*

*Really. But I'm afraid to show it, because I should be fearless. Let's help her (and me too).*



*Great design! Cities shouldn't look like the sets of horror movies.*

*Don't ever forget Goethe's words: more light!*

*Mirrors, lights... nothing in your way is hidden.*

Mainly, but not only, women and girls experience fear and various types of sexual violence in public spaces, from harassment to assault including rape and femicide. It happens on streets, public transport and in parks, in and around schools and workplaces or in their own neighbourhoods.

Rethinking potentially risky places, such as corridors, dark corners, passages and tunnels, with new designs can be a great tool to relieve the anxiety that arises from restrictive, unclear spaces.

If the design of the passages can't be changed (e.g. inner-city blocks and tunnels), installing wide-angle mirrors and additional lighting can make the space clearer and gives the person a safe distance to avoid a perceived danger.

## DESIGN CHANGE

- eliminating narrow, closed-off passages and corners in new developments, buildings, etc.

- installing wide-angle mirrors on corners from both sides so people can see who is coming

- installing more lights on paths and in enclosed corridors

## 3 On the surface

# 3



### A Parent with a Baby Stroller

*Baby strollers and poor-quality surfaces are nothing new in the criticism of urban design, but let's remind ourselves why...*

#### Reference:

Story inspired by everyday life and user-friendly design.







When we think about something, we always start with ourselves.

But we shouldn't stop there. Just because we have two arms and two legs doesn't mean everybody else does.

And even then, they're not free all the time.



These passages are not only made for walking...

... but for rolling wheels too.

Yes, yes, I'm almost home. No problems.

Women make more trips by foot than men. They are also more likely to divide their time between work and family commitments, such as taking care of children or other dependents. In recognising this, a plan to improve pedestrian mobility and access to public transport is an essential measure for an equitable, fair shared city.

The 6th Viennese District was the first to implement gender mainstreaming measures in Vienna. One of them was to install massive staircases near major intersections with ramps running through the middle to make crossing easier for people with strollers and for individuals using a walker or a wheelchair.<sup>4</sup>

## DESIGN CHANGE

- barrier-free measures, such as installing ramps and elevators in addition to stairways in public buildings and on streets with elevated pavements

## 4 The power of design

# 4



An Elderly Person

*Let's explore the connection between age, physical ability and various seat designs.*

### Reference:

Story inspired by gender mainstreaming measures in Berlin, Vienna and other progressive cities.






Uff...

Yow... not so easy to stand up anymore...






Well, I made a vow ... I'll be there for you in both good and bad times.

Thank you.


I didn't realise that the vow included benches too...




And they just sat on the bench to rest.

Now they're even more tired. After their sixties, more and more people have trouble getting up without support.

Let's help them. Shall we?



Armrests for older people...



...and higher benches too.

In 2015, 58 percent of the world's population aged 60 years or over resided in urban areas, up from 51 percent in 2000. The oldest are even more likely to live in cities: the proportion of people aged 80 years and over residing in urban areas increased from 56 percent in 2000 to 63 percent in 2015. In 2015, Europe had an older population of elderly persons than any other region in the world.<sup>5</sup>

Generic benches and seats with no armrests are less convenient for the elderly and frail who need extra help getting up. It is important to introduce a great variety of seats, playing with heights and sizes, to provide comfortable seating for people of all age categories.

The installation of a variety of individual seating options in parks, squares and other public spaces is a sign that elderly people are not forgotten and that social interaction is important at every age.

## DESIGN CHANGE

- installing individual chair-like seats with armrests for the elderly
- maintaining different seat heights, as higher seats are convenient for elderly persons with less strength to get up
- installing a variety of individual seating options in parks, squares and other public spaces

## 5 Shortcuts

# 5

### A Group of Kids

Approx. 7-13 years old



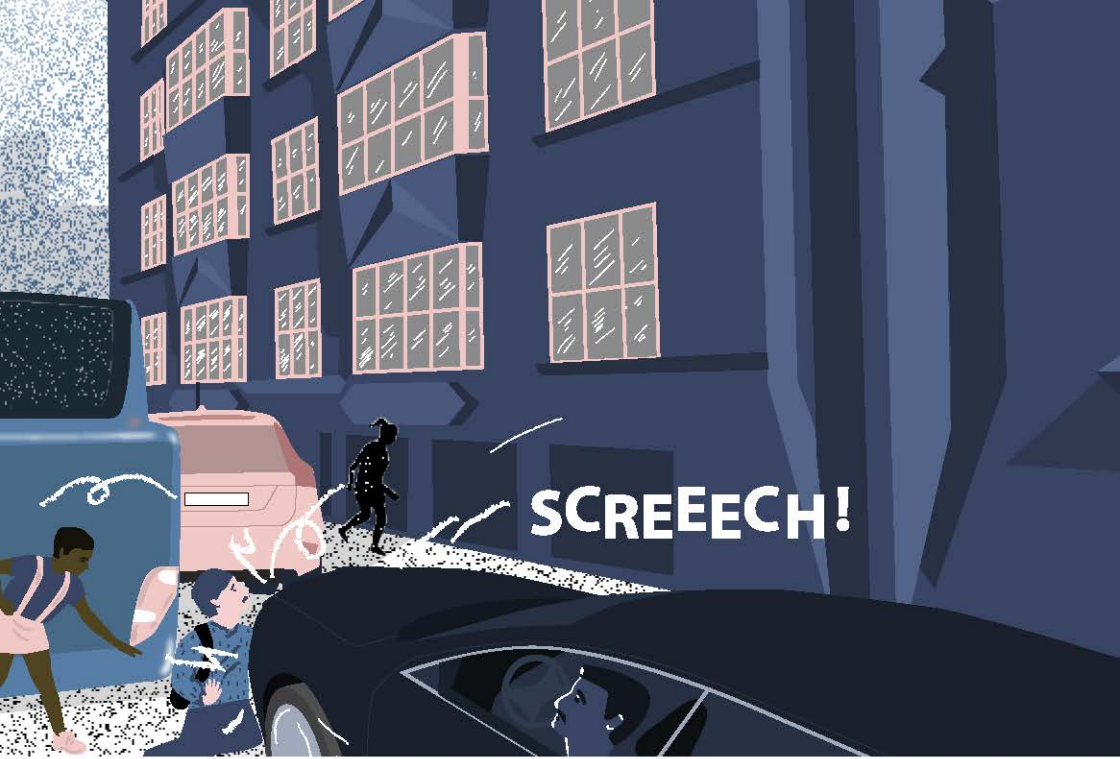
*Kids always find informal shortcuts when moving through the city. What happens when the shortcut leads through a busy street or parking facility?*



### Reference:

Story inspired by a plaza parking lot that became a shortcut for kids walking between school and the nearest tram stop in the centre of Prague.





**SCREEECH!**

*Sophia: In designing this kind of space, everyone should ask this very simple question: do you love your car more than your children?*

*Eric: Not only kids. Don't forget about other people who move more slowly than cars.*

*Sophia: But we all do!*  
*Eric: (smiles) True.*

Although road traffic injury deaths have decreased in some high-income countries, it is predicted that by 2030 they will be the fifth leading cause of death worldwide, and the seventh leading cause of Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALY) lost. In many low-income and middle-income countries, children are at an increased risk because roads are shared spaces for playing, working, walking, cycling and driving.

### **As pedestrians:**

- children are the most likely to be injured or killed
- 5–14-year-olds are most at risk
- children account for 5–10% of all road traffic deaths in high-income countries and 30–40% of all road traffic deaths in low-income and middle-income countries

When planning points of interest (public buildings, parks, public transport stops and other facilities), it is essential to always look for natural pedestrian shortcuts, especially

those that children may take.

## **DESIGN CHANGE**

- applying traffic calming measures in areas of heavy pedestrian movement, especially in areas with a high presence of children

## 6 More light

# 6



### An Elderly Woman


Approx. 60 years old

*Sometimes, you don't take part in cheerful cultural activities for seemingly banal reasons...*

#### Reference:

Story inspired by the true experiences of elderly women who still enjoy culture but often turn down evening events due to unsafe roads and distances.



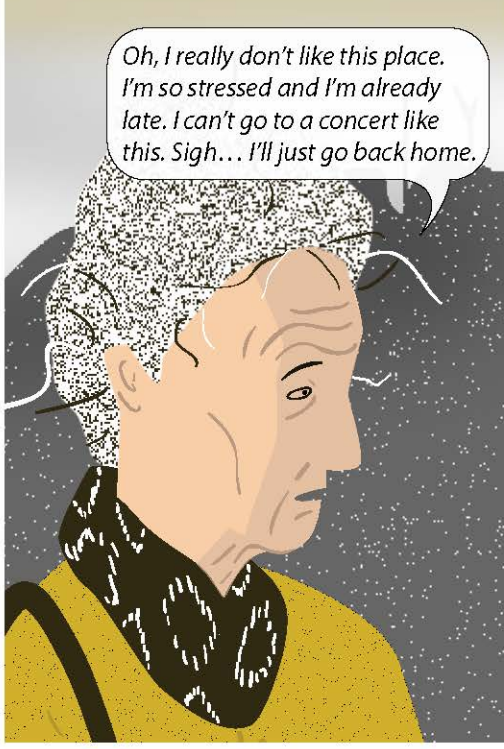


*I'm late for the concert!*


*Ouch!  
My stockings!*

*I can't see in this light at all.  
Half of the sidewalk is  
blocked by cars, and on the other  
side I'll just twist my ankle.*






Oh, I really don't like this place. I'm so stressed and I'm already late. I can't go to a concert like this. Sigh... I'll just go back home.



She really looked like she was looking forward to the concert.

After just a few hundred metres, she decided she was running late.

And she'll have to use the same path to get back home.



With light, safe, wide and open pedestrian paths...

... she can even enjoy the walk to the concert and back. Even in the late evening and still get there on time!

Globally, throughout 2010–2015, women outlived men by an average of 4.5 years. Women accounted for 54 percent of the global population aged 60 years or over and 61 percent of those aged 80 years or over in 2015. Taking into account generally lower incomes during their active working years and in retirement, elderly women depend on free and accessible cultural and sport opportunities more than men.<sup>7</sup>

Since most senior citizens usually take public transport or choose to walk, a network of facilities accessible via safe pedestrian paths or public transport plays a major role in maintaining a good quality of life.

It is important to methodically integrate the interests of pedestrians into transport planning by putting them on an equal footing with other forms of transport. New lighting standards should take into account pedestrians' interests when determining the level of illumination, as current standards do not consider pedestrians' feelings of subjective

safety, which cannot be measured by objective data.<sup>8</sup>

## DESIGN CHANGE

- lighting aimed at pedestrian and walkable areas, not parked cars
- adapting parking spaces so they do not obstruct the space for pedestrians
- greenery is trimmed and can be seen through
- applying anti-slip pedestrian surfaces where possible

# 7 Parental stereotypes

# 7



A Father

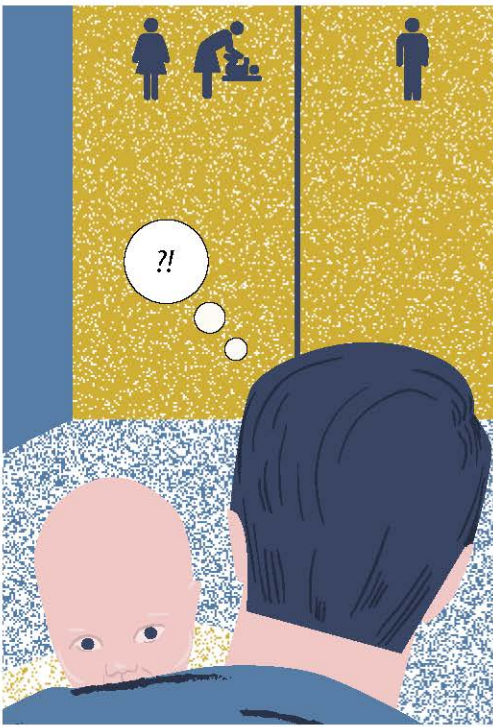
*Have you ever thought that changing a diaper in toilets may be a problem in public buildings and even shopping malls... if you are a father?*

**Reference:**

Story inspired by real life and measures taken in some countries.



@#%ψ&!!!?



Gender stereotypes are the most important obstacles to gender equality. In 2006, the City of Vienna launched the *"Take a different perspective!"* campaign aimed at the general public as well as public administrators. Posters and print ads were designed to raise awareness about gender equality. By playing with expectations, the campaign encouraged changes to how people think of and perceive traditional gender roles. The new pictographs have gone beyond posters. For example, changing tables in public toilets are now also indicated by signs showing a man changing a baby.<sup>9</sup>

These measures have been taken up by many Western countries; most recently, then US President Obama signed into law the Bathrooms Accessible in Every Situation Act (the BABIES Act). This legislation requires that both men's and women's bathrooms in publicly accessible federal buildings contain baby changing tables.<sup>10</sup>

## DESIGN CHANGE

- creating areas in public buildings where baby strollers can be safely stored
- installing baby changing stations in both men's and women's toilets, or separately

## 8 Non-consumption zones

# 8

Various groups of people visiting, living and working on highly frequented streets and plazas

*Surely you remember the city centre that you once visited. Now it has become a noisy, crowded tourist area full of café tables where you no longer dare to go.*

### Reference:

Story inspired by the redesign of Mariahilferstrasse in Vienna.





Excuse me!  
Where's the church?

Is this a restaurant?  
I need a toilet!

It looks so snobbish!

It's terribly  
crowded  
here – and  
the coffee is  
expensive!

I have to get away from  
here now or I'll faint!





*I feel like I've just opened a can of sardines and I'm looking at them.*

*People can't shop because everyone else is in their way.*

*How can one walk though if there's barely space to breathe? Imagine living here. Who can afford that? Look at the price for lunch!*



*We should have non-consumption zones - places where there are no terraces, but where public seating of various types enable people of any income level to sit in different formations, chat and observe street life.*

*Homeless people can be here too. We shouldn't push them out of these areas; this isn't a solution. They have more support options here.*

Over time, many high-profile inner-city spaces like boulevards and central squares become gentrified. They become busy spaces serving commercial interests and tourism.

Expensive shops and cafés slowly reduce opportunities for the residents, low-income and no-income groups such as homeless people who stay in these areas. Informal social activities are limited due to a lack of seating and the presence of high-income groups.

A famous redesign of the busiest boulevard in Vienna, Mariahilferstrasse, considered gentrification to be the main reason to implement so-called non-consumption zones.

This policy set a space limit for commercial activities and opened up spaces for everyday, the informal activities of users of different ages, incomes and cultural backgrounds.

The redesign implemented seating in formations suitable for social interaction and which prevent a total "invasion" by commercial activities.

This measure is important for maintaining the diverse social

fabric of inner-city life.

## DESIGN CHANGE

- creating non-consumption zones, which designate spaces for commercial activities and informal, non-commercial activities

- facilities for sitting, chatting and observing street life in the square are provided for diverse user groups who would otherwise not stay in the area

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