

What makes a city friendly?

Stimulus question	<p>What makes us feel good in the city? What spaces are friendly and which ones are not? Who decides on the design of public space? Can we make a difference?</p>
Overview	<p>‘Friendly City’ is an opportunity to take a closer look at the public space in your city/town/district. Archival photographs of Tychy will become a starting point to talk about what it is that makes a space friendly and gives its residents and users a sense of well-being. The activity can even be an opportunity to... talk to a local urban planning officer.</p>
No. of participants	<p>up to 20 people</p>
Time	<p>The activity consists of 3–4 steps, which – depending on the mode of work – can be completed during a cycle of 1–3 sessions.</p>
Location	<p>The activity can take place in the school, common room, community centre, library or museum.</p>
Resources and equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • room with computers and access to the Internet, • colour printer + paper supply to print photos, • participants’ camera-enabled smartphones or photo cameras, • micro USB cable (to connect mobile phone/camera to computer), • mobile storage device (e.g. USB flash drive), • map of the area or city (from City Hall, bookshop, newsagent’s or Google maps – an interesting area can be selected and printed out in desired size), • flipchart, marker pens, • sheets of paper, clipboards and pens,
How to go about it? Preparation	<p>Content-related preparation: approx. 2–3 hours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View the www.abc.tychy.pl website • Read the essays “Flashbacks from the Construction of a Big City” by Agnieszka Ociepa-Weiss and “Tychy from A to Z” by Patryk Oczko (in the “Essays” tab on www.abc.tychy.pl) • Get the participants acquainted with the concepts of ‘participation’, ‘revitalisation’, ‘participatory budgeting’ in the context of urban space and urban planning, • Collect office supplies, • Set up the room.
Step 1: Public space in photographs (approx. 45 minutes)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The starting point for your local work will be the example of the city of Tychy and its virtual map. Briefly explain the history of Nowe Tychy to the participants and refer them to the virtual map available at www.abc.tychy.pl. In order to learn more about the history of Nowe Tychy

and the everyday life of its residents, the circumstances of the decision on the expansion of the city and its stages, see the “Essays” page at www.abc.tychy.pl The texts “Flashbacks from the Construction of a Big City” by Agnieszka Ociepa-Weiss and “Tychy from A to Z” by Patryk Oczko will be particularly valuable for the script

2. Introduce the participants to the way the map works, the search tool, the descriptions of the photographs, the type of photographs and the subject matter presented, so that they can navigate the archive by themselves and have a closer look at it.
3. Ask the participants to view the photos, focusing on those that depict people in public spaces (streets, parks, squares, courtyards). The selected photos (maximum 20) are saved by the participants on their computers in a predefined folder on a shared server, which you can access. Alternatively, the photos can be sent to your e-mail address. Still another option is to collect them on one mobile storage device, during which time, while waiting for their turn, the participants can explore the map on their own.
4. Do a demonstration of the photos chosen by the participants. Brainstorm the following together: Is the urban space in the photos ‘friendly’? What does this mean? How is space used by people? What elements of public space make it resident-friendly?
5. Write down the conclusions of the discussion as you go along with your findings using two sheets of paper labelled ‘Friendly City’ and ‘Friendly City’.

**Step 2: Field work
(approx. 60 minutes)**

1. Start by working with a map of your city/town/neighbourhood. Plan your walking tour so that it takes about 30 minutes.
2. Split the group into two teams: those who will focus on the friendly aspects of public space, and those who will look for the unfriendly ones.
3. Do the planned tour together, taking photographs to document selected elements of your public space (e.g. benches, greenery, pedestrian crossings, dustbin shelters, shop windows, rubbish bins, flower beds, pavement and road surface) along the way.
4. When you return from the tour, upload the photos from the participants’ cameras and gather them in two folders marked ‘Friendly’ and ‘Unfriendly’. Before the next step, you will need to print out all the photos taken in small sizes (approx. ¼ of an A4 sheet).

**Step 3: image of
the neighbourhood
(approx. 45 minutes)**

1. Arrange the printed photos in the room. Discuss the findings/impressions from the fieldwork.
2. On a large shared map, each of the teams use different colours to mark those sites which were particularly noteworthy during the walking tour. If the map is sufficiently large, you can stick appropriate photos in these spots.
3. Ask participants if they know the terms ‘revitalisation’ and ‘civic participation’ – harvest ideas and explain what these processes mean. You can refer to local examples of such practices.
4. Brainstorm the following: What questions would the participants like to ask the local planning officer in their city/town/district? What is causing concern, or is unclear?

5. If you are not planning to continue with Step 4, you can turn the effects of your work (map with marked sites, photographs taken and the question list) into a small exhibition.

**Step 4 (optional):
a meeting at the
local planning office
(by prior appointment)
approx. 60 minutes**

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1. Invite the participants to present the results of their work and a list of the questions they have raised.
 2. Ask the office staff to explain what “urban planning”, “revitalisation”, “participation” is and what the public space planning process involves.
 3. Discuss opportunities to have a positive impact on your neighbourhood.
 4. Finally, harvest the impressions/conclusions of the participants from the whole experience of working together.

Possible variations

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1. If you are involved in history, you can also introduce during Step 1 the theme of the realities of 1950s cities, including issues such as the impact of the political system on the creation and growth of cities; migration of people from rural to urban areas; deglomeration; mentalities of the communist era, urban and architectural concepts of socialist realism, etc.
 2. If your town/city has a participatory budgeting scheme, the project may result in a proposal for a specific change in your public space.