

DON'T STAY OUT ALONE

ADDRESSING WOMEN'S PERCEPTION OF SAFETY AND FREEDOM IN CITIES BY DESIGN

Topic

Closing gaps between men and women is central to the sustainable development goals. Design decisions shape the environment we live in and have an impact on social transformation. Unsafe cities create disproportionate burdens for women, affecting their mobility, access to public space and activity.

While legal measures of preventing violence are constantly improved, little attention was put so far to the relationship between spatial design and safety. Women's participation in public space is restricted by objective danger, but also by feelings of fear and distress. Understanding which factors can evoke perception of safety, freedom and confidence is crucial to improving equity in cities by means of design.

Aim

The aim of the study is to evaluate previous interventions carried out by international, regional, and local organizations in South America. It is also to demonstrate the relationships between gender inequality and design, and to lay out best practices to build more inclusive cities.

Method

The research will be based on a critical review of already implemented interventions by organizations acting on three levels:
 - international (UN Women's „Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces“) in Medellín, Quito and Montevideo,
 - regional („Ciudades sin violencia para las mujeres, ciudades seguras para tod@s“) in Santiago,
 - local (municipal) in Curitiba.

In each of the cities I will focus on different design solutions, related to:
 - streets and passages,
 - parks,
 - squares,
 - transport,
 - cultural buildings and urban art.

Prior to travel:
 BIBLIOGRAPHIC REVIEW - DATA COLLECTION - ONLINE SURVEY - ESTABLISHING CONTACTS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

During the period of travel:
 DATA ANALYSIS - SAFETY AUDIT WALKS - FOCUS GROUPS - SOCIAL MAPPING - INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL EXPERTS - TRAVEL DIARY

At the end of the journey, it is my intention to publicly exhibit the findings at conferences and in the architectural press. To publicize the relevant topic, I will release online the travel diary, and a report including a collection of good design solutions and practices.

Personal motivation

As a woman, I have experienced gender-based violence in the cities I lived in. Since I was a girl, I was warned not to stay out alone, and I knew where it was not safe for me to go. I often felt fear in the city, and its perception was related to the quality of space that surrounded me.

I strongly believe that with research-based design decisions, we can improve safety in our cities and make them equally accessible for all.

Individual skills

Studies in Architecture equipped me with tools for analysing and representing spatial complexities.

As a volunteer and educator, I have leadership skills and experience with organizing focus groups and community meetings.

Knowing the languages spoken in the selected countries will allow me for a problem-free interaction with locals.

cultural architecture



transport



squares



parks



streets



Medellin, Columbia

Manrique, Santo Domingo Savio

Medellín joined the UN program as the first city in Columbia. The municipality pioneered "urban acupuncture" - improving accessibility and mobility by small-scale interventions. The regeneration process was strongly connected to art and culture.

Quito, Ecuador

Parada Villa Flora, Parada Colina, Parada Plaza del Teatro, Parada Colón

Quito is one of five founding cities of the UN initiative. Ten years ago, in the scoping study women identified the public transportation as unsafe, so the plan emphasized changes mostly in this area. Trolley stops were remodelled, and secure waiting areas were provided.

Santiago, Chile

Cumming, Padre Mariano 140, Santo Domingo, Morando 83

In Santiago urban safety was improved with the focus on flexible interventions in abandoned urban squares. In suburban neighbourhoods a project was launched to recover public spaces for women also during night hours.

Montevideo, Uruguay

Parque Rodó, Parque Batlle

The capital of Uruguay joined the UN's project in 2018. One of the major interventions was focused on regenerating urban parks - spaces reported as particularly salient in terms of safety issues in women's discourse.

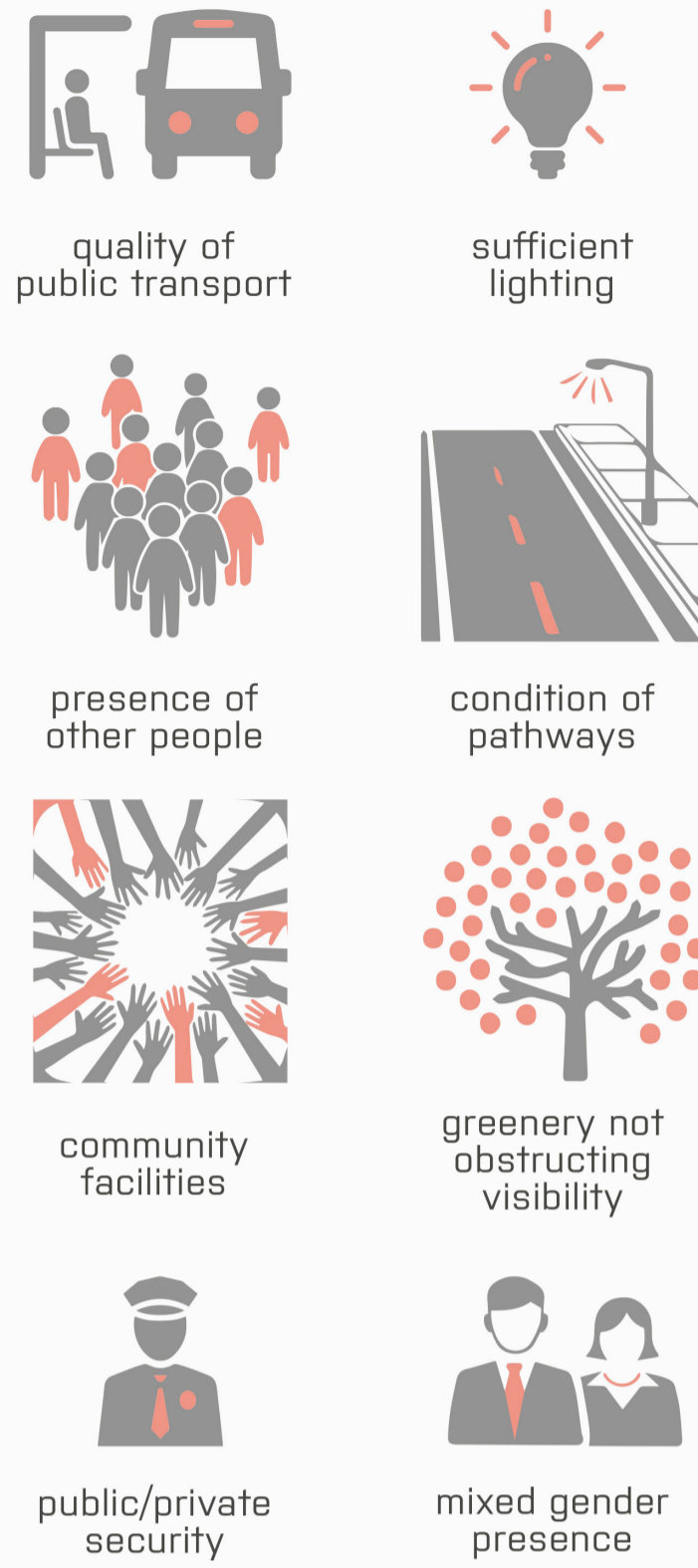
Curitiba, Brazil

Rua 24 horas, Rua XV de Novembro

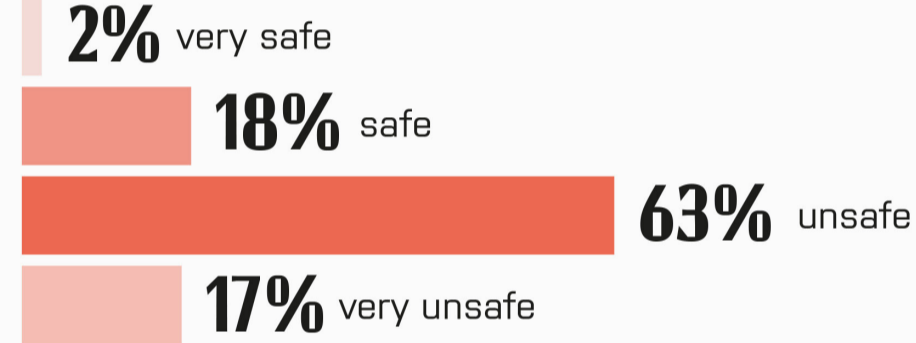
Curitiba, thanks to its innovative urban planning, became a model for sustainable development. In 2019, a gender sensitive safety study was carried out. Some of the most significant interventions were related to streets, passages and activities along them.



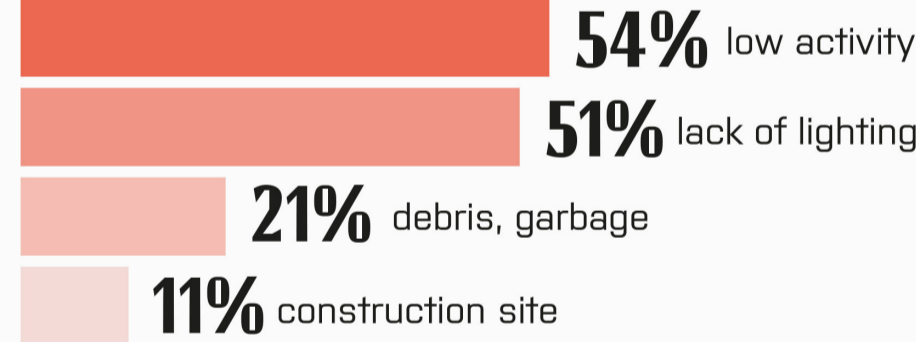
Variables affecting perception of safety and freedom
(Me nuevo segura, Development Bank of Latin America)



How women feel when alone in public spaces?
(Mujeres de la Matria Latinoamericana)



Which factors affect the perception of safety?
(Mujeres de la Matria Latinoamericana)



3 months travel route across 5 countries in South America

