

JANE'S WALK

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Jane's Walk is a global movement of community-based walking conversations inspired by urban thinker Jane Jacobs (1916–2006), who advocated for human-centred cities shaped by local communities rather than only by planners and institutions. The first Jane's Walk took place in 2007 in Toronto, organised by Jacobs' colleagues to honour her ideas about street life, neighbourhood identity and civic participation. Today, Jane's Walk events are held worldwide, promoting active engagement with urban spaces.

The core purpose of Jane's Walk is to help people better understand and connect with their neighbourhoods. The walks are free, informal and open to everyone. They are not tourist tours or professional lectures but conversations that explore how people experience streets, parks, housing, public spaces and everyday mobility. Each walk reflects the local character and stories of a place, highlighting social dynamics, heritage, challenges and hidden potentials. Jacobs believed that residents carry essential knowledge about how their neighbourhood functions, and these walks create a platform to share that knowledge.

Jane's Walks are organised by volunteers, residents, NGOs, community groups or educators who plan a route and invite others to join. Walk leaders do not need expert status; they simply guide discussion and pose questions. Topics can include accessibility, safety, green spaces, public transport, gentrification, cultural identity or social inclusion. The walks turn familiar routes into spaces of reflection by asking questions such as: Where do people feel safe or excluded? Which places support interaction? What changes would improve the neighbourhood?

The method encourages people to see their environment critically and socially. Walking together strengthens community bonds, builds trust among participants and gives voice to groups often left out of urban decision-making. Jane's Walk promotes active citizenship by developing awareness of local issues and empowering communities to imagine change. It also supports sustainable mobility by encouraging walking as an everyday way of knowing and using the city.

The movement is active in many countries, including Slovenia, where it is coordinated by the Institute for Spatial Policies (IPoP). In educational and planning contexts, Jane's Walk is frequently used as a tool for participatory urban learning. For example, urban walks like the one conducted in Beltinci encourage participants to observe details related to safety, accessibility and public space quality while documenting findings through photos and notes. In essence, Jane's Walk celebrates the idea that cities belong to the people who live in them. It transforms walking into a civic act an opportunity to express care for one's surroundings and to participate in shaping more inclusive, liveable and democratic urban environments.