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Sustainable Accessible Future Environments

T 4.8

Develop local guidelines for stakeholder groups in urban areas



SAFE

SUSTAINABLE, ACCESSIBLE FUTURE ENVIRONMENTS

The course is a collaboration between five European Universities

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LAUREA-AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU OY (LAUREA)
FACHHOCHSCHULE KIEL (Kiel UAS)
UNIVERSIDAD DE GRANADA (UGR) and
WYŻSZA SZKOŁA GOSPODARKI Z SIEDZIBĄ W BYDGOSZCZ UCZELNIA NIEPAŃSTWOWA (WSG)

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1 Introduction

The European Union is committed to building inclusive and secure societies. Central to its Urban Agenda¹ is to improve the quality of life in urban areas. In other words, cities must ensure the protection of all individuals, allowing them to safely access and benefit from the available resources and services, irrespective of their circumstances. Achieving more inclusive city planning and development requires the support, commitment and involvement of a variety of public and private stakeholders.

As part of various measures in Workpackage 4, the SAFE Project has produced knowledge about the accessibility and safety of urban open spaces and services in the five European countries involved in the project. All analyses from the SAFE Project indicate that all urban areas under investigation continue to face accessibility challenges for vulnerable populations, as well as infrastructure-related and perceived personal safety concerns.

Therefore, this brochure, titled “Local Stakeholder Recommendations for Urban Areas” uses the outcomes of Work Package 4 to guide local stakeholders involved in urban development in shaping future developments that actively foster safer, more accessible and sustainable environments for all citizens.

In SAFE, each consortium partner represented a specific city and focused on a particular target group. These groups often encounter obstacles in urban environments due to their social characteristics, which have a negative impact on their safety and access to essential services:

- *LAUREA University of Applied Sciences* has explored the situation of older people in Vantaa,
- The *University of Ljubljana* the situation of disabled people in Kranj,
- The *University of Granada* the situation of people with autism in Granada,
- *Kiel University of Applied Sciences* the situation of women with a migrant background in Kiel,
- The *WSG University Bydgoszcz* the situation of families with children in Bydgoszcz.

Background knowledge on the specific obstacles and needs of the aforementioned groups was gathered during the ISPs, scenario workshops and case study interviews, along with suggestions for improvements. Including these perspectives in urban design is key to ensuring universal accessibility.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/policy/themes/urban-development/agenda_en

The following sections describe the challenges and needs of each group with regard to safer and more accessible urban development, and introduce the local stakeholders identified by each consortium partner who could help achieve this.

2 The Role of Local Stakeholders in Urban Development

In urban areas, local stakeholders encompass individuals, groups, or organizations with a vested interest in the decision-making processes and actions associated with urban development. Such stakeholders, whether directly engaged in the community or without formal affiliation, can exert substantial influence on urban initiatives (Wereda; Moch; Wachulak, 2022, 2). Their involvement is crucial for the success of urban projects, as their insights help ensure that developments are attuned to local needs and priorities. By incorporating both direct engagement and indirect influence, local stakeholders play a vital role in shaping sustainable and inclusive urban environments. Incorporating stakeholders in urban planning and local policymaking significantly improves the quality of decisions, rendering them more sustainable and inclusive (Reed, 2008). Stakeholder insights complement scientific and public management perspectives, essential for crafting context-specific solutions that drive sustainability (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014). Engaging with diverse local stakeholders allows for addressing the complex needs of varied populations, fostering communities that are resilient and inclusive (Soma et al., 2018). Moreover, local stakeholders facilitate broader community involvement, fostering collaboration between residents and policymakers (Wereda; Moch; Wachulak, 2022, 8). This collaboration enhances social cohesion and empowers communities to actively contribute to their environments. By providing direct feedback and participating in grassroots initiatives, stakeholders can address urgent social and environmental issues, ensuring that urban development transforms not only physical spaces, but also improves the quality of life for all residents. For this project, key local stakeholders are local governments, municipalities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), urban planners, public infrastructure providers, educational institutions, and healthcare services.

Recognizing the diverse needs of the community is central to effective urban planning, and this is where the principles of universal design come into play. This approach complements the insights provided by local stakeholders, integrating their perspectives into the creation of spaces that promote inclusivity and accessibility for all residents. The following chapter will provide a more detailed explanation of this concept, which was developed in the 1960s.

3 Universal Design

Universal design is a concept that emerged in the mid 20th century, primarily attributed to architect Ronald Mace, whose personal experiences using a wheelchair informed his approach to barrier-free architecture. Educated at North Carolina State University, Mace dedicated his career to developing environments, products, and services that are inherently accessible and usable by everyone, regardless of age, ability, or status (Rao et al., 2024, 155) The following seven fundamental principles guide this vision of universal design:

1. Flexibility in use
2. Simple and intuitive use
3. Perceptible information
4. Tolerance for error
5. Low physical effort
6. Size and space for approach and use²

These principles ensure that inclusivity and accessibility are integrated into the design process from the outset, rather than being added afterwards (Lid, 2014, p. 1346). Incorporating universal design fosters independence and dignity for all individuals by providing solutions that cater to a wide range of users. It enhances both functionality and accessibility, while also acknowledging the diversity and varied needs within different populations. This framework is essential for creating more inclusive societies and aligns with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 10 and 11³, which focus on reducing inequalities and fostering sustainable cities and communities. Understanding the diverse needs of communities is fundamental to effective urban planning, as it highlights the significance of universal design. By adopting its principles, planners can shape urban environments that are accessible and beneficial to all, integrating the perspectives of local stakeholders and promoting inclusivity across urban settings. The universal design is important for urban development and focussing on different target groups, which have still a lot of challenges going around in a city and their every-day-life. The following recommendations are based on universal design principles and focus particularly on safety and accessibility in the five partner cities.

² <https://universaldesign.ie/about-universal-design/the-7-principles>

³ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

4 Recommendations for improving safety and accessibility for the elderly in Vantaa

4.1 City of Vantaa

Vantaa is the fourth largest city in Finland and part of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, with a population of over 251,000 located just north of Helsinki in southern Uusimaa. The city is known for its diverse population, with over 120 native languages spoken. Vantaa is also home to the Helsinki Airport, the largest airport in Finland, and significant business hubs like Aviapolis. Notable landmarks include the Church of St. Lawrence and the Finnish Aviation Museum.

General concerns elderly individuals residing and/or spending time in Vantaa made an issue of related to a decrease in community spirit, the disappearance of green spaces, unrest in the area, particularly in the evenings, a decline in residents' sense of safety, the removal of overpasses and underpasses, improvements regarding traffic lights and parking arrangements, lack of services, littering and a lack of maintenance.

4.2 Challenges in terms of safety and accessibility

The physical and cognitive changes that often accompany ageing – typically, functional capacity, muscle strength, bones, balance, and the respiratory system weaken – can make it difficult for seniors to navigate complex urban environments. For instance, mobility issues and sensory impairments can prevent them from accessing public transport, healthcare and other services as well as community resources. Social isolation is another risk, particularly for those living alone or without family or support networks. Additionally, concerns about elder abuse, neglect or discrimination persist. Furthermore, winter conditions in Finland can be tough. Road safety is a general issue, however, snow and ice can make pavements and roads slippery, increasing the risk of falls and injuries for older people. Those with mobility aids such as walkers or wheelchairs may find it difficult to navigate through snow or uneven surfaces. Harsh winter conditions can also disrupt public transport, making it more difficult for seniors to access essential services such as healthcare facilities and grocery stores and affecting their ability to maintain independence. Particularly during the winter months, the early onset of darkness can have a significant impact on seniors, making enhanced lighting a crucial consideration. Adequate lighting improves visibility, which reduces the risk of falls and accidents for seniors with mobility or vision impairments. Well-lit pathways and public spaces make it safer for them to navigate outdoor areas and access essential services, which decreases feelings of insecurity or isolation.

Additionally, improved lighting in homes can enable seniors to move around more safely and comfortably, thereby promoting independence and well-being.

Another specific issue is the 72-hour guideline in Finland that suggests individuals should manage independently for the initial 72 hours of a disruption. This assumes that residents are healthy and active. For senior people who may face restrictions or handicaps, the 72-hour guideline presents specific challenges because they might have limited mobility, sensory impairments, or chronic health conditions that make independent management during disruptions difficult. They may also face obstacles in accessing essential supplies, healthcare, and communication channels needed to report issues or seek help.

Concerns about crime often include property theft, scams targeting seniors, and safety in public spaces, especially during evening hours. These fears can restrict the willingness to engage in community activities or use public transport, thus affecting the quality of life.

4.3 Identified local stakeholders in Vantaa

STAKEHOLDER	RESPONSIBILITY
CITY OF VANTAA	acts as the central coordinating body, bringing together various entities to implement safety measures and to improve accessibility
EASTERN UUSIMAA POLICE DEPARTMENT	provides essential law enforcement and crime prevention services
CENTRAL UUSIMAA RESCUE DEPARTMENT	is the general rescue authority for the region
VANTAA-KERAVA WELLBEING SERVICES COUNTY	is responsible for organising health, social and emergency services and is a self-governing entity
LOCAL SENIOR ASSOCIATIONS AND PRIVATE HOME CARE SERVICES	focus on the specific needs of the elderly, ensuring they receive care and support
LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND RESIDENTS	
THE FINNISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE WELFARE OF OLDER ADULTS	specialises in advocating for the rights and well-being of elderly individuals
PRIVATE SECTOR	construction and real estate companies contribute by designing and building accessible infrastructure. Service providers, including shops and pharmacies, are

	encouraged to implement practices that ensure ease of access for all customers
RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS	e.g., LAUREA University of Applied Sciences can provide insights and innovations through applied research

4.4 Recommendations for local stakeholders

Especially due to the aforementioned physical changes, the environment should be safe, accessible, and barrier-free for the elderly (Ikäinstituutti 2024). By creating age-friendly infrastructure, such as accessible transport options, secure pedestrian pathways and community centres providing social and recreational activities, or increased lighting, cities can significantly improve the safety and accessibility of services for elderly residents, thereby enhancing their overall quality of life.

In order to improve SAFETY ...

The **City of Vantaa** could ...

- ✓ **improve urban infrastructure** by maintaining well-lit streets (especially in dark zones, car parks, and underpasses) and pavements (esp. street maintenance in winter) in order to reduce accidents and enhance personal security, particularly for vulnerable groups such as the elderly
- ✓ **improve crosswalk safety** by ensuring the visibility of crosswalk markings, and installing traffic lights or speed bumps
- ✓ **develop and maintain safe and efficient public transport options**, for instance provide clear markings for pedestrian paths and intersections at crosswalks and ensure that buses and trams do not reverse onto crosswalks.
- ✓ **collaborate with local law enforcement** to address crime prevention more effectively
- ✓ **improve emergency preparedness plans** to cater for the needs of a diverse community and ensuring that elderly residents, including those with disabilities or language barriers, are supported in times of crisis.

The **Eastern Uusimaa Police Department** could ...

- ✓ **increase their community policing efforts** to build trust and foster communication with residents, particularly the elderly who may feel vulnerable
- ✓ **offer safety workshops and informational sessions** educating citizens on crime prevention, personal safety and how to avoid scams, which would be particularly beneficial for seniors
- ✓ **enhance its visibility** in areas with higher crime rates or where elderly individuals frequently go,

- ✓ **increase surveillance** in shopping centres and busy public transport areas to address disruptive behaviour
- ✓ **collaborate closely with municipal services** to ensure that urban infrastructure, such as lighting and public transport, supports the safety of all residents.

The **Central Uusimaa Rescue Department** could ...

- ✓ could conduct **regular safety audits in homes and community facilities** frequented by seniors to identify potential hazards, such as fall risks or fire dangers
- ✓ **provide personalised safety consultations** to improve safety at home
- ✓ **organise workshops tailored to the specific needs of the elderly**, focusing on fire safety and emergency preparedness, including evacuation procedures and the safe use of heating devices
- ✓ **partner with local organisations and care providers to train staff and volunteers** in emergency response and make sure that assistance is readily available when needed
- ✓ **develop an initiative to check on isolated seniors** and ensure they have access to the necessary resources and support.

The **Vantaa-Kerava Wellbeing Services County** could ...

- ✓ **carry out home safety assessments to identify hazards** such as loose rugs, inadequate lighting or a lack of handrails and recommend modifications to prevent falls and injuries
- ✓ **offer health and wellness programmes** focusing on fall prevention, including balance and mobility exercises tailored for seniors
- ✓ **collaborate with local organisations to create a network of community support**, the county can combat social isolation and ensure that seniors have access to social activities and peer support. This can lower their vulnerability to scams and neglect
- ✓ **promote emergency response systems**, such as personal alarms or telecare services, to provide elderly residents with immediate access to assistance.

Local Senior Associations and Private Home Care Services could ...

- ✓ also **offer workshops and information sessions** focused on personal safety, teaching seniors how to prevent falls, recognise scams and respond to emergencies
- ✓ **organise social activities** and peer support groups to reduce isolation
- ✓ **conduct thorough home safety assessments to identify risks** such as inadequate lighting or unstable furniture and work with families to implement the necessary modifications
- ✓ **provide caregivers with training** on best practices in elderly care, emphasising how to handle emergencies
- ✓ **offer 24/7 support systems**, such as personal emergency alarms or telecare services, ensuring that elderly individuals can quickly access assistance when needed.

Local communities could ...

- ✓ **organise regular community events and social gatherings** to reduce isolation and keep the elderly engaged, thereby promoting their mental and emotional well-being.

Residents could ...

- ✓ **volunteer to check in on elderly neighbours** and offer assistance with daily tasks such as grocery shopping, home maintenance or transport to appointments.

In order to improve **ACCESSIBILITY**...

The **City of Vantaa** could ...

- 🔑 **improve urban infrastructure** by ensuring that pavements and pedestrian crossings are well maintained and fitted with ramps, kerb cuts and non-slip surfaces to facilitate safe mobility.
- 🔑 **invest in elevator and escalator maintenance** to ensure accessible routes
- 🔑 ensure that **public service websites** are accessible, up to date and clear and that guidance on using digital services is provided
- 🔑 **make public transport more accessible** by using low-floor buses, providing priority seating and clear signage to accommodate seniors' needs and by considering the needs of people with pushchairs and mobility aids when positioning bus stop
- 🔑 **improve signage** by paying attention to the placement, clarity and use of images in signage and ensure that there are signs for accessible routes
- 🔑 **invest in age-friendly public spaces** such as parks and community centres. These spaces should include adequate seating, accessible restrooms and shaded areas to encourage social interaction and physical activity among the elderly
- 🔑 **offer technology solutions** such as real-time public transport updates and user-friendly city navigation apps could help seniors access services more effectively
- 🔑 **provide incentives and support** for businesses to adopt accessibility improvements.

The **Vantaa-Kerava Wellbeing Services County** could ...

- 🔑 enhance accessibility for elderly people by **expanding healthcare services with mobile and telehealth options**
- 🔑 **employ accessibility experts** and surveyors to inspect the built environment.

The **Finnish Association for the Welfare of Older Adults** could ...

- 🔑 **advocate for policy changes** that prioritise accessible infrastructure and services, ensuring that the needs of seniors are considered in urban planning decisions
- 🔑 **guide local authorities and organisations in implementing effective solutions**
- 🔑 **raise awareness** about the importance of creating age-friendly environments, for instance through campaigns
- 🔑 **facilitate forums and platforms** for elderly residents to voice their concerns and experiences.

The **private sector** represented by construction and real estate companies could ...

- 🔑 **incorporate universal design principles into their projects**, ensuring that all new buildings and renovations feature accessible entrances, ramps, and elevators to accommodate those with mobility challenges. By installing non-slip flooring, wide doorways, and accessible restrooms within residential and commercial buildings, they can create safer environments for seniors.
- 🔑 **focus on developing age-friendly housing**, incorporating features such as step-free access, grab bars in bathrooms, and user-friendly technology to assist with daily activities.
- 🔑 **collaborate with urban planners and local authorities** to influence the development of community spaces and transport hubs that prioritise ease of access.

The **private sector** represented by service providers, such as shops and pharmacies could ...

- 🔑 **ensure that physical spaces are accessible** by installing ramps or automatic doors for easy entry and maintaining wide, clutter-free aisles to accommodate mobility aids like wheelchairs and walkers.
- 🔑 **provide clear, visible signage** and labels with larger fonts, and avoiding high shelves, can make it easier for seniors to navigate and find products.
- 🔑 **Train their personnel to assist elderly** customers effectively, understanding how to communicate patiently and provide support when needed.
- 🔑 offer services like **home delivery or online shopping** with user-friendly interfaces
- 🔑 **implement seating areas** where elderly customers can rest and **offer magnifying glasses** for reading small print on product labels.

Research and educational institutions like LAUREA University of Applied Sciences could

...

- 🔑 **conduct studies to identify the specific accessibility needs and challenges** faced by the elderly population
- 🔑 **provide data-driven insights** that inform urban planning and policy-making and avoid planning mistakes
- 🔑 **develop innovative solutions**, such as assistive technologies or smart home systems
- 🔑 **pilot and test new accessibility initiatives** in real-world settings and making necessary adjustments
- 🔑 **offer workshops and training for students and professionals** across various fields, passing on knowledge the importance of inclusive design and accessibility in creating age-friendly environments
- 🔑 **conduct projects** that involve students working directly with the elderly community.

5 Recommendations for improving safety and accessibility for the disabled in Kranj

5.1 City of Kranj

Kranj is one of the largest cities in Slovenia and is developing into a center of national importance as the second most significant city in the broader Ljubljana urban area. Within the Gorenjska region, it functions as a regional centre, concentrating public services, administrative, educational, and cultural institutions, as well as key business and service activities that support the entire region. The city also attracts residents from surrounding communities due to strong daily flows of work, education, and transportation. Given the high volume of administrative, tourist, and business activity a large number of daily visitors, including many individuals with various forms of disabilities comes to the city every day. Therefore, it is essential that public spaces and buildings are designed to be both accessible and safe, to accommodate a wide range of people's needs. Recognizing these efforts, Kranj has been declared a City for People with Disabilities, reflecting its commitment to inclusive urban development and planning that supports the daily lives, activities, and social integration of people with disabilities.

Kranj has adopted a Strategic Accessibility Plan to guide its long-term efforts towards inclusive urban development. As a result of its continued commitment to accessibility and inclusion, Kranj has been officially declared a 'City for People with Disabilities'.

5.2 Challenges in terms of safety and accessibility

People with disabilities often face challenges in terms of safety and accessibility due to inadequate infrastructure and public services. Physical infrastructure often lacks essential features, such as ramps, kerb cuts and tactile paving, which make it difficult for people with mobility impairments to safely navigate streets and public spaces. This could potentially result in falls or injuries. Public transport systems often lack features that would enable disabled people to use them safely and easily, such as wheelchair accessibility, audible announcements, and visual displays. This limits travel options and independence. Public buildings and facilities may not adhere to accessibility standards, lacking appropriate restroom facilities, lifts, or clear signage. Furthermore, emergency evacuation procedures in many public buildings often fail to consider the needs of people with mobility or sensory impairments, thereby placing them at greater risk in an emergency. Furthermore, disabled individuals may have concerns about crime related to theft, scams, or harassment.

5.3 Identified local stakeholders in Kranj

STAKEHOLDER	RESPONSIBILITY
THE MUNICIPALITY OF KRANJ	Its key responsibilities include infrastructure measures and safety measures as well as emergency readiness for disabled residents
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES	(e.g., Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Health, Department of Transportation, Emergency Services Management, Urban Development or Planning Agencies, Disability Rights or Advocacy Commissions, Public Safety Departments, Housing Authorities) focus on ensuring safe accessibility, emergency preparedness, and protective measures for disabled individuals
NONGOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS	(e.g., disability advocacy groups, community service organisations, health-focused charities, special needs support groups, rehabilitation and therapy centres, local branches of national disability organizations, accessibility and inclusion networks, disabled rights associations) provide safety resources, and facilitate community support for disabled individuals
COMMUNITY MEMBERS	who support safety issues of disabled people in Kranj include typically family members, friends, neighbours, local volunteers, educators, healthcare professionals, and members of disability advocacy groups
EMERGENCY SERVICES	(e.g., police, fire and rescue services, emergency medical services, civil protection services (disaster response))
DESIGNERS, ARCHITECTS, AND ENGINEERS	are crucial in creating functional, sustainable, and visually appealing environments by combining infrastructure design, spatial planning, and innovative technology.

5.4 Recommendations for local stakeholders

Urban design that prioritises accessibility creates inclusive and navigable environments, benefiting disabled people. Features such as barrier-free pathways, ramps and clear signage ensure that people

can move around the city seamlessly. Accessible public transport enhances mobility and independence, and inclusive public spaces encourage social interaction.

In order to improve SAFETY ...

The **Municipality of Kranj** could ...

- ✓ ensure that **public spaces**, such as streets and parks, are **well-lit and free of obstructions**
- ✓ **maintain safe pedestrian pathways** with ramps, tactile paving, and clear signage
- ✓ **enhance safety measures in public transportation** to accommodate disabled passengers (like priority seating and secure boarding)
- ✓ **implement smart surveillance systems** in high-risk areas
- ✓ **implement accessible emergency evacuation plans** and procedures in public buildings
- ✓ Conduct **safety audits and assessments of public areas** to identify and address potential hazards in order to guide targeted interventions.

Government agencies could ...

- ✓ ensure that all public spaces and infrastructure, including sidewalks, buildings, and transportation systems, are designed with **universal accessibility** in mind
- ✓ **Conduct regular training sessions for emergency responders** to improve their understanding and response to the unique requirements of disabled individuals during crises. Additionally, government bodies can collaborate with local disability advocacy groups to identify safety concerns and design targeted interventions.
- ✓ launch **public awareness campaigns** to educate the general population on disability rights and safety issues, fostering a more inclusive and understanding community.
- ✓ **enforce stringent compliance with accessibility laws and regulations**, penalising non-compliance to ensure a safer environment for all.

NGOs could ...

- ✓ **conduct workshops and awareness campaigns** to sensitise the community about the specific safety challenges faced by disabled people and can promote inclusive practices
- ✓ **create a network of support** for disabled individuals as well as platforms to voice their concerns and experiences in order to develop safety strategies that truly meet the needs of those affected
- ✓ **facilitate community engagement** to understand and address the specific safety concerns of disabled residents.

Community members could ...

- ✓ help disabled individuals to feel safer and more included by **providing assistance with everyday tasks** such as crossing streets or navigating public spaces
- ✓ be vigilant in identifying and **reporting potential safety hazards**, such as broken pavements or poorly lit areas, to the relevant local authority.

Emergency services could ...

- ✓ **develop accessible emergency response plans** that incorporate accessible evacuation routes and communication systems for evacuating individuals with mobility, sensory, or cognitive impairments
- ✓ **train emergency personnel** to recognise and effectively respond to the specific needs of disabled individuals, ensuring they can provide appropriate assistance during emergencies
- ✓ **establish communication protocols that use multiple formats** (such as visual, auditory, and tactile alerts), ensuring that all residents receive critical information during a crisis
- ✓ conduct **regular emergency drills** that involve disabled
- ✓ provide **public workshops** focused on emergency preparedness for disabled individuals and their caregivers.

In order to improve **ACCESSIBILITY...**

The **Municipality of Kranj** could ...

- 🔑 **prioritise and finance the development and maintenance of barrier-free infrastructure** (including ramps, lowering of pavement kerbs, and tactile markings for individuals who are blind or visually impaired), to ensure smooth mobility throughout the city
- 🔑 **implement universal design standards** for buildings and public spaces and promote inclusive urban planning
- 🔑 **ensure that public transportation is fully accessible**, with features like low-floor buses, audible announcements, and priority seating
- 🔑 **implement clear and easy-to-read signage** across public spaces to aid navigation for those with visual or cognitive impairments
- 🔑 **collaborate with local businesses** to encourage the adoption of accessibility-friendly practices
- 🔑 **offer training programs** for municipal staff and local service providers on disability awareness and accessibility needs

Government agencies could ...

- 🔑 **allocate resources for the implementation of a Family Assistants Programme** to aid individuals with disabilities at home
- 🔑 **co-finance non-governmental organisations (NGOs)** that support people with disabilities
- 🔑 **co-finance children with special needs** in kindergartens, ensuring they have access to inclusive educational environments that cater to their unique learning and social interaction requirements
- 🔑 **co-finance reliable and accessible transportation for children with special needs** ensuring that they can seamlessly access educational and therapeutic facilities
- 🔑 **co-finance neurophysiotherapy services** providing children with specialised therapeutic interventions aimed at improving physical abilities and overall well-being
- 🔑 **support institutional care services** by promoting programmes that foster the independence and well-being of disabled individuals.

NGOs could ...

- 🔑 **advocate for inclusive policies**, raise public awareness, and support community engagement
- 🔑 collaborate with local government and businesses to identify and **address accessibility barriers** in public spaces, transport, and facilities
- 🔑 **offer training programs** for service providers and promote best practices
- 🔑 **develop support networks** and resources for disabled individuals, facilitating their access to information and services
- 🔑 **organise local events and raise funds.**

Community members could ...

- 🔑 **make the needs of disabled individuals heard**, for instance, in local meetings
- 🔑 **engage in volunteer efforts** to assist with, for instance, accessibility initiatives, such as helping organise transportation
- 🔑 **promote awareness and understanding.**

Designers, architects, and engineers could ...

- 🔑 **prioritise and apply universal design features**, such as ramps, wide doorways, and tactile paving, to ensure public and private spaces are accessible to all. In the planning stages, professionals should engage with the disabled community to understand their specific needs, allowing for tailored solutions that address real-world challenges. Additionally, **incorporating assistive technologies and adaptive environments** can further improve accessibility
- 🔑 Designers can create **user-friendly layouts that facilitate navigation** for individuals with mobility or sensory impairments, while engineers can ensure that infrastructure supports these designs effectively
- 🔑 **Professionals** in these fields can stay informed of best practices and emerging technologies by **undertaking training and continuing education** on accessibility standards.

6 Recommendations for improving safety and accessibility for autistic people in Granada

6.1 City of Granada

Granada is a historic and culturally rich city in southern Spain. It is renowned for its architectural landmarks, such as the Alhambra, and its vibrant university life. With a population of around 230,000, Granada is a mid-sized city with a mix of traditional and modern infrastructure, offering many opportunities for social engagement, education and tourism. In terms of gastronomy, Granada is famed for its tapas and cultural scene. Despite its many attractions, Granada faces significant challenges, particularly with regard to accessibility and safety. The city's mountainous terrain means there are steep, sloping streets, particularly in historic neighbourhoods such as the Albaicín, which pose difficulties for people with reduced mobility. Many of Granada's narrow, cobbled streets present additional hurdles. These characteristics can pose particular challenges for individuals with autism.

6.2 Challenges in terms of safety and accessibility

Autistic individuals in Granada face distinct challenges relating to safety and accessibility in urban environments. The city's vibrant atmosphere, which is renowned for its cultural and historical richness, often results in high levels of sensory stimuli, such as noise from traffic, bright lights and overcrowded public spaces. These factors can be overwhelming for individuals with sensory sensitivities, leading to anxiety and distress, particularly during festivals and public celebrations which are characterised by loud music and large crowds. Navigating historic sites such as the Alhambra, with their dense crowds and unpredictable settings, can exacerbate sensory overload further. In addition to sensory challenges, social interactions in bustling city settings can be difficult due to the complexity of unspoken cues, which can lead to isolation. Public transport systems in Granada can be daunting, with complex timetables and busy stations requiring clear signage and straightforward communication methods to ensure safety and reduce anxiety. The need for predictability and routine means urban layouts should be consistent with regular schedules to minimise stress. Furthermore, traditional emergency alarms and protocols may be ineffective for autistic individuals. It is therefore crucial to have autism-aware strategies in place that offer clear and calm instructions during emergencies. Incorporating sensory-friendly zones and support staff trained to assist autistic individuals is important to fostering an inclusive environment. Although initiatives such as autism-friendly

pedestrian crossings and inclusive hospitality efforts are positive steps, Granada requires broader, city-wide strategies to improve accessibility, safety and inclusivity for people with autism.

6.3 Identified local stakeholders in Granada

STAKEHOLDER	RESPONSIBILITY
GRANADA CITY COUNCIL (DEPARTMENT OF CITIZEN PROTECTION)	They develop inclusive policies and safety protocols
LOCAL AND NATIONAL POLICE	Responsible for the safety of every citizen in Granada.
ASOCIACIÓN GRANADINA DE SÍNDROME DE ASPERGER-TEA	A key advocacy organization that represents and supports individuals with Asperger's and their families.
HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES	They can provide diagnosis, treatment, and crisis intervention, especially during public incidents
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES)	They are important to support autistic individuals.
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION STAFF AND SERVICES	They are essential for all aspects of public transport.
FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS	They are essential for prevention, reporting, and ongoing support

6.4 Recommendations for local stakeholders

For individuals with autism, the environment should be safe, accessible, and accommodating to their unique needs. By designing autism-friendly infrastructure, such as sensory-friendly transport options, clear and simple signage, quiet zones, and community centers offering structured social and recreational activities, cities can significantly enhance the safety and accessibility of services for autistic individuals, thereby improving their overall quality of life.

In order to improve SAFETY

The **Granada City Council** could ...

- ☑ **run local awareness campaigns** — on buses, metro stations, and public buildings — to educate the general population about autism and promote empathy, reducing stigma and discrimination in public interactions.

- ✓ **ensure that major public events** in Granada — such as Holy Week, Corpus Christi, and museum exhibitions — include sensory-friendly sessions, pre-event guides, and trained staff and volunteers to support people with autism.

The **local and national police** could ...

- ✓ **implement awareness training** aimed at Granada's police and emergency services. This would help them recognize common behaviours (e.g., lack of eye contact, literal communication) of autistic people and respond appropriately in high-stress situations.
- ✓ **develop specialized units** within the police force that are trained to handle incidents involving neurodiverse individuals, ensuring that situations are de-escalated safely and empathetically.
- ✓ **include autism-specific scenarios in crisis intervention training programs** to improve officers' ability to de-escalate situations involving autistic individuals.

The **Asociación Granadina de Síndrome de Asperger-TEA** could...

- ✓ **establish support groups for autistic individuals** and their families to share experiences, resources, and strategies for navigating safety and accessibility challenges in daily life.

Healthcare professionals and mental health services (e.g Asociación Mírame, Centro de Salud Mental Infantil y Juvenil, Hospital Universitario San Cecilio, Hospital Universitario Virgen de las Nieves) could...

- ✓ **adopt specific protocols** for patients with autism. E.g. allowing a support person to accompany them at all times.

University of Granada could...

- ✓ **ensure campus safety measures** include procedures for supporting neurodivergent students in emergency situations, such as clear signage, structured routines, and calm spaces.

Public transportation staff and services could...

- ✓ **ensure that all signage in stations** and on vehicles is clear and easy to understand, incorporating symbols and simple language.

Families and caregivers could ...

- ✓ **identify and establish safe meeting points** in frequently visited locations, like shopping centers or parks, where family members can quickly regroup if separated.

In order to improve **ACCESSIBILITY**

The **Granada City Council** could ...

- 🔑 **create designated low-stimulation “safe zones”** in key locations such as libraries, transport hubs, and healthcare centres, where individuals can go during moments of sensory or emotional overload.
- 🔑 **designate areas** within parks, libraries, and other public facilities as sensory-friendly zones with reduced noise and lighting adjustments, providing a calm environment for those with sensory sensitivities.
- 🔑 install **easily recognizable signs** with visual symbols and straightforward language in public spaces, helping autistic individuals navigate more independently.
- 🔑 **ensure that municipal buildings**, cultural institutions, healthcare centres and the private service firms **use clear signage**, visual instructions, and simple communication. Offer appointments in quieter hours for those who need reduced sensory input.
- 🔑 **equip all frontline public employees** — including those in city offices, libraries, and reception desks —, as well as the staff of service companies with **practical training** on how to support people with autism in respectful and effective ways.
- 🔑 **design public websites**, digital services with linear navigation, clear labels, and minimal distractions to better accommodate individuals who process information in a more structured or literal way.
- 🔑 **develop apps** that assist autistic individuals in navigating the city, providing real-time updates about congestion, noise levels, or other sensory information.

The **Asociación Granadina de Síndrome de Asperger-TEA** could...

- 🔑 **develop and offer training workshops** for local businesses, organizations, and public service providers on autism awareness, fostering a more inclusive environment.
- 🔑 **create and distribute accessible resources**, such as easy-to-understand guides on navigating public transport or accessing community services, specifically tailored for autistic individuals.

Healthcare professionals and mental health services (e.g Asociación Mírame, Centro de Salud Mental Infantil y Juvenil, Hospital Universitario San Cecilio, Hospital Universitario Virgen de las Nieves) could...

- 🔑 **modify clinical settings** to be more accommodating, such as creating quiet waiting areas with dimmed lighting to reduce sensory overload for autistic patients.
- 🔑 **use clear, simple language and visual aids** to explain procedures or health information, ensuring comprehension and comfort for autistic individuals.
- 🔑 **ensure that all health-related information**, such as brochures or websites, is accessible through various formats, including easy-read materials and visual content.

University of Granada could...

- 🔑 **conduct research on autism and related fields** to contribute to the broader understanding of autism within society and to inform policy and practice.
- 🔑 **establish dedicated support services**, such as an autism liaison officer or special needs coordinator, to offer guidance, resources, and advocacy for autistic students.

- 🔑 **encourage faculty to adopt inclusive teaching practices and curriculum designs** that accommodate different learning needs and styles, such as providing lecture notes in advance or allowing alternative assessment methods.
- 🔑 **establish designated sensory-friendly zones across campus** where autistic students can find respite from overstimulation, featuring calming environments and reduced sensory input.

Public transportation staff and services could...

- 🔑 **introduce sensory-friendly travel times**, where the lighting is dimmed, and announcements are minimized, creating a more comfortable environment for autistic individuals.
- 🔑 **designate quiet areas on buses, trams, or trains for those with sensory sensitivities**, reducing exposure to overwhelming noise or activity.

Families and caregivers could ...

- 🔑 **create consistent daily routines that include familiar paths** and locations in Granada, reducing anxiety and stress for autistic individuals by providing predictability.
- 🔑 **connect with other families and caregivers to share experiences**, resources, and strategies for ensuring safety in the community (round table)

7 Recommendations for improving safety and accessibility for migrant women in Kiel-Gaarden

7.1 City of Kiel-Gaarden

Gaarden, a district on the east bank of Kiel, is one of the city's largest areas with over 18,000 residents, more than 60% of whom come from a migration background. The district enjoys a strategic location near the city center and the fjord, featuring green spaces, bustling market squares like Vinetaplatz, and pedestrian-friendly areas such as Elisabeth Street. Despite these advantages, Gaarden is perceived as socio-economically disadvantaged, which has affected its public reputation. The area faces significant social issues, including high rates of unemployment (over 13%) and poverty, with 37% of residents depending on basic income support. It is also known as a hotspot for alcohol and drug activities, with prevalent crime, particularly drug-related offenses, leading to concerns about safety. Efforts from law enforcement focus on combating these issues with increased police visibility. Furthermore, a rise in poorly managed properties, known as 'junk properties', exacerbates the challenges, as they often become centers for illicit activities and suffer from overcrowding and structural neglect. Despite these challenges, Gaarden's multicultural identity imbues it with a unique vibrancy. However, many migrant women in the community face hurdles such as unemployment, illiteracy, and language barriers, often relying on state support to provide for their families.

7.2 Challenges in terms of safety and accessibility

Migrant women in Kiel-Gaarden face multifaceted challenges related to safety and accessibility, deeply intertwined with cultural, social, and economic factors. Language barriers are a central issue, hindering effective communication with local authorities and service providers, which complicates reporting crimes or seeking necessary assistance. This linguistic gap is exacerbated by cultural differences that may lead to misunderstandings and feelings of alienation, further isolating these women from the community. Additionally, prevalent discrimination and xenophobia can create hostile environments, deterring migrant women from accessing public spaces or community resources essential for their integration and safety. Domestic violence remains a significant concern, as many migrant women may feel trapped by the fear of stigma, lack of awareness about their rights, or concerns over deportation if they report abuse. Economic vulnerability adds another layer of difficulty. Limited access to education and employment often leads to financial dependence, increasing susceptibility to exploitation and making it harder for these women to escape unsafe environments. Legal and documentation

issues further compound these challenges, as unclear residency status or fear of repercussions can inhibit access to public services, legal aid, or social benefits, reinforcing a cycle of exclusion and insecurity. Accessing essential services like healthcare, legal aid, and psychological support is particularly challenging, undermining the safety and well-being of migrant women. Social isolation emerges as a critical risk factor, limiting support networks and intensifying feelings of vulnerability. Even though Gaarden is a multicultural neighbourhood and there are some initiatives to support migrant women and their children, these often depend on funding and donations. There is scope for further improvement to help integrate and empower migrant women.

7.3 Identified local stakeholders in Kiel

STAKEHOLDER	RESPONSIBILITY
KIEL MUNICIPALITY	Central decision-maker on urban policy and development
STADTTEILBÜRO GAARDEN	The Gaarden Socially Integrative City office works as a coordination office between the administration and the Gaarden population.
POLICE DEPARTMENT KIEL / KOMMUNALER ORDNUNGSDIENST	
TABU	Specialist center for women's health with a focus on female genital mutilation and cutting (FGM/C)
CONTRA	Counselling service against trafficking of women in Schleswig-Holstein
MYRIAM	Counselling Centre for Migrant Women in Schleswig-Holstein
ZBBS – CENTRAL EDUCATION AND ADVISORY CENTRE FOR MIGRANTS	An NGO that promotes democracy, social responsibility, openness and tolerance through its programmes. It is a place for intercultural encounters, exchange and learning.
ZEIK – CENTRE FOR EMPOWERMENT AND INTERCULTURAL CREATIVITY	Refugees from a variety of different backgrounds have created an organised and self-managed space for intercultural encounters, exchange and mutual learning.
HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS	
EDUCATIONAL CENTRES (SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES)	E.g. Kiel University of Applied Sciences and schools in the districts of Gaarden

7.4 Recommendations for local stakeholders

Creating a welcoming and supportive environment for migrant women involves ensuring that services are accessible, inclusive, and sensitive to their unique experiences and needs. By developing infrastructure that includes culturally appropriate support services, multilingual resources, women-only spaces, and community centers that provide skill-building programs and social integration activities, cities can greatly enhance the accessibility and effectiveness of services for migrant women. This approach fosters a sense of belonging and empowerment, ultimately improving their overall quality of life.

In order to improve SAFETY

The Police Department/Kommunaler Ordnungsdienst could...

- ✓ **implement and enhance safety measures** in neighborhoods with high migrant populations, focusing on building trust through community policing and cultural sensitivity training.
- ✓ **establish resources and safe spaces** dedicated to supporting migrant women who are victims of domestic abuse or violence, ensuring they have access to the help and protection they need.
- ✓ **provide specialized training** for officers that focuses on cultural awareness and sensitivity, helping them understand the specific needs and backgrounds of migrant women to ensure respectful and effective communication.

The NGO TABU could...

- ✓ **develop and distribute multi-language posters** within Gaarden that provide information on domestic violence, forced marriage, and FGM helplines to ensure accessibility for all community members.
- ✓ **launch public awareness campaigns** to educate the broader community about the challenges migrant women face in terms of FGM-C, reducing stigma and encouraging a more inclusive and supportive environment.

The NGO Contra could...

- ✓ **conduct informative sessions** in Gaarden to educate migrant women about human trafficking, their rights, and available support services. This can empower them to recognize and avoid risky situations.
- ✓ **establish safe spaces or collaborate** with local shelters where migrant women can find refuge if they are at risk, ensuring these spaces are welcoming and culturally sensitive.
- ✓ **employ multilingual officers or translators** to assist in interactions with migrant women, ensuring they can access police services and communicate effectively in their preferred language.

In order to improve ACCESSIBILITY

The **Kiel Municipality** could...

- 🔑 **ensure that comprehensive, multilingual social services** are available in Gaarden, providing migrant women with tailored support in relation to housing, healthcare and welfare services.
- 🔑 **provide multilingual support across all municipal services.** This can include translation services, multilingual signage, and information materials available in the languages most commonly spoken by migrant communities.
- 🔑 **train municipal employees in cultural competence** to ensure they can effectively engage with migrant women and understand the specific cultural contexts and challenges they may face.
- 🔑 **fund more social housing projects** in Gaarden, particularly for migrant women.

The **Stadtteilbüro Gaarden** could...

- 🔑 **organize open counseling cafés for migrant women** to offer important information on topics such as women's rights, domestic violence, child marriages, facilitating informed decision-making.
- 🔑 **establish community centers or safe spaces** where migrant women can gather, access resources, and receive support in a welcoming and non-judgmental environment.

The **NGO Myriam** could

- 🔑 **provide legal aid** to help migrant women understand their rights, navigate the legal system, and address issues such as residency status and work permits, thereby reducing the risk of exploitation or legal uncertainty.
- 🔑 **offer vocational training and skill development** programs to enhance economic independence for migrant women, empowering them with the tools needed to secure employment and improve their financial stability.

The **NGO ZBBS** could...

- 🔑 **develop and provide specific support services, including language classes,** job training, and integration assistance, to aid migrant women in successfully adapting to their new environment.
- 🔑 **develop programs that promote cultural exchange and integration,** helping migrant women become familiar with local customs and practices while preserving their cultural identities.
- 🔑 **organise free language courses for women,** with childcare provided, in Gaarden.

The **NGO ZEIK** could...

- 🔑 **partner with media and communication platforms** to raise awareness about various issues faced by migrant women, amplifying their voices and stories while promoting available resources and hotlines.
- 🔑 **organize informational sessions on legal rights, health care options**, and available support services, empowering migrant women with knowledge and resources to navigate the German system confidently.
- 🔑 **encourage cultural exchange and interaction through events and activities** that celebrate diversity, fostering understanding and cohesion between migrant women and the local community.

Healthcare providers (doctors, clinics, etc.) could...

- 🔑 **collaborate with migrant women's communities** to ensure they have access to the necessary health services, including maternal and mental health support, to promote their overall well-being and healthy integration.
- 🔑 **offer medical consultations and resources in multiple languages** to ensure that migrant women can communicate effectively with healthcare professionals and understand their healthcare options.
- 🔑 **organize workshops on important health topics**, such as preventive care, reproductive health, and mental health, tailored to the cultural contexts and concerns of migrant women.
- 🔑 **use culturally appropriate methods to disseminate health information**, such as visual aids, community radio, or outreach programs that engage directly with migrant communities.

8 Recommendations for improving safety and accessibility families with children in Bydgoszcz

8.1 City of Bydgoszcz

Bydgoszcz is one of the largest cities in northern Poland, located in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie Province, where it serves as a co-capital alongside the historic city of Toruń. With a population of around 330,000, Bydgoszcz is a vibrant urban centre situated at the confluence of the Brda and Vistula rivers, and crossed by the historic Bydgoszcz Canal. Its geographical location, halfway between Warsaw and the Baltic Sea, gives it strategic significance in terms of transport, trade, and logistics. Historically an important hub for commerce and industry, Bydgoszcz today continues to be a key economic engine in the region. Its economy is diversified, with well-developed sectors such as logistics and transport, IT and telecommunications, food processing, chemical and machine industries, and increasingly, business services. Śródmieście, literally the “city centre,” is the urban heart of Bydgoszcz, with rich historic architecture, green spaces and a lively cultural scene. It is generally considered a safe and accessible place to live as a family with children. The nearby Wincenty Witos Park offers playgrounds, walking paths, and a calm

environment, great for babies and children. Streets like Staszica and Paderewskiego feature well-preserved Art Nouveau and modernist buildings, ideal for leisurely family strolls. Śródmieście, the city centre, also provides convenient access to schools and kindergartens (including specialist ones like the Braille education centre for visually impaired children and youth), healthcare, grocery stores, and family-friendly hotels with secure parking and CCTV. New housing estates built between historic tenements attract younger residents, including families with children of school and pre-school age which makes the population of the neighbourhood more age-diverse. Numerous tram and bus lines connect Śródmieście with other neighborhoods of Bydgoszcz, and most are low-floor, therefore stroller-friendly. Expanding cycling infrastructure, including family cargo bike rental services, makes it easier to move around with kids. Residential parking permits and monitored parking lots make car use feasible despite the central location. Local clinics and family doctors serve the area; emergency services are easily reachable, however waiting times may vary. Proximity to two University Hospitals and other medical centers ensures peace of mind in case of urgent needs.

8.2 Challenges in terms of safety and accessibility

Urban environments face a range of safety and accessibility challenges that have an adverse impact on the quality of life for families with children. During the Intensive Study Programme (ISP) in Bydgoszcz as part of the SAFE project, several critical issues were identified. These include a lack of handrails at steps leading to buildings such as shops and churches, and an insufficient number of disabled parking spaces, which hinder the mobility of people with physical impairments. Furthermore, traffic congestion and the absence of pedestrian crossings pose significant risks to pedestrians. Overstimulating environments with unpredictable elements, such as scooters and excessive noise, can also cause distress. The absence of quiet areas or sensory-friendly zones exacerbates these concerns further. Additionally, navigation is difficult for non-native speakers due to the frequent absence or incompleteness of information signs, which are often only in Polish. Poor pedestrian infrastructure, such as bike parking that narrows pavements, alongside inaccessible buildings without lifts, restricts movement for those using pushchairs or with mobility challenges. Furthermore, the absence of public amenities, including toilets and intercultural gathering spaces, significantly limits accessibility. These issues are compounded by uneven pavements, streets blocked by cars, bikes and scooters, inadequate lighting and a lack of inclusive playgrounds. Insufficient explanations of electronic services affect less digitally literate populations, such as seniors, while the absence of lifts in older buildings presents ongoing mobility challenges. Addressing these issues through informed urban

planning, by fostering vibrant neighbourhoods with accessible parks, playgrounds, schools and affordable services, can create supportive environments where families and communities can thrive, ensuring comprehensive safety and accessibility for all residents.

8.3 Identified local stakeholders in Bydgoszcz

STAKEHOLDER	RESPONSIBILITY
BYDGOSZCZ CITY HALL (URZĄD MIASTA BYDGOSZCZY)	Central decision-maker on urban policy, zoning, safety regulations, and funding for infrastructure upgrades
CITY COUNCIL OF BYDGOSZCZ (RADA MIASTA BYDGOSZCZY)	the city's legislative body, composed of 28 elected councillors who represent the interests of residents and make key decisions regarding the city's functioning (e.g. investments)
COUNCIL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND EQUAL TREATMENT OF BYDGOSZCZ (BYDGOSKA RADA DS. PRAW CZŁOWIEKA I RÓWNEGO TRAKTOWANIA)	Advisory body of the City Mayor on equality, diversity and inclusivity issues
ROAD AND PUBLIC TRANSPORT AUTHORITY (ZDMIKP)	Oversees road maintenance, pedestrian crossings, bike lanes, and public transport safety/accessibility
PUBLIC TRANSPORT COMPANY (MZK BYDGOSZCZ)	Responsible for accessible trams, buses, stops, and driver training in helping families/disabled passengers
MUNICIPAL POLICE (STRAŻ MIEJSKA)	Ensures public safety, enforces traffic regulations, monitors illegal parking (e.g., on sidewalks or near schools)
BYDGOSZCZ SOCIAL POLICY AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT (WYDZIAŁ POLITYKI SPOŁECZNEJ I ZDROWIA)	Works on social inclusion, services for children, elderly, and people with disabilities
URBAN PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE DEPARTMENT (WYDZIAŁ URBANISTYKI I ARCHITEKTURY)	Responsible for inclusive urban design, public space accessibility, and building permits

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (WYDZIAŁ EDUKACJI)	Coordinates with schools on safe access, nearby traffic zones, and school infrastructure planning
MUNICIPAL GREEN SPACES AUTHORITY (ZARZĄD ZIELENI MIEJSKIEJ)	Manages parks, green areas, and playgrounds, including their safety, lighting, and maintenance
DISTRICT COUNCILS (RADY OSIEDLA)	Represent local residents, including families, and are active in flagging safety/access issues directly to the city authorities
GAUDEAMUS FOUNDATION (FUNDACJA GAUDEAMUS)	Supporting talented children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as Ukrainian refugee families
BYDGOSZCZ URBAN MOVEMENT ASSOCIATION (STOWARZYSZENIE BYDGOSKI RUCH MIEJSKI)	Advocates to improve conditions for sustainable, diverse mobility - walking, cycling, and using public transport in the city
CREATIVE EDUCATION FOUNDATION (FUNDACJA KREATYWNEJ EDUKACJI)	Promotes child-friendly urban spaces, education innovations, and local civic engagement
BYDGOSZCZ LOCAL ACTION GROUP ASSOCIATION (STOWARZYSZENIE BYDGOSKA LOKALNA GRUPA DZIAŁANIA)	Community-led partnership between public authorities, private entities, NGOs, and local residents, stimulating local, grassroots initiatives and increasing citizens' involvement
MODRZEW ASSOCIATION (STOWARZYSZENIE MODRZEW)	Advocates for tree preservation, walkable, inclusive neighborhoods and sustainable urban planning

8.4 Recommendations for local stakeholders

For families with children, it is essential to create environments that are safe, engaging, and supportive of their diverse needs. By designing family-friendly infrastructure, such as inclusive playgrounds, accessible transportation, community centers with a range of educational and recreational programs, and child care facilities, cities can significantly enhance the well-being

and development of children. These efforts contribute to a nurturing community environment where families can thrive and children can grow up healthy, happy, and well-supported.

In order to **improve SAFETY** ...

City Council of Bydgoszcz could...

- ✓ **advocate for investments** in safe family-friendly projects and facilities.
- ✓ **prioritize funding for infrastructure that enhances safety**, such as safer intersections and well-lit pedestrian pathways.
- ✓ **create traffic-calmed zones** (reduced speed) near all schools and nurseries.

Road and Public Transport Authority (ZDMiKP) could...

- ✓ **install raised crosswalks and speed tables** near schools, parks, and kindergartens (e.g. around Plac Wolności, ul. Gdańska, ul. Krasińskiego).
- ✓ **add pedestrian islands on wide streets** like Jagiellońska and Focha to allow safer mid-crossing refuge.
- ✓ **implement time-based car restrictions during school hours**, monitored by city guards or local volunteers

Municipal Police could...

- ✓ **strictly enforce traffic regulations** to prevent illegal parking and ensure the safety of children near schools and playgrounds.
- ✓ **increase street lighting** in residential and park areas.
- ✓ **expand municipal CCTV monitoring**, especially in playgrounds, underpasses, and alleyways

Education Department could...

- ✓ **collaborate with schools** to ensure safe access routes and safe traffic zones, protecting students.
- ✓ **offer short courses on street safety**, emergency contact skills, and cycling rules using interactive formats.

Bydgoszcz Urban Movement Association could...

- ✓ **promote safe, sustainable mobility** options like walking and cycling to reduce traffic congestion.
- ✓ **run community mapping projects** (with children and parents) to identify danger zones, poor lighting, and missing crossings—share results with local councils.
- ✓ **advocate for regular Car-Free Days** in Śródmieście (e.g. on Gdańska or Cieszkowskiego Street), turning public space into a safe, play-friendly zone

MODrzew Association could ...

- ☑ **advocate for sustainable urban planning** that emphasizes safe, walkable neighborhoods.
- ☑ **support the preservation of trees** and the development of green spaces, which can provide safe, natural areas for children to play and families to gather while enhancing the overall neighborhood environment.
- ☑ **conduct campaigns to raise awareness about road safety**, environmental conservation, and the importance of community safety initiatives, targeting both adults and children.

In order to improve **ACCESSIBILITY**

Bydgoszcz City Hall could...

- 🔑 **provide resources to improve public space accessibility**, ensuring they are welcoming to families.
- 🔑 **apply universal design principles** to public playgrounds: rubber surfaces, wide paths, adaptive equipment (e.g., swings with back support), accessible entrances and shaded rest zones.
- 🔑 **require all municipal buildings** (e.g., libraries, clinics, schools, cultural centers) **to be step-free or have elevators**
- 🔑 **provide family toilets with changing tables**, offer play corners in waiting areas

Council for Human Rights and Equal Treatment of Bydgoszcz could...

- 🔑 **ensure urban development plans are inclusive** and address the diverse needs of families.
- 🔑 **develop a “Family-Friendly Business” label for shops, cafés, clinics**, etc. that: offer stroller access, have child seating and facilities, provide flexible waiting or play areas.

Public Transport Company could...

- 🔑 **equip trams and buses with accessible features**, providing training for drivers to assist families.
- 🔑 **ensure barrier-free sidewalks** (remove high curbs, fix uneven pavements)
- 🔑 **ensure low-floor trams/buses on all routes**

Bydgoszcz Social Policy and Health Department could...

- 🔑 **ensure healthcare facilities are family-friendly** and accessible, providing amenities such as child-care areas, family waiting rooms, and services available in multiple languages to accommodate non-native speakers.
- 🔑 **work on ensuring that public health infrastructure**, such as clinics and recreation areas, are accessible to families with children, incorporating ramps, accessible restrooms, and clear signage to enhance mobility for all family members.

Urban Planning and Architecture Department could...

- 🔑 **implement inclusive design principles** for public spaces and buildings, ensuring accessibility for families.

- 🔑 **design safe, well-lit, stroller-friendly stops** with real-time info and benches.
- 🔑 **design seating for parents**, including those with limited mobility

Municipal Green Spaces Authority could...

- 🔑 **maintain parks and playgrounds**, improving their accessibility for families with children.
- 🔑 **audit and retrofit public parks and playgrounds** (like Park Witos) with rubber surfacing, fencing, and shaded zones.

Gaudeamus Foundation could...

- 🔑 **create after-school initiatives** that offer safe, supervised environments for children, providing educational and recreational activities that focus on safety and personal development.
- 🔑 **facilitate support groups and networking opportunities** for families, helping them to connect with each other and share resources, advice, and support.
- 🔑 **partner with schools** to enhance **accessibility and safety measures** within educational settings, ensuring that children have a secure and inclusive environment in which to learn and grow.

Creative Education Foundation could...

- 🔑 **foster child-friendly urban spaces** and innovative educational programs that promote access and inclusivity.
- 🔑 **develop educational programs** that incorporate **safety and accessibility training** for both children and parents. These can include workshops on pedestrian safety, emergency preparedness, and digital literacy for safe online behavior.
- 🔑 **advocate for urban planning** and design that **prioritizes child-friendly spaces**, such as accessible playgrounds, safe walking paths, and family-oriented public spaces.

Bydgoszcz Local Action Group Association could...

- 🔑 **encourage schools and parents to co-lead mini projects**, e.g. building stroller ramps at entrances, installing benches along common walking routes, adding wayfinding signs to help families navigate key areas.
- 🔑 **establish forums or platforms where families can voice** their accessibility concerns, ensuring their needs are considered in local planning and decision-making processes.
- 🔑 **organize campaigns that educate families** on safety practices, such as emergency preparedness, safe routes to school, and online safety for children, empowering them with knowledge and tools.

9 Conclusion

In conclusion, this brochure addresses the urgent requirement for urban environments that are safer and more accessible for diverse and vulnerable groups, such as the elderly, people with disabilities, individuals with autism, migrant women, and families with children. Based on insights from the SAFE Project's Work Package 4 (WP4), the document offers thorough recommendations to dismantle the barriers restricting full participation in urban life. Through collaboration with municipal authorities, NGOs, advocacy groups, and healthcare providers, the focus remains firmly on fostering inclusivity and community well-being. A key part of these strategies is integrating universal design principles to ensure environments are accessible and embrace diversity and functionality. Implementing these recommendations can promote a higher quality of life for urban residents, thereby bolstering community resilience and sustainability. This approach provides adaptable models of transformational urban planning with a focus on inclusivity.

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T4.8 Develop local guidelines for stakeholder groups in urban areas