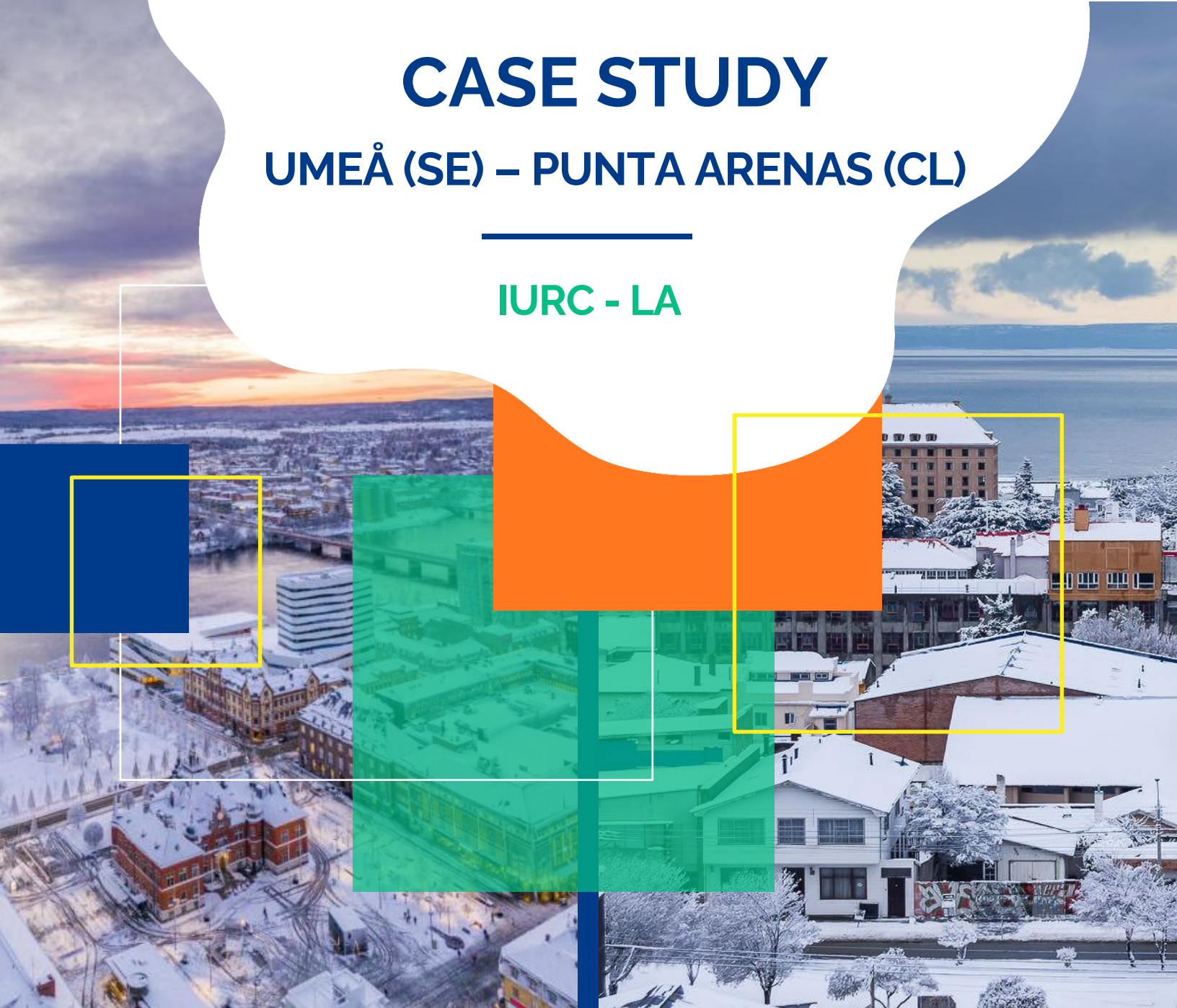


CASE STUDY

UMEÅ (SE) – PUNTA ARENAS (CL)

IURC - LA



SEPTEMBER 2023

Thematic Network: Urban and Regional Renewal and Social Cohesion

Thematic Clusters: Urban Agenda / Planning

Cross-cutting challenge: Energy transition and climate change

Topic keywords: urban planning, gender, public spaces, social inclusion

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 **IURC**
INTERNATIONAL URBAN AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

Umeå – Punta Arenas

IURC – CASE STUDY

The case study presents the incorporation of gender equity criteria in the design of public spaces and the development of new planning methodologies. The initiative between Umeå and Punta Arenas is enabling a cultural change reconsidering the perception of public spaces.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The city of Umeå (Sweden) has a long tradition of integrating gender equality into its policies, strategies, plans and projects. In this framework, the city has developed the "[Gender Landscape](#)" approach to disseminate participatory design methodologies and values associated with gender equality in public spaces. The city of Punta Arenas (Chile) is developing the "Green Areas Master Plan", seeking to increase and improve the quality of public spaces in the city.

Within the process of technical cooperation between both cities, technical sessions and field visits were carried out, associated with the incorporation of gender equity into the planning and design of public spaces. Based on this experience, Punta Arenas decided to incorporate this theme into the design of the city's "Green Areas Master Plan". In order to put the lessons learned into practice, they developed a pilot project in cooperation with Umeå, which consists of incorporating the gender perspective into the design of a square located next to a public school in the city. Amongst the first actions implemented was the realization of participatory workshops with girls and young people from this school, for them to express their expectations and needs.



MAIN CHALLENGE AND SOLUTION

For over a decade, Umeå has implemented the “Gendered Landscape” methodology as a framework for urban planning with a gender equality perspective. This methodology encompasses the creation of a special tour (in bus or bicycle) to showcase important landmarks and information about the city, as well as new planning methods. On the one hand, the bus tour serves to visualise gender-based statistics in Umeå, showcasing successful transformations and best practices in the city. It aims to foster an understanding of the importance of comprehensively addressing power structures, rooted in the experiences of residents and the unique characteristics of the locality. On the other hand, the new planning methods are applied in all urban planning practices, providing a holistic understanding of how gender-based power structures and inequalities influence the way different groups experience and access the city. Thus, planning methods must consider the gender-segregated labour market when planning public transport routes and integrating data on perceptions of safety in public space when designing parks.

“Amongst the main themes that we could see in Umeå was the gender perspective in public space – how they design public spaces to make women feel safe and represented. One striking experience was the circular swings developed along the riverbank through citizen participation with teenage girls.”

- Angela Salazar, Urban Advisor Municipality of Punta Arenas



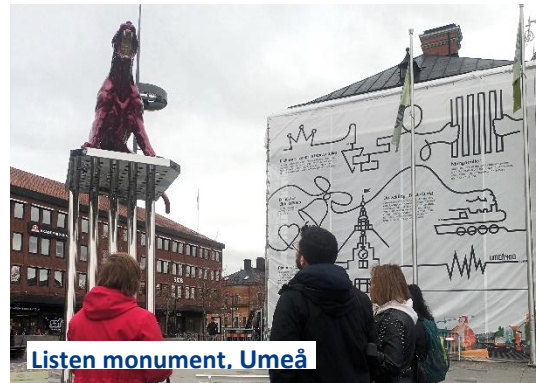
In May 2022, a delegation from the Municipality of Punta Arenas undertook a gendered landscape tour of Umeå. They visited locations such as the Lev tunnel, the Listen monument and the Free Zone park, as good examples of successful work. Additionally, they explored the first public daycare in Umeå, facilitating discussions about the impact of public childcare policies on women’s participation in the labour market and economic independence, as well as the role of the pedagogical curriculum in countering the formation of stereotypical gender roles from an early age.

- The **Lev tunnel** serves as a pedestrian and bicycle beneath under the railway, connecting the city centre with the Haga neighbourhood. The tunnel was designed with the ambition to create an accessible and perceived safe environment for all residents throughout the day. Its width, ample lighting, rounded corners, and absence of pillars contribute to a sense of openness and safety ensuring that unknown individuals cannot hide within it. The presence of multiple exits further enhances safety perceptions in what can otherwise be an intimidating environment.



Lev tunnel. Umeå

- The **Listen monument**, located at the central square Rådhusstorget, commemorates the #Metoo movement, serving as a constant reminder of the ongoing struggle for gender equality and against oppression and violations. The artwork, a red roaring puma positioned three metres above the ground, symbolised both forward progress and a call to listen, act and effect change, akin to the collective stories of the #Metoo movement. It underscores the necessity of perpetually addressing these stories and maintaining an unceasing commitment to achieving gender equality.



Listen monument. Umeå

- In the design of the **Free Zone Park ("Frizon")** along the riverwalk, particular attention was paid to **involving teenage girls in the decision-making process, recognizing their typical underrepresentation in urban development dialogues**. The "inclusion through exclusion" method was applied, exclusively targeting teenage girls in these discussions. The girls shared their perspective on public spaces, expectations, entitlement, safety and societal expectations. The aim was to create an environment devoid of expectations, fears, and insecurity where everyone could feel welcome. Visibility, lighting, and proximity to others were key considerations. The result was a space designed to meet the needs of a specific group while challenging normative design standards, exemplified by backrests on large swings tailored to a height of 1.65 meters, which is the average height of women in Sweden.



Frizon, Umeå

In Punta Arenas, the "**Green Areas Master Plan**" had been developed to revitalise all public spaces designated as "Green Areas," including squares, median strip and any green or brown spaces specified in zoning plans. The objective is to improve these spaces by introducing pedestrian lighting, planting nursery trees and shrubs, installing benches, and replacing or updating existing recreational equipment. Additionally, a focus was placed on security features and universal accessibility criteria to create safer and more inclusive spaces. As part of this initiative, a pilot project was initiated to incorporate **a gender perspective into an abandoned public square adjacent to a school**. This endeavour aimed to capture the perspectives and needs of the school's attending girls.

RESULTS AND IMPACT

Throughout the IURC exchange, urban planning with a gender equality perspective played a significant role in sharing experiences and knowledge. The exchange was informed by Umeå's extensive experience in this field. In the early stages of the exchange, aside to the study visit in Umeå mentioned above, numerous meetings were conducted to share and discuss experiences. These discussions occurred both internally within the teams of Punta Arenas and Umeå and via digital seminars. Furthermore, participation in the IURC Latin America webinars "[Smart Strategies for Equality and Social Inclusion](#)" (December 9, 2021) and "[Gender & Planning: Towards more inclusive cities](#)" (November 21, 2022) served as a platform for disseminating these experiences to a broader audience beyond the city-to-city exchange.

“An important foundation for the gendered landscape method is the recognition there is no one-size-fits-all solution. Gender equality work must be rooted in an understanding of the local context, providing a comprehensive grasp of how gender inequality manifests in a specific locale.”

- Annika Dalén, Gender equality officer at the Municipality of Umeå



Field visit / Bus Stop Prototype, Umeå

During the visit of Umeå's delegation to Punta Arenas, numerous face-to-face exchanges took place, allowing to share experiences and challenges regarding the integration of a gender equality perspective into urban planning. One notable event was the **ACCESS forum 2022** in Punta Arenas, which fosters academic collaboration between Chilean and Swedish universities. The forum, held in November 2022, focused on "Reconnecting for a Sustainable Future." During one of the sessions, representatives from the municipalities of Umeå and Punta Arenas presented their work and engaged with researchers on topics related to gender equality and social sustainability in urban planning.

The study visits in Punta Arenas also included sessions with representatives from regional and national entities responsible for gender equality matters, fostering enlightening discussions about the opportunities and obstacles of addressing specific issues within distinct cultural and legal contexts. Additionally, the agenda featured a visit to a neighbourhood renovated through the "Quiero mi Barrio" programme of the Chilean Ministry of Housing and Urbanism. This visit allowed the delegation to gain insights into participatory methodologies that could be adapted and applied in various participatory processes and citizen dialogues.

Umeå's experience of considering public spaces through a gender perspective showcased how simple elements can lead to great impacts and lasting transformations, ensuring women's safety and representation.



Field visit / Workshop Access Forum, Punta Arenas

One of the most interesting results of this cooperation is the development of **a pilot project that seeks to incorporate a gender perspective into the design of a public space**. The park, located next to the Juan Williams Public School (Punta Arenas), has been designated for the pilot, and the project is now part of the **City's Green Areas Master Plan**. The intervention aimed to transform the square from drawings of local children, integrating their ideas and expectations to the final design of the park. The plan also considered the maintenance, openness, and accessibility of the area.



Student drawings, Punta Arenas

The pilot project has included participation from children and young people from the school, through workshops and surveys to learn more about their needs and ideas on how to develop and design the square.

In addition, Umeå prepared a [factsheet](#) that provides three examples of best practices based on its experience in integrating a gender perspective into planning practice. It also provides guidelines to integrate a gender perspective into planning initiatives. This document can inspire other cities to adapt this approach to their own context, by considering the collection and analysis of gender-segregated data and formulating critical questions, amongst other important aspects.

GENDER EQUALITY PERSPECTIVE IN URBAN PLANNING

Experience from UMEÅ (Sweden)

Umeå, Sweden, is a city that **actively strives for gender equality**, aiming to create conditions for women and men to have equal power to shape society as well as their own lives. This has been central to their municipal development strategies for decades.

A crucial starting point is that **planning approaches must integrate an understanding of how gendered power structures and norms shape how we plan and interact with our cities**. It is therefore necessary to integrate a refined understanding of gender (in)equality as a central aspect of planning strategies. This approach seeks to replace mainstream planning practices that tend to only add a "gender perspective" at the end of the process.

"There is no one-size-fits-all, copy-paste-ready solution on gender and planning"

This factsheet will provide **three examples of best practices based on the experience of Umeå** in integrating a gender perspective into planning practice. It also provides guidelines to integrate a gender perspective into planning initiatives.



1 Gender-segregated data

2 Asking critical questions

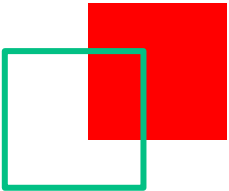
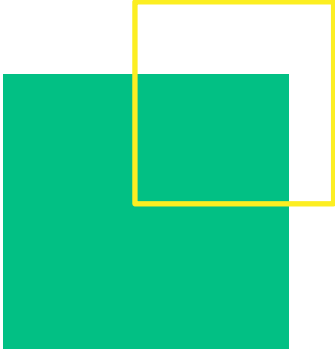
3 Examples from Umeå



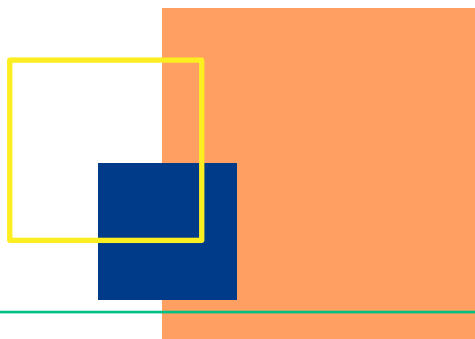
LESSONS LEARNED



A fundamental principle of the gendered landscape methodology is the recognition that there is no universal solution. Instead, effective gender equality initiatives must be grounded in a profound comprehension of the local context – a holistic understanding of how gender inequalities manifest in the specific locale.



Various local and national contexts present diverse challenges and opportunities. These variations are linked not only to social norms and stereotypes that give rise to rigid gender-based norms and expectations but also to differences in institutional and legal frameworks. Notably, there are substantial disparities between Swedish and Chilean municipalities in terms of their mandates and the extent of their authority. Swedish municipalities enjoy greater autonomy, particularly in urban planning decisions. One valuable lesson drawn from this contrast is the significance of collaborative efforts in multi-level governance and cross-sectorial cooperation.



One of the most important impacts from the cooperation will be the integration of a gender perspective to the remaining squares outlined in the Punta Arenas Green Areas Master Plan. The municipality will also maintain the methodology of conducting surveys and collecting drawings, and will consider introducing sculpture symbolizing women, game structures designed to foster safety and interaction, and murals inspired by poetry representation into these spaces.

Municipalities possess the most comprehensive local knowledge and insights, which are indispensable for tailoring gender-inclusive urban planning to the specific context. However, their authority is often constrained through short mandates, underscoring the importance of sharing this vital information and fostering effective cooperation with institutions responsible for decisions that wield significant influence at the local level.

THE IURC PROGRAMME

The International Urban and Regional Cooperation (IURC) programme enables cities in different global regions to link up and share solutions to common problems. It is part of a long-term strategy by the European Union to foster sustainable urban development in cooperation with the public and private sectors, as well as representatives of research and innovation, community groups and citizens. Through engaging in IURC, cities will have the chance to share and exchange knowledge with their international counterparts, building a greener, more prosperous future.

The IURC programme is an opportunity for local governments to learn from each other, set ambitious targets, forge lasting partnerships, test new solutions, and boost their city's international profile. Its activities will support the achievement of policy objectives as well as major international agreements on urban development and climate change, such as the EU Urban Agenda, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris Agreement.

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Liliana de Simone (Access Forum),

Links to related outputs:

Guidelines "Gender equality perspective in urban planning":

<https://www.iurc.eu/library/gender-equality-perspective-in-urban-planning-experience-from-umea-sweden/>

[*Gendered Landscape Tour Umea*](#)

[*Green Areas and Public Spaces Master Plan \(Punta Arenas\)*](#)

[*Academic Collaboration Chile-Sweden ACCESS*](#)

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