



**URBAN-NET**

*Research  
Anthology  
2010*



SIXTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

## Introduction

**S**ome 80% of Europe's population live in urban areas. Our cities and towns are confronted by complex, interdependent environmental, social and economic issues that have local and global dimensions. Addressing these issues demands a more integrated approach. Collaboration amongst researchers, professionals, practitioners and citizens is key to developing fair and effective responses to the common challenges that we face in a globalised world.

Transnational research can bring multiple benefits to this process by sharing knowledge, experience and resources from across Europe and beyond. This fosters innovative approaches to common problems, helps with the adoption of good practices and promotes the creation of adaptable solutions.

URBAN-NET's core focus is on integrated transnational research on urban sustainability. This anthology presents eleven transnational research projects funded by URBAN-NET in 2008/9. At the time of writing not all of the projects have finished so we cannot present conclusions and recommendations. This anthology is not intended, however, to present a scientific exposition of each project but to give a flavour of the nature and scope of issues being addressed by integrated research on urban sustainability. We hope that it will appeal to a wide audience: from professionals to interested citizens; from research associations to civil society organisations.

All of the projects involve a mix of disciplines; planning, engineering, anthropology, political science, psychology, geography, ecology etc. The subjects range from urban policy and retailing to housing degradation and climate change. They offer a testament to the complexity and interdependency of the urban phenomenon.

Governance is a fundamental issue for many of the projects. The first project "Democratic dilemmas of participatory planning" investigates the pitfalls and dilemmas of greater "public" participation in urban planning. It takes an innovative look at the institutions, relationships and strategies associated with planning processes and asks how we can have greater democracy in urban planning without compromising the functionality and accountability of civic administrations and our elected representatives.

GDUS looks at governance from the perspective of gender and diversity and explores whether integrated urban policies that address gender and diversity discrimination can also contribute to sustainable neighbourhoods by addressing mobility, social exclusion and structural changes more holistically.

This brings us to the issue of resilience. How do we ensure that our cities and urban areas meet the multiple demands of society in an era of increasing and uncertain change without constraining further development as the planet's population increases?

SUPERCITIES looks at resilience from a land-use perspective; comparing land-use patterns and planning policy developments for four countries and their influence on the resulting spatial forms for different city regions within each country.

Three projects deal with urban resilience from a sectoral perspective: DEGRA-CO investigates how we evaluate and address degradation of privately-owned flats in large housing estates in deprived neighbourhoods; REPLACIS considers the rise of experiential consumerism, its influence on retail planning structure and implications for the social and economic resilience of cities; and CURE focuses on the new cultural and creative industries replacing former industrial areas.

We depend on many essential services that can only be provided by healthy functioning ecosystems: food, water, building materials, energy, clean air etc. The SUPER project proposes integrating "ecosystem services" into urban spatial planning to improve urban resilience. It explores how

interactions between socio-ecological systems and governance systems could improve resilience to ecological and climate change.

The final four projects are devoted to climate change. Urban tourism is one of Europe's largest economic sectors. "Urban Tourism and Climate Change" investigates awareness of, attitudes and behaviours towards climate change within the tourism industries of three countries.

The Research Network for Climate-neutral Cities aims to integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation actions into urban planning. By bringing together city planners and researchers it prompts knowledge exchange on the successes and constraints of strategies and visions adopted by different cities and urban districts to improve resilience to climate change.

Heat stress amongst urban populations is predicted to rise as a result of climate change. The penultimate project looks at how air temperature and the urban heat island effect are influenced by the characteristics and design of urban streets.

Finally, TOPEUM seeks greater understanding of how urban space and building materials can be modified and designed to minimise energy use in Mediterranean cities where denser settlements favour greater shading but poorer air circulation.

Contributions from each of the research teams have been edited for the purposes of this anthology.

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## GDUS gender, diversity and urban sustainability



**T**he Gender, Diversity and Urban Sustainability [GDUS] Network investigates and analyses experiments in urban policy which try to address gender inequalities in everyday practices of the city.

Rapid urban sprawl in the last century has had far-reaching consequences for sustainability; profoundly changing time-space patterns steered by essential everyday activities. Large urban areas and single-use zoning cause excessive transportation, energy and water consumption and waste production. Sprawl places stress on family life and paves the way for social friction and difficulties.

Political leaders try to address these issues but implementation of sustainable policies is often frustrated by complexities, such as economic factors and market-forces. Within Europe, the interplay of highly diverse cultural traditions has led to very different policies, and outcomes vary widely between states.

As the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities 2007 points out, holistic strategies and coordinated action are increasingly necessary in working towards sustainable cities. Problems regarding social exclusion, structural change, climate change and mobility have to be tackled in an integrated manner.

### Perspective

In GDUS, we choose to view social cohesion and sustainable development from the perspective of gender inequality. As an interdisciplinary domain, the gender perspective in urban studies is concerned with supporting everyday life through adequate housing, neighbourhood services, meeting places, transport, etc. as well as by improving participation in, and influencing of, city planning.

Taking account of everyday time-space patterns and planning for greater efficiency are responses to the demands of numerous grass-root organisations and initiatives, as well as to demographic and social realities. Greenhouse gas emissions can also be reduced and the acceptability of territorial measures addressing climate change and urban sustainability may be enhanced.

### Objectives of GDUS

- to organise expertise across EU-member states and explain implications for practice and policies regarding gender-aware planning;
- to create an inventory of good practices; to recommend best practices that support sustainable urban development;
- to experiment with innovative methods of knowledge exchange with practitioners, policymakers and citizens groups;
- to develop new evaluation tools for urban policies that take account of gender;
- to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of policies;
- to draw recommendations for different stakeholders, planning systems and scales;
- to disseminate GDUS results across the member states; and
- to develop knowledge that will advance spatial planning theory and practice.

## Connection to everyday urban practices

Experts of the Gender, Diversity and Urban Sustainability [GDUS] Network collaborate to investigate and analyse experiments in urban policy which try to correct the discriminations arising from gender inequalities in the everyday practices of the city. They contribute the results to the theory and practice of town-planning and urban development on the one hand and social policies supporting urban sustainability on the other. Tools, pilot projects and manuals have been created to move towards urban development that will improve social cohesion, reduce impacts on climate change and

raise the quality of decision-making processes. GDUS members enable policymakers to make more efficient and effective use of existing EU-funded research on gender and anti-discrimination policies.

## Research design and methodology

GDUS is transdisciplinary and involves researchers with a gender perspective working together from the fields of landscape planning, urban design, spatial planning, sociology, political science, architecture and geography. It combines theoretical concepts, methodologies and research from these disciplines to bring a holistic approach to the complexity of everyday life in cities.

Holistic strategies and coordinated actions are increasingly necessary in working towards sustainable cities to ensure that social exclusion, structural change, climate change and mobility are addressed in an integrated way.

To enhance connectivity between research and policy, GDUS works with local authorities and other stakeholders to develop new integrative tools that will link research and practice in the design and implementation of sustainable policies. In this way, we help exchange knowledge and scientific analyses to improve sustainable development and climate change policy.

Two examples of collaboration demonstrate the value of operating as an exchange network:

- GDUS co-organised a series of thematic

sessions at the Madrid 'City Futures' conference in July 2009. These sessions brought to light numerous local initiatives and evaluated the benefits and constraints of a paragraph on gender included in national planning legislation. On this occasion, the network expanded beyond the URBAN-NET project partners, incorporating experiences from Italian policies.

- At the 2009 annual GDUS hosted by BoKu in Vienna, besides monitoring progress on building a body of knowledge, GDUS also joined forces on a local case-study; applying the different tools to one of the local 'large urban projects', Nordwestbahnhof.

## Examples of tools and interventions

From Gender\_Archland, we share the experience of Gender Practice and Criteria in Spatial Planning (2006) Recommendations for the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming in Spatial Planning are issued on the basis of different existing regional examples and by researching products, processes and structures. This was further developed as Gender Compass Planning (2009); a supportive instrument for the planning administration of Freiburg and for external planning offices. This brought the gender perspective into projects and processes: from land-use planning and local master plans through to individual building plans.

Working with Umeå city council, northern Sweden developed ideas around the gender equal city to find new ways of improving women's participation



in city planning. Particular focus was given to the young, the disabled and immigrants. The new participatory methods included “brainstorming” sessions with representatives from different women’s organisations and focus group interviews with different groups of women to create visions for the “woman-made city”.

The results of the Daily Routines Project, funded by the European Social Fund, have been disseminated more widely to enhance communication between social policy and spatial planning. This has resulted in the development of several planning instruments, some of which can be consulted online: a virtual version of the traveling exposition ‘all around (the clock)’; best practice time-based planning and a do-it-yourself scan.

In Austria, gender mainstreaming has been successful as a top-down strategy. Since 2001, a number of experiences have originated from the planning departments of larger cities. The first “gendered district”, Mariahilf in the City of Vienna, is based on the concept of a fair-shared public space (Kail, 2005).

The transnational project GenderAlp! paved the way for a gender-based approach for the province of Salzburg in the revision of the spatial zoning plan for the Greater Salzburg Region during 2003. GenderAlp! is a rare example of gender-aware spatial planning on a regional scale. The “3R” method developed in Sweden was translated to spatial and urban planning in the framework of GenderAlp! In spite of very different regional

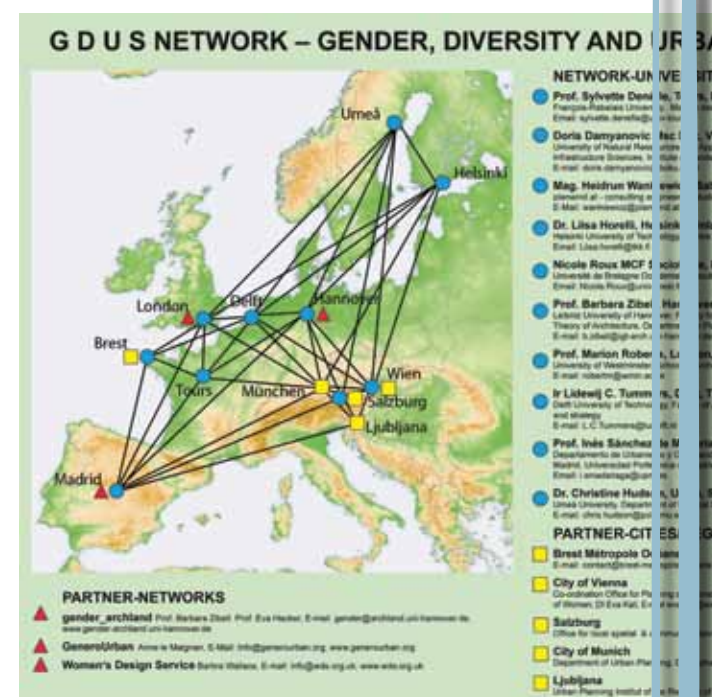
administrative systems, traditions and planning cultures, a common understanding of key issues in gender-aware planning emerged from this example of transnational cooperation, revising stereotype concepts and strategies; including those for mixed-use areas.

Concern with spatial issues not only involves municipalities but also balances urban and rural development and migration between both areas.

Project examples include: “Being young – getting older” in rural Austria which combines sustainable municipal development with equal opportunities in decision-making processes or “Together we develop our spaces” - an example of requirement oriented municipal development, increasing efficiency and acceptance of measures through space-saving settlement and municipality development in rural communities while noting age and gender-specific needs and requirements, (BOKU, Institute of Landscape Planning).

### Future steps

GDUS network continues to develop criteria for the evaluation of local experiences in a cross-cultural comparison. This will not only enhance the local strategies but also build a body of knowledge to contribute to the innovation of European planning systems.



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2 Finnish & 1 Spanish Ministry and 3 NGOs in Helsinki, Rotterdam and Salzburg

**GDUS website:** [www.rali.boku.ac.at/gdus.html](http://www.rali.boku.ac.at/gdus.html)

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