



WP3 Simulation based training package

Module Title: Module 1: Understanding the Urban Environment - Implementing Universal Design

Introduction to the Module

This module is part of the ACT4DYS Simulation-Based Training Package (WP3), developed to empower youth workers and trainers to become effective guides for disability-inclusive urban development. The package responds to a pressing need: too many urban spaces continue to exclude young persons with disabilities from full participation in public life, despite clear obligations under international human-rights frameworks.

Module 1 (Understanding the Urban Environment: Implementing Universal Design) lays the conceptual and practical foundation for the entire training package. It introduces Universal Design (UD) as both a design philosophy and a rights-based imperative, exploring how its seven core principles can be applied to create urban environments that are accessible, equitable, and welcoming to all, regardless of age, ability, or background.

Who is this module for?

This module is primarily designed for youth workers, youth trainers, disability advocates, urban planners, and other stakeholders involved in shaping urban environments and supporting young people. No prior specialist knowledge is required; the module is designed to be accessible to practitioners from diverse professional backgrounds.

What will you learn?

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Describe the foundational concepts of urban development and their relationship to inclusion and accessibility;
- Explain the seven principles of Universal Design and apply them to propose practical solutions for accessibility barriers;
- Identify common barriers affecting young persons with disabilities in urban spaces: physical, social, and behavioural;
- Analyse real-world case studies to assess the inclusivity of different urban settings;
- Collaborate effectively with diverse stakeholders in inclusive urban planning processes;



Co-funded by
the European Union



- Apply your learning in a hands-on simulation scenario: redesigning a real park to become accessible and inclusive for all.

How is this module structured?

The module is organised into four interconnected sections, following the structure established for all ACT4DYS scenarios:

- Introduction to the topic and Theoretical Knowledge: core concepts including Universal Design principles, sustainable transportation, and youth-friendly spaces, grounded in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- Practical Knowledge & Insights: lived experiences of young persons with disabilities, successful inclusive urban projects (e.g., Barcelona's Superblocks, Norway's Design for All), and the role of youth workers as advocates;
- Simulation Scenario: "Vrijbroekpark 2.0 – Let's Improve It!": a collaborative design challenge where multidisciplinary teams redesign a real Belgian park, applying UD principles in a structured, role-based sprint;
- Resources: a glossary, bibliography, 2 activity sheets, evaluation rubric, trainer script, and links to the ACT4DYS e-portfolio and recommended podcasts, courses, and readings.

This module in the wider training package

The ACT4DYS Training Package comprises four scenarios developed by the project consortium. This first module provides the foundational knowledge that underpins the entire package. It is followed by Scenario 2 (Improving Alternative Transportation), Scenario 3 (Creating Youth-Friendly Public Spaces), and Scenario 4 (the Urban Assessment Tool). Throughout the development process, the European Disability Forum (EDF), the organisation that represents persons with disabilities at European level, reviewed all materials to ensure they meet inclusion and accessibility standards aligned with Universal Design for Learning and WCAG 2.2.

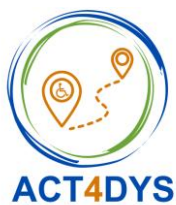
The training package builds the capacity of youth workers across five European countries to champion disability-inclusive urban development, combining non-formal education methods, hands-on simulations, and rigorous peer review to deliver learning that is both meaningful and transferable to practice.

Module developed by M. Begoña Arenas from ITC.





Co-funded by
the European Union



This scenario is available under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International \(CC BY 4.0\) license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



Co-funded by
the European Union



Introduction to the Topic

Urban environments are complex ecosystems shaped by infrastructure, policy, culture, and community needs. This is especially true for young adults navigating these spaces during critical stages of personal and social development. As cities continue to grow, the demand for inclusive, accessible, and sustainable urban spaces becomes increasingly urgent. This module begins by exploring the foundational concepts of urban development and the critical role of Universal Design (UD) in ensuring that cities are welcoming and functional for all, particularly young persons with disabilities.

Urban planning has often been shaped by goals such as efficiency, traffic flow, and economic growth. In practice, this has meant designing cities around cars, large commercial areas, and fast movement, rather than around the everyday needs of all people. As a result, many public spaces, buildings, and transport systems were not designed with accessibility in mind. This has created barriers for young people with disabilities, limiting their access to education, jobs, leisure activities, and opportunities to participate fully in community life. This exclusion not only violates human-rights principles, such as those in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities but also prevents cities from benefiting from the perspectives and contributions of all residents.

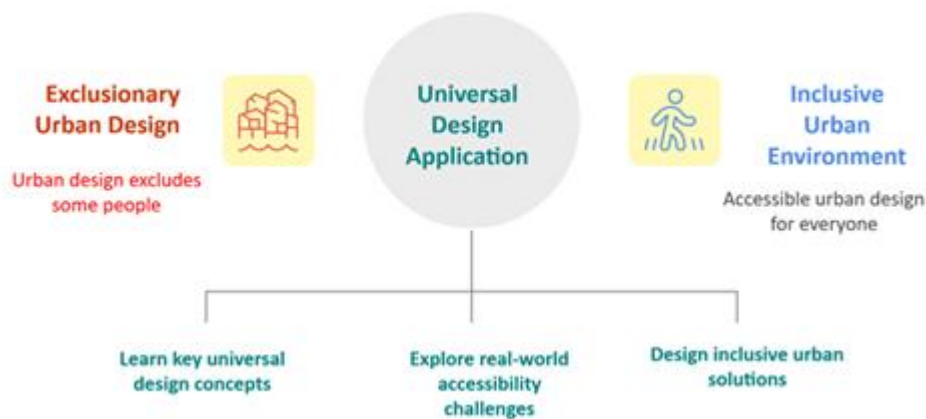
Universal Design demands a proactive approach to accessibility. Rather than retrofitting environments to accommodate specific needs, UD emphasises designing spaces that are inherently usable by the widest range of people, regardless of age, ability, disability, or background (Steinfeld & Maisel, 2012). This approach aligns with the social model of disability, which views disability as a product of environmental and societal barriers rather than individual impairments (Oliver, 1996).

The importance of inclusive urban design is highlighted by international frameworks such as the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#) and the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#). Article 9 of the CRPD obliges countries to remove barriers to access in the physical environment, transportation, and public facilities (United Nations, 2006). Similarly, SDG 11 aims to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable, with a specific focus on accessibility for populations in vulnerable situations (United Nations, 2015).

Young people with disabilities face unique challenges in urban environments, including inaccessible public transport, lack of youth-friendly spaces, and limited opportunities for civic engagement. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of both the physical and social dimensions of urban life. It also demands collaboration among urban planners, youth workers, disability advocates, and policymakers.

As illustrated in Figure 1, this module sets the stage for such collaboration by equipping participants with the knowledge and tools to critically assess urban environments through the lens of Universal Design, with a particular focus on the lived experiences and needs of young people with disabilities.

Figure 1: ACT4DYS application of urban design Principles. Own elaboration.



This module introduces key concepts, explores real-world challenges, and prepares learners to engage in a simulation scenario where they will apply their insights to design inclusive urban solutions.

Module 1 - THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE

This section explores the core concepts, theories, and principles that underpin disability-inclusive urban development, with a focus on Universal Design, sustainable transportation, and youth-friendly spaces. These theoretical foundations provide the analytical tools necessary for participants to critically engage with urban environments and propose inclusive solutions.

1. Principles of Universal Design

Universal Design (UD) is a proactive design philosophy that aims to create environments, products, and systems that are usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for later adaptations or specialised solutions (Mace, 1998). Rather than focusing solely on accommodating individuals with disabilities after barriers appear, UD promotes inclusive thinking across all phases of



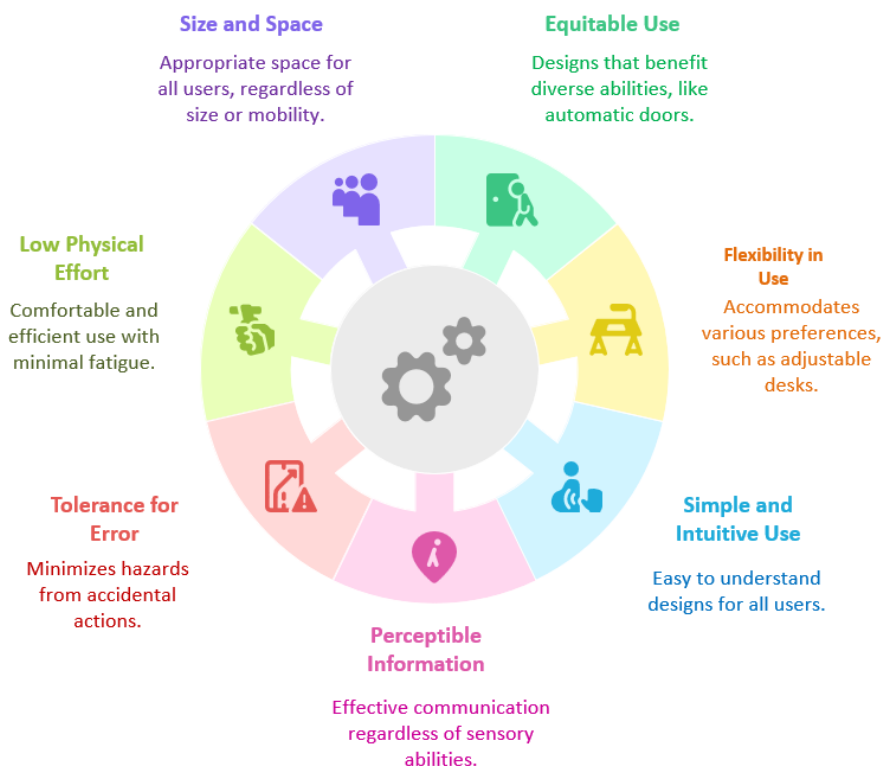
Co-funded by
the European Union



a project, from planning and design to implementation and evaluation. This ensures that diversity in ability, disability, age, and experience is considered throughout the entire development process.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the seven principles of Universal Design (Connell *et al.*, 1997) serve as a foundational guide for inclusive urban planning:

Figure 2: Universal Design Principles. Adapted from Connell et al., 1997.



These principles are not prescriptive checklists but rather design goals that encourage inclusive thinking. They are especially relevant in urban contexts where diverse populations interact with shared infrastructure:

1. **Equitable Use:** The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities and disabilities. For example, automatic doors benefit wheelchair users, parents with strollers, and people carrying heavy items.
2. **Flexibility in Use:** The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences, abilities, and disabilities. Adjustable-height desks or multi-language signage are examples.
3. **Simple and Intuitive Use:** The design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or concentration level.
4. **Perceptible Information:** The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities (e.g., visual and tactile signage).



Co-funded by
the European Union



5. **Tolerance for Error:** The design minimises hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
6. **Low Physical Effort:** The design can be used efficiently and comfortably with a minimum of fatigue.
7. **Size and Space for Approach and Use:** Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility.

For instance, public transportation systems that incorporate UD principles might include low-floor buses, tactile paving, and audible stop announcements. These features benefit not only persons with disabilities but also older adults, children, and non-native language speakers.

Importantly, UD aligns with the social model of disability, which reframes disability as a result of environmental and societal barriers rather than individual impairments (Oliver, 1996). This model shifts responsibility from the individual to the system, emphasising the need to remove obstacles in the built environment, communication, and social attitudes.

In urban planning, applying UD means designing parks, sidewalks, housing, public buildings, and recreational spaces that are accessible and welcoming to all. It also means involving persons with disabilities in the process to ensure that their lived experiences inform inclusive solutions (Steinfeld & Maisel, 2012). This participatory approach not only improves design outcomes but also fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment among marginalised groups.

2. Concepts Related to Sustainable Transportation

Sustainable transportation is a key component of inclusive urban development. It refers to systems that are environmentally responsible, economically viable, and socially inclusive (Banister, 2008). For young persons with disabilities, access to reliable and accessible transportation is essential for participation in education, employment, and social life.

Designing transportation systems with UD principles ensures that vehicles, stations, and pathways are accessible to individuals with mobility, sensory, and cognitive disabilities. This includes features such as tactile paving, audio announcements, low-floor buses, and clear signage. Integrating these features not only benefits persons with disabilities but also supports aging populations, parents with strollers, and others with temporary mobility challenges.

3. Importance of Youth-Friendly Spaces

Youth-friendly urban spaces are environments that support the physical, emotional, and social development of young people. These spaces should be safe, accessible, and inclusive, allowing for recreation, learning, and civic engagement. For young

persons with disabilities, such spaces must be designed with attention to accessibility, autonomy, and opportunities for interaction (Malone, 2002).

Inclusive youth spaces contribute to social cohesion and empower young people to participate in community life. They also serve as platforms for advocacy and leadership, enabling youth to shape the environments they inhabit. Urban planners, youth workers, and disability advocates must collaborate to ensure that these spaces reflect the diverse needs and aspirations of all young people.

Practical Knowledge & Insights:

While theoretical frameworks provide the foundation for inclusive urban development, practical knowledge is essential for translating these ideas into real-world impact. This section explores the lived experiences of young persons with disabilities in urban environments, highlights successful case studies, and outlines the roles of key stakeholders in promoting inclusive and sustainable urban practices.

1. Understanding the Needs of Young persons with disabilities

Young persons with disabilities often face multiple, intersecting barriers in urban settings. These include inaccessible transportation, poorly designed public spaces, lack of inclusive recreational facilities, and limited opportunities for civic participation (UNICEF, 2013). These barriers are not just physical but also social and attitudinal, often rooted in a lack of awareness or consultation.

For example, a young person with a visual impairment may struggle to navigate a city without tactile paving or audible signals at crossings. Similarly, a young autistic person may find crowded, noisy environments overwhelming without designated quiet zones or sensory-friendly spaces (WHO, 2011). Addressing these needs requires a user-centered approach which involves young persons with disabilities in the design and evaluation of urban spaces.

2. Case Studies of Inclusive Urban Projects

Several cities have successfully implemented disability-inclusive urban initiatives that demonstrate the value of Universal Design:

- Barcelona's Superblocks project reorganises city blocks to prioritise pedestrians and reduce traffic, creating safer, more accessible public spaces (Mueller et al., 2020).
- The "Design for All" initiative in Norway integrates UD principles into national planning policies, ensuring that accessibility is a legal and design requirement from the outset (Bringolf, 2011).



Co-funded by
the European Union



- The ACT4DYS [e-portfolio](#) includes examples such as youth-led audits of public spaces, co-design workshops with disabled youth, and inclusive playgrounds that foster social interaction and mobility.

These examples show that inclusive design is not only feasible but also enhances the quality of life for all residents.

3. Role of Youth Workers and Other Stakeholders

Youth workers play a critical role in advocating for and facilitating inclusive urban development. They act as intermediaries between young people and decision-makers, helping to amplify the voices of marginalised groups. Their responsibilities may include:

- Organising participatory design workshops.
- Supporting youth in conducting accessibility audits.
- Facilitating dialogue between youth, planners, and policymakers.

Other stakeholders may collaborate to ensure that inclusive design is embedded in every stage of urban development. Cross-sector partnerships are essential for aligning technical expertise with community needs.

4. Strategies for Sustainable and Inclusive Urban Practices

To promote sustainable and inclusive urban environments, practitioners can adopt several strategies:

- Participatory planning: Involving young persons with disabilities in all phases of design and decision-making.
- Policy integration: Embedding UD principles into local and national planning regulations.
- Capacity building: Training professionals and community members on inclusive design practices.
- Monitoring and evaluation: Using tools like accessibility audits and user feedback to assess and improve urban spaces.

These strategies ensure that inclusion is not an afterthought but a core value in urban development.

Connection to the Simulation Scenario:

The simulation scenario titled “Vrijbroekpark 2.0 – Let’s Improve It!” serves as a dynamic, hands-on application of the module’s content. It allows participants, primarily youth workers, to engage in a collaborative design challenge that integrates Universal Design principles, inclusive urban planning, and sustainability. The scenario is structured to mirror real-world urban development processes, encouraging critical thinking, teamwork, and creativity.

Applying Theoretical Knowledge During the Design Phase

During the Design Phase, participants are divided into multidisciplinary teams (e.g., city planners, disability advocates, environmental experts, and community

representatives). Each team receives a blueprint of Vrijbroekpark, found in Belgium, and is tasked with redesigning the space to enhance accessibility and inclusivity.

Theoretical concepts from the module, such as the seven principles of Universal Design (Connell et al., 1997), the social model of disability (Oliver, 1996), and sustainable mobility (Banister, 2008), are directly applied. For example:

- Equitable Use is addressed by adding ramps and tactile paths.
- Flexibility in Use is reflected in sensory zones for neurodivergent users.
- Sustainable Design is incorporated through eco-friendly features like solar shade structures and rain gardens.

Participants must identify gaps in accessibility and propose improvements using UD principles, such as adjusting path gradients, adding Braille signage, and creating quiet zones. The instructor facilitates this phase by posing real-world challenges and offering technical guidance.

Informing Decisions with Practical Insights

Insights from the module's practical section—such as the lived experiences of young persons with disabilities (UNICEF, 2013; WHO, 2011) and successful case studies (Mueller et al., 2020), inform design decisions. Teams are encouraged to consider:

- How their design supports mobility, sensory, and cognitive needs.
- How youth-friendly features promote social inclusion and intergenerational interaction.
- How sustainability and accessibility can coexist in urban planning.

These considerations ensure that the simulation reflects authentic challenges and solutions in disability-inclusive urban development.

Preparation for the Pitch and Presentation

In the Pitch & Presentation phase, each team presents their redesigned park model, explaining how they applied UD principles and addressed community needs. This phase reinforces communication skills and the ability to justify design choices based on theoretical and practical knowledge.

Participants must articulate:

- How their design supports users with diverse abilities and disabilities.
- What trade-offs were made between creativity and functionality.
- How their roles influenced the final outcome.

The instructor acts as a “City Commissioner,” asking probing questions to assess understanding and encourage reflection.

Resources: (List of supporting materials for participants and trainers)

- Glossary, in the following page
- Bibliography, included at the end of this document
- Links to relevant sections of the ACT4DYS [e-portfolio](#)
- Activity Sheets for scenario tasks.
- Rubric for evaluation.
- Instructions for Youth Workers/Trainers on how to use the module content and run the scenario (see One page “Trainer Script” right after reading materials).
- Additional reading materials, videos, podcasts or links:

Podcasts

[Inclusive Designers Podcast](#) – “The Ins and Outs of Good Urban Design”. A deep dive into best practices for inclusive urban design, featuring experts Meg O’Connell and Steve Wright. Topics include accessibility in public spaces, inclusive mobility, and design without retrofitting.

[Building Inclusive Arab Cities](#) – Arab Urban Development Institute. A webinar-style podcast exploring how universal accessibility is embedded in urban planning across Arab cities. Includes case studies and tools like the ‘Sahl’ system and LEED framework.

Courses & Videos

[Planning for Universal Design – Planetizen Course](#). A structured video course introducing the principles of Universal Design, its distinction from ADA compliance, and real-world case studies (e.g., Portland Transit Mall, London).

Reading Materials

[Universal Design: A Guide for Architects and Designers – UGREEN](#). A comprehensive guide to implementing UD in architecture and urban planning, with a focus on community well-being and social inclusion.

[EDF flyers on persons with disabilities and the SDGs](#). Available in easy-to-read for persons with intellectual disabilities and in all EU languages. Also a video in international sign.

One page “Trainer Script”

Kick off (2 min):

“Hi everyone! Today we’re improving a park to make it more inclusive, , especially to young people with disabilities. Quick pre survey now; it helps us see what changed after.”



Co-funded by
the European Union



UD mini intro (5–7 min):

Universal Design = spaces that are easy to use for the widest range of people from the start—clear routes, step free access, tactile/visual info, quiet zones. It's about dignity, safety, and participation

Team brief (1 min):

“You’ll work as a Planner, Disability Advocate, Community Rep, Environmental Expert. Make fast choices and build a simple model.”

Design sprint cues (sprinkle every 5–10 min):

“Show me one fix for a wheelchair user here.”

“Add one sensory friendly spot.”

“How will someone with visual impairment find the toilets?” / “Where’s the shade and rest area?”

Pitches (3 min/team) + friendly scoring:

“I’ll score for creativity, functionality, inclusivity, sustainability, and community fit, short and sweet.”

Close (5 min):

“Name one UD thing you’ll try at work next week.”

→ Post survey link/QR.

“Thanks! Your feedback helps us improve the training package.”

What to do if you run it online

- Keep the same flow. Use breakout rooms for teams.
- Collect evidence with a shared attendance form + screenshots.
- Use digital whiteboards (Miro, Jamboard, PPT) for the map.
- Still do pre/post surveys and a short debrief



Co-funded by
the European Union



References:

- Banister, D. (2008). *The sustainable mobility paradigm*. *Transport Policy*, 15(2), 73–80. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2007.10.005>
- Bringolf, J. (2011). *Barriers to universal design in housing*. *Urban Policy and Research*, 29(3), 275–292. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08111146.2011.578110>
- Connell, B. R., Jones, M., Mace, R., Mueller, J., Mullick, A., Ostroff, E., ... & Vanderheiden, G. (1997). *The principles of universal design*. Center for Universal Design, NC State University.
- Mace, R. (1998). *Universal design in housing*. *Assistive Technology*, 10(1), 21–28.
- Malone, K. (2002). *Street life: Youth, culture and competing uses of public space*. *Environment and Urbanization*, 14(2), 157–168. <https://doi.org/10.1177/095624780201400213>
- Mueller, N., Rojas-Rueda, D., Khreis, H., Cirach, M., Andrés, D., Ballester, J., & Nieuwenhuijsen, M. J. (2020). *Changing the urban design of cities for health: The Superblock model*. *Environment International*, 134, 105132. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envint.2019.105132>
- Oliver, M. (1996). *Understanding disability: From theory to practice*. Macmillan.
- Steinfeld, E., & Maisel, J. (2012). *Universal design: Creating inclusive environments*. Wiley.
- UNICEF. (2013). *The state of the world's children 2013: Children with disabilities*. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/state-worlds-children-2013>
- United Nations. (2006). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>
- United Nations. (2015). *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>
- World Health Organization (WHO). (2011). *World report on disability*. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241564182>.

Module 1 - SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

Participants: 15 youth workers

Call for participants: [make up a call for participants using this REGISTRATION AND CONSENT form as an example](#)

Objective of the session:

Make up a scenario-based exercise in teams to design and physically model an accessible urban space, applying universal design principles to ensure the space is inclusive for all people, especially those with disabilities.

Step-by-Step Structure:

1. Introduction & Briefing (15 minutes)

- **Goal:** Introduce participants to the concept of Universal Design and its importance in urban planning (In power point: use the content from the ACT4DYS_WP3_ThematicModuleContent_1).
- **Instructor's Role:** Provide a brief overview of Universal Design principles, highlighting the importance of making spaces accessible for persons with various disabilities.
 - Explain the concept of “designing for all”: how spaces should be usable by people regardless of age, ability, disability, or background.
 - Show examples of urban spaces that successfully integrate universal design (e.g., ramps, tactile paths, signage).
- **Game Element:** Create excitement by explaining that participants will be judged on creativity, functionality, and inclusivity.
- **Pre-Activity Question:** Ask participants to think about public spaces they've visited: what elements made them accessible or not?

2. Team Formation & Role Assignment (5 minutes)

- **Goal:** Form teams and assign roles.
- **Instructor's Role:** Ensure that each team has a good mix of skills and perspectives (e.g., a city planner working with an environmental expert and disability advocate).
- **Preparation:** Each team receives a set of materials and a basic map/blueprint of the space they will redesign (see below).

3. Design Phase (30-40 minutes)

- **Goal:** Vrijbroekpark 2.0 – Let's Improve It!.
- **Task Breakdown:**
 - City Planners:
 - Reconfigure the park's layout to reduce walking distance to key zones.
 - Add shaded resting points every 100 meters.



Co-funded by
the European Union



- Disability Advocates:
 - Improve tactile paving routes, ensure all entrances include audio/visual signage.
 - Introduce quiet sensory buffers for neurodivergent users along loud play areas.
- Community Representatives:
 - Integrate social gathering zones like picnic circles or storytelling benches.
 - Propose features to support intergenerational gatherings and cultural inclusion.
- Environmental Experts:
 - Add eco-friendly enhancements like rain gardens, solar shade structures, and native plants that are safe and sensory engaging.
 - Recommend sustainable seating made from recycled materials.

Task Instructions:

- Map Corrections: Use the [provided blueprint of Vrijbroekpark](#).

Screenshot below:



Vrijbroekpark site map

- Identify Gaps: Locate areas lacking accessibility, shade, social seats, or wayfinding.
- Propose Improvements: Sketch or model:
 - Improved path widths and gradients.
 - Sensory zones (textures, signs, scent).
 - Eco features integrated into accessible seating or play.
 - Cove signage with Braille, audio, multi-language labels.



Co-funded by
the European Union



- **Instructor's Role:** Circulate among the teams to offer guidance and challenges.
Examples:

- "The space needs to be sensory-friendly. Can you make a space that reduces noise for autistic visitors?"
- "Can you integrate a feature that allows for easier navigation for persons with visual impairments?"
- "You have 10 minutes to add a wheelchair-accessible ramp. Where would you place it?"
- "This park should be sustainable. How can you ensure it has eco-friendly elements?"

Provide additional guidance and technical information if needed (e.g., measurements for accessibility).

Instructor's Tip: Use a "timer" to increase the urgency and simulate real-world pressure.

4. Pitch & Presentation (15 minutes)

- **Goal:** Each team presents their model to the group and explains how they incorporated universal design principles.
- **Task Breakdown:**
 - Each team has 3 minutes to present their design, highlighting key accessibility features, sustainability, and how the community's needs were considered.
 - They should justify the choices they made for ramps, tactile paths, seating, and sensory areas.
- **Instructor's Role:** Act as the "City Commissioner" or "Urban Planning Panel," asking questions about specific features. For example:
 - "How does this design support persons with mobility disabilities?"
 - "What considerations have you made for persons with visual disabilities?"
 - "Explain how your design fosters a sense of community and safety."
- **Peer Feedback:** Allow the other teams to ask questions or offer feedback, reinforcing the collaborative nature of urban planning.

5. Judging & Evaluation (10 minutes)

- **Goal:** Teams receive feedback on their design based on creativity, functionality, and compliance with universal design principles.
- **Instructor's Role:** Assess the designs and provide feedback on:
 - Creativity: Did the team think outside the box in designing a unique, engaging space?
 - Functionality: Is the design realistic, and does it meet all accessibility needs?
 - Inclusivity: How well did the design cater to people of all abilities?

Use a rubric to score each team based on specific criteria (e.g., design quality, accessibility, sustainability, community engagement).

- **Game Element:** Teams receive points for creativity, functionality, and inclusivity. The team with the highest score wins, but all teams should be praised for their contributions and creativity.

6. Debrief & Reflection (15 minutes)

- **Goal:** Reflect on the process and lessons learned.
- **Instructor's Role:** Lead a discussion on the importance of universal design and how it can be applied in real-world urban planning.



Co-funded by
the European Union



- What challenges did the teams face while ensuring accessibility?
 - How did they balance creativity with practicality?
 - How did their roles influence the final design?
- **Knowledge Check:** Ask participants to share how they would apply universal design principles in their own communities or in their future work with youth.

Final Thoughts for Youth Worker Training:

This hands-on, role-playing approach allows youth workers to experience the complexities of urban design, including the need for inclusivity and accessibility. By actively participating in the creation of an urban space, they'll be better equipped to understand and teach these concepts to others.

The structure also encourages teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking, all of which are valuable skills for youth workers when engaging with young people and communities in their work.



Co-funded by
the European Union



Module 1 – RESOURCES: ACTIVITIES

Activity Sheet 1: "Disability Advocate" Role - Scenario 1

Module/Scenario Title: Scenario 1: Understanding the Urban Environment - Implementing Universal Design

Assigned Role: Disability Advocate

Activity Objective: As the Disability Advocate, your goal is to ensure that your team's proposal for the simulated urban environment is as inclusive and accessible as possible, focusing on the needs of young persons with disabilities. You will need to identify barriers and propose solutions based on the principles of Universal Design.

Instructions:

1. Review the Scenario: Carefully read the description of the urban environment presented in this scenario. Pay close attention to infrastructure elements, transportation, and public spaces.

2. Identify Accessibility Barriers: Use the environment description and your understanding of mobility and access challenges for persons with disabilities. Identify at least 3 specific barriers that could hinder the full participation of young persons with disabilities in this environment. Consider different types of disabilities (e.g., reduced mobility, visual impairment, hearing impairment).

Questions to guide your thinking: How does a wheelchair user navigate this street? Can a blind person safely traverse this park? Are public transport options usable by everyone?

3. Propose Universal Design Solutions: For each barrier you identified, propose one or more concrete solutions using the principles of Universal Design. Universal Design aims to create environments usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

◦Example: If you identified stairs as a barrier, a Universal Design solution could be the installation of a ramp with an appropriate slope and handrails.

4. Collaborate with Your Team: Discuss your findings and proposals with your other team members (Urban Planners, Community Representatives, Environmental Experts). Explain the importance of accessibility and inclusion and how your solutions integrate into their overall design. Ensure the team's final proposal reflects strong consideration for disability inclusion.

5. Prepare Your Contribution for Presentation: Be ready to explain to the evaluators how your team's proposal addresses the needs of young persons with disabilities and how it incorporates the principles of Universal Design. Highlight the key solutions that your role has championed.

Additional Resources:

Consult relevant sections of the interactive E-portfolio with case studies and best practices in inclusive urban development.

Space for Notes and Ideas:

Activity Sheet 2: " Identifying Barriers and Inclusive Solutions in city-based Workplace Environments"

Module/Scenario Title: Scenario 1: Understanding the Urban Environment - Implementing Universal Design

Assigned Role: collaborative exercise

Activity Objective: To apply the principles of Universal Design to real or familiar workplace contexts by collaboratively identifying accessibility barriers and proposing inclusive and sustainable solutions using a [Padlet board](#).

Instructions:

1. Think about your current workplace or a workplace you know well.
2. Identify at least one accessibility barrier that could affect participation at work.
3. Post your contribution in the appropriate column:

Physical barriers

Digital barriers

Organisational barriers

Attitudinal barriers

4. For each barrier, add a proposed inclusive solution, aligned with the principles of Universal Design.

Additional Resources:

Examples (model contribution)

Barrier (Attitudinal): Assuming that requesting flexibility means lack of commitment.



Co-funded by
the European Union



Inclusive solution: Promote flexible working as a standard option for everyone and include it in organisational policies and internal communication.

Barrier (Digital): Internal platforms without captions or accessible formats.

Inclusive solution: Ensure accessible digital tools by default (captions, screen-reader compatibility, clear layouts).

Space for Notes and Ideas:



Module 1 - RESOURCES: RUBRIC

Rubric for Evaluating Scenario 1: Understanding the Urban Environment - Implementing Universal Design

Criteria	5 - Exemplary	4 - Proficient	3 - Satisfactory	2 - Needs Improvement	1 - Unsatisfactory
Evaluate Universal Design Principles	Thoroughly and insightfully evaluates all principles of Universal Design, clearly explaining their effectiveness in promoting accessibility and inclusivity in urban spaces.	Clearly evaluates most principles, explaining their role in fostering accessibility and inclusivity with minor omissions.	Provides a basic evaluation of Universal Design principles with some understanding of their effectiveness.	Limited evaluation of principles; explanations are vague or incomplete regarding accessibility and inclusivity.	Fails to evaluate Universal Design principles or explanations are inaccurate or missing.
Analyse Case Studies on Inclusive Design	Deeply analyses multiple case studies, effectively assessing real-world applications and impacts on diverse populations with strong critical insight.	Analyses case studies with good understanding of applications and impact, though some details or populations may be underexplored.	Offers a general analysis of case studies, touching on applications and impacts with limited depth.	Provides minimal or superficial analysis with little connection to real-world applications or population impacts.	Does not analyse case studies or analysis is irrelevant or incorrect.
Apply Universal Design Strategies to Urban	Creatively and effectively proposes detailed, feasible solutions integrating Universal	Proposes practical solutions using Universal Design concepts that mostly ensure equitable	Suggests some strategies for applying Universal Design, but solutions may lack	Proposals are vague, impractical, or only partially aligned with Universal	Does not propose solutions or proposals that do not reflect Universal



Co-funded by
the European Union



Environments	Design concepts that ensure equitable access for all urban users.	access, with minor gaps.	detail or full feasibility.	Design concepts.	Design principles.
Critically Assess Accessibility Challenges	Identifies multiple significant barriers in urban environments and offers well-reasoned, innovative recommendations for improvements based on Universal Design.	Identifies key barriers and provides sound recommendations for improvements using Universal Design principles.	Recognises some accessibility challenges and suggests basic improvements but lacks depth or critical assessment.	Identifies a few barriers with limited or unclear recommendations for improvement.	Fails to identify barriers or recommendations are missing or irrelevant.



Co-funded by
the European Union



Module 1 - RESOURCES: GLOSSARY

Accessibility: The design of products, devices, services, or environments so they are usable by people with a wide range of abilities and disabilities.

Assistive Technology: Tools or devices that help individuals with disabilities perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible (e.g., screen readers, hearing aids, mobility aids).

Braille: A tactile writing system used by people who are visually impaired. It consists of raised dots arranged in cells.

Community Engagement: The process of working collaboratively with community members to address issues that impact their well-being and environment.

Disability Advocate: An individual who supports and promotes the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities in society.

Inclusive Design: A design approach that considers the full range of human diversity, including ability, language, culture, gender, and age, throughout the design process.

Intergenerational Space: Urban or community spaces designed to be welcoming and functional for people of all ages, encouraging interaction across generations.

Quiet/Sensory Zone: Designated areas in public spaces that reduce sensory input (e.g., noise, light, crowds) to accommodate individuals with sensory sensitivities, such as those with autism.



Co-funded by
the European Union



Social Model of Disability: A framework that views disability as a result of societal and environmental barriers rather than an individual's impairment.

Sustainable Transportation: Transport systems that are environmentally friendly, economically viable, and socially inclusive, promoting accessibility and reducing emissions.

Tactile Paving: Textured ground surface indicators used to assist visually impaired pedestrians in navigating public spaces safely.

Universal Design (UD): A design philosophy which aims to make environments accessible to all, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

Urban Planning: The technical and political process of designing and regulating the use of spaces in cities, including infrastructure, transportation, and public spaces.

User-Centered Design: A design process that prioritises the needs, preferences, and limitations of end users at every stage of development.

Youth-Friendly Spaces: Urban environments that are safe, accessible, and inclusive for young people, supporting their development, participation, and well-being.