

GENDER INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION

A PRACTICAL MANUAL

Colophon

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This manual was created as a supplement to the graduation report ‘Beyond the Blueprint: Harnessing Lived Experience in Participatory processes to advance Gender Mainstreaming and address spatial inequalities of the Gendered city’ and produced in pursuit of the title Master of Science/Engineer in the field of Management in the Built Environment. The thesis can be accessed through the education repository of TU Delft.

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AUTHORS NOTE

Over the past year, I conducted my master’s thesis research on how to address gender inequalities in citizen participation processes. The insights from this research have been translated into this practical manual, designed to guide you through the key steps needed to effectively tackle gender-based spatial inequalities within your own participation initiatives.

Let’s work together toward more inclusive and equitable urban environments.

Enjoy reading!

Jikke Keizer
June 2025

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INTRODUCTION

Why Gender Inclusive Participation?

Women face countless everyday challenges as they move through the city — from the lack of safe and accessible public toilets, to dealing with street harassment and spaces that don’t feel welcoming. The built environment is far from neutral. In fact, it often reflects and reinforces traditional gender roles, making it harder for women to move, live, and thrive in urban spaces.

If we want to create more inclusive and equitable cities, the first step is to make these issues visible. This is where citizen participation can play a powerful role. Participation processes can open up space for women to share their lived experiences, shedding light on the daily

struggles and inequities that too often go unseen or unheard. Yet, at the moment, these topics rarely surface in traditional participation settings.

By making citizen participation more gender inclusive — creating spaces where women’s voices and stories are genuinely heard — we can begin to recognize and address these systemic gender-based injustices. It’s a critical step towards reshaping our cities into places that work for everyone.



Image 2. Women participating © Urbana

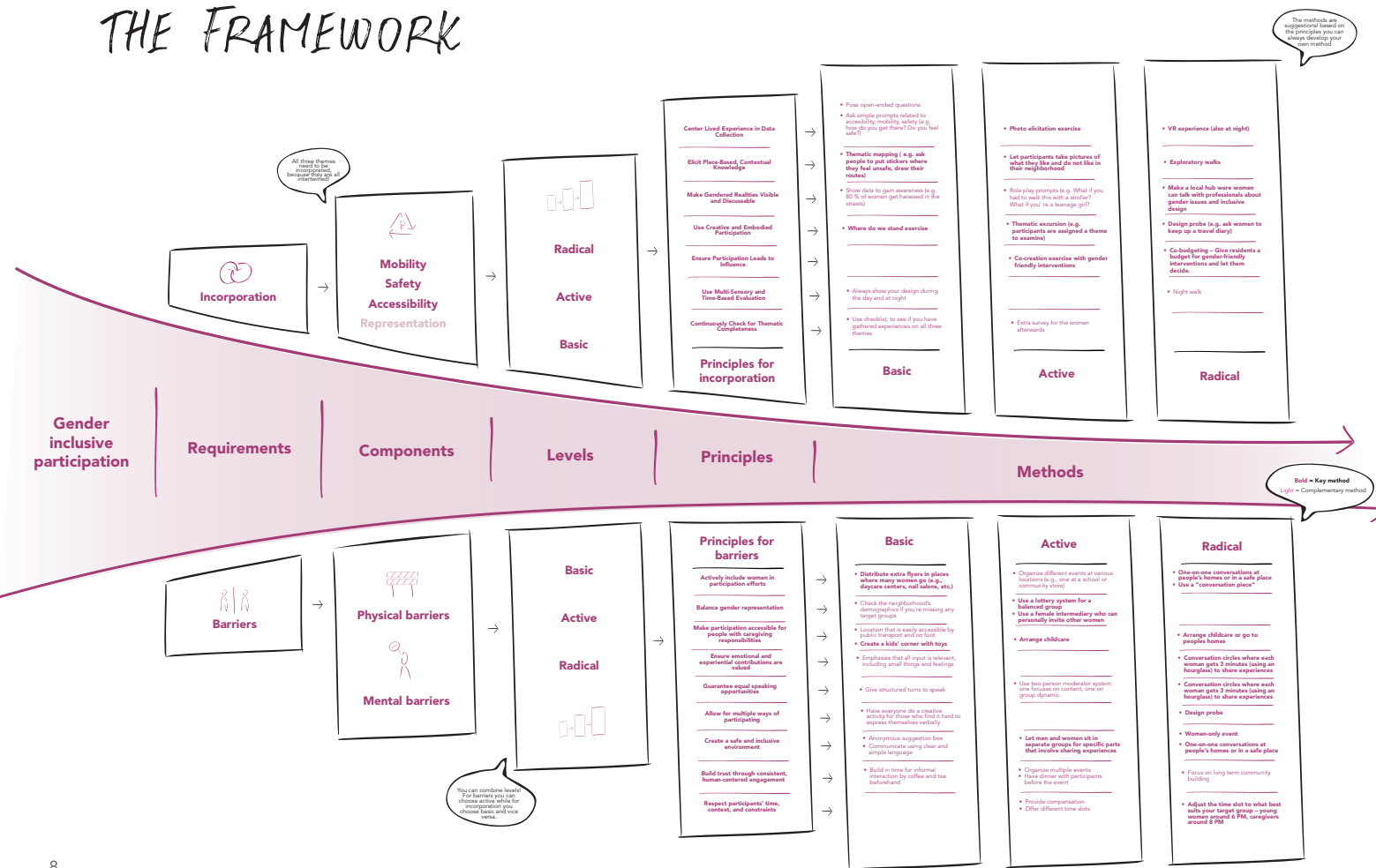
INTRODUCTION

Who is the manual relevant for?

This manual is relevant for a wide range of people and disciplines connected to the built environment and citizen participation. It is most valuable for those who design, organize, and execute citizen participation processes, as it is a practical tool that guides you through decisions you can make while organizing your participation session. This can range from developers, urban planners, architects, spatial consultancy firms or social designers. It is also valuable for public servants, policymakers, and researchers seeking to embed more inclusive and equitable practices within their work. It can serve as an informative manual that exposes how gender inequalities

manifest themselves within participation sessions and promotes mandate to incorporate gender-considerations into applications for participation trajectories. By providing practical tools, insights, and examples, this manual aims to support all those involved in shaping, planning, and governing the built environment — and to help them create spaces that truly reflect and serve the richness and diversity of the people who inhabit them.

THE FRAMEWORK



Introduction to the framework

Organizers of participation processes often assume that integrating inclusivity — and gender considerations in particular — will require significant additional time, effort, and resources. While this can be true to some extent, it is only part of the picture. In many cases, the biggest challenge is a lack of knowledge about how to do this effectively and where to start.

To address this gap, a guiding structure has been developed to form the backbone of this manual. As shown in the figure on the left, this structure is designed to lead you, as a practitioner, through the key steps and considerations required to

make your participation more gender-inclusive. The central pink line captures the overall path you'll need to follow, from requirements to levels and methods, while the white boxes break down what each step entails. Together, these elements create a practical roadmap — making the process more approachable, actionable, and tailored to the realities of those working to create more inclusive and equitable participatory practices.

THE FRAMEWORK

Reading guide

From the next page onward, you'll find the structure broken down into a series of steps, each one focusing on a key consideration for making participation more gender-inclusive. Every step is explained in detail, with practical examples and reflections to help you understand how to apply it to your own context.

As you move through this manual, you will be invited to make decisions about how best to use these steps within your specific project. It's important to understand that this manual is not a rigid, one-size-fits-all checklist. Instead, it offers a flexible framework — a set of guiding

principles, ideas, and suggestions — that you can adapt, adjust, or build upon based on your own context, priorities, and available resources. Its goal is to support you in making participation more inclusive, while allowing room for creativity and for adding your own insights and approaches along the way.



Image 3. Women doing thematic mapping © Urbana

THE MANUAL

Requirements

The first step for gender inclusive participation are the two requirements that need to be addressed.

1. Barriers

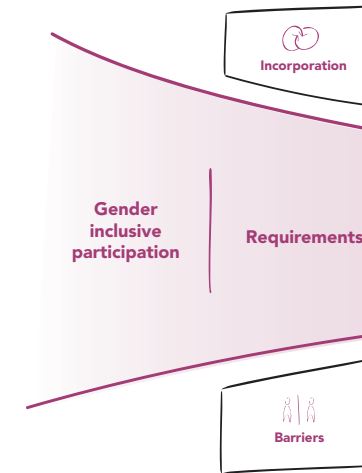
Participation processes are often dominated by men — and when women do join, they tend to engage in different ways. This raises an important question: why are women underrepresented, and what is making it harder for them to take part?

If we don't address these barriers, we risk leaving out women's lived experiences — insights that are vital for understanding and addressing the gendered nature of the city.

2. Incorporation: Making Gender Part of the Conversation

But removing barriers is only the first step. Even when women are present, their gender-specific needs and insights aren't always brought to the surface. In many cases, women aren't consciously aware that certain struggles — like a lack of accessible pathways or the difficulty of navigating spaces with a stroller — are rooted in gendered design and planning. These issues often get normalized or overlooked as “just the way things are.”

That's why it's not enough to make participation more accessible. We also have to make gender a central theme of the conversation — intentionally creating space to recognize, name, and address these everyday challenges. Only then can we design environments that truly work for everyone.



THE MANUAL

Components

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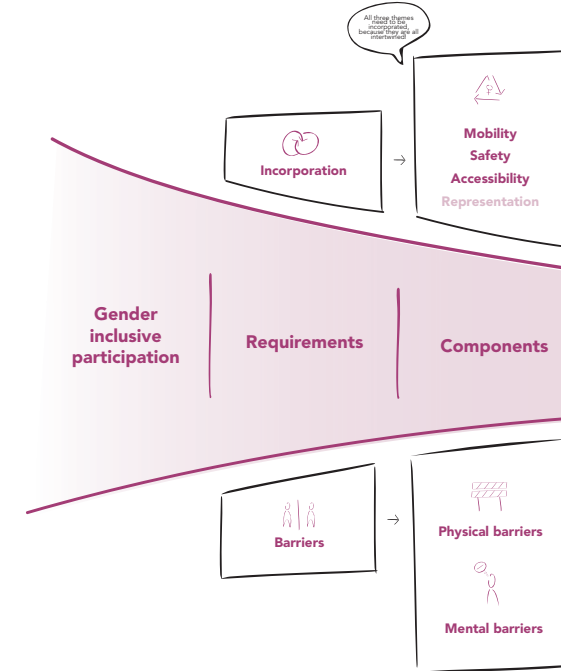
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THE MANUAL

What are the four themes?

As the four themes of incorporation might not be all familiar to you. Here is a breakdown of what the themes are about and how they relate to gender inequalities in the city.

Mobility

How we move through a city has a big impact on how we experience it — and this is very different for women compared to men. Women often have a smaller daily travel range, make more stops, and tend to run more household errands. They're more likely to work from home or close to home, and to use public transportation. Women also often balance work and family duties, which fragments their time and affects how and when they move through the city. During the day, women are more likely to spend time in nearby public spaces, like parks, especially when

looking after children or accompanying older or disabled relatives.

Safety

Safety is another key theme. Women often adjust how and where they move based on their feelings of safety — for example, choosing certain routes, avoiding certain spaces, or limiting their trips at night. This “geography of fear” affects how much freedom women have to move around the city, and it can also limit their access to opportunities. Things like poorly lit streets, isolated bus stops, or a lack of well-designed walking routes can make spaces feel unsafe, discouraging women from fully using public spaces and reinforcing gender roles that keep them closer to home.

Accessibility

Access to basic services — like public restrooms, childcare, or community centers — is another vital piece of the puzzle. These spaces are often not well-distributed or designed with women's needs in mind, making it harder for them to balance caregiving responsibilities, work, and daily life. As a result, women are more likely to work part-time or in lower-paid roles closer to home, because getting to other areas of the city is more challenging. This can deepen economic and social inequalities across neighborhoods.

Representation

Finally, representation is about feeling that you belong in a space — and that the space belongs to people like you. It's about seeing yourself reflected in the city, whether through things like

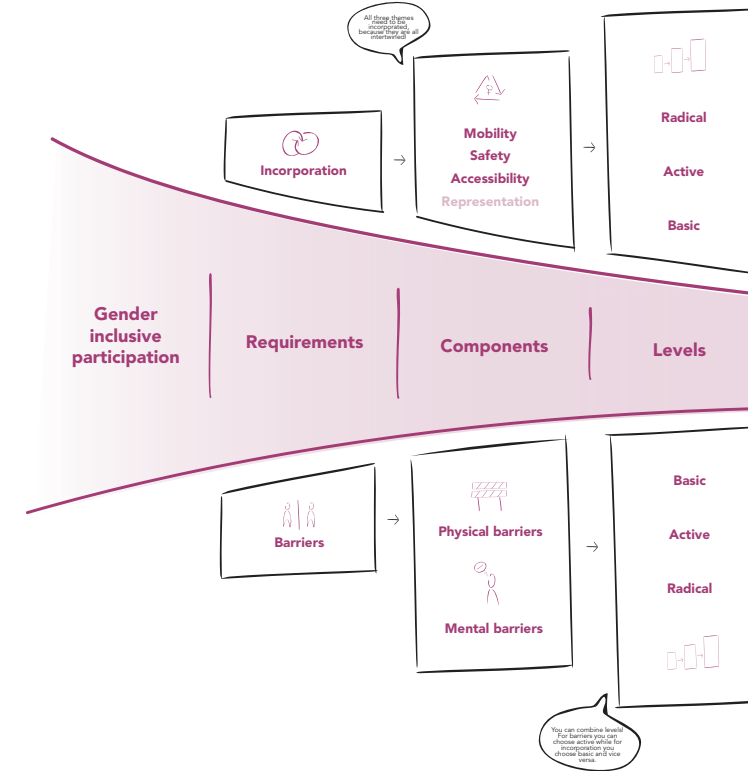
street names, statues, or public art, or simply by seeing others like you using the space. When women, and other underrepresented groups, don't recognize themselves in public spaces, it can send a signal that those spaces aren't meant for them — making it harder to feel safe, confident, and welcomed.

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Levels

The idea of having multiple levels comes from two important insights. First, practitioners working in the built environment often need simple, easy-to-use tools because limited time, budget, and knowledge can make it hard to focus on inclusivity and gender equality. Second, gender-related issues in cities vary a lot depending on the specific context, so different situations call for different approaches. For example, a participation for large redevelopment of a neighborhood calls for different considerations than participation for a greenery initiative for new planters.

That's why the manual offers three levels: Basic, Active, and Radical. The Basic level suggests small changes that fit easily into existing processes. The Active level introduces new methods that more directly address gender themes. The Radical level fully adapts the participation process to fit the specific needs of women or other target groups.



THE MANUAL

Option 1: Choose a level

The levels offer two ways to guide your approach. First, you can select the level that best fits your project's size, available resources, and overall goals. For example, if you're working with a limited budget or tight schedule, the Basic level provides practical, easy-to-implement steps that still make your process more inclusive. On the other hand, if you have more time, capacity, and a desire for meaningful engagement, the Radical level allows you to design a deeply collaborative and tailored experience that centers the voices of women or other target groups. This flexibility ensures you can choose an approach that's realistic and effective for your specific situation.

Option 2: Combine levels

The second option is a combination of the levels. One of the best things about this tiered approach is how flexible it is. You're not limited to just one level — rather, you are encouraged to combine methods across levels to create a process that is both inclusive and responsive to the group's needs. Research shows that different people want to participate in different ways. Some might be happy to give quick feedback, while others might be eager to dive into deeper conversations and co create ideas. By combining methods from various levels, you can create a space where everyone feels comfortable sharing their lived experiences, no matter how much or

how little they want to contribute. It's also worth thinking about the order in which you introduce these methods. Conversations about gender and public space aren't always topics people are used to talking about openly. At first, participants might not recognize how their daily challenges are connected to gender. That's why starting with the basic level can be a great way to build trust and make people feel more comfortable. As the process goes on, you can gradually move towards more intensive methods, allowing participants to open up and engage more deeply when they're ready.

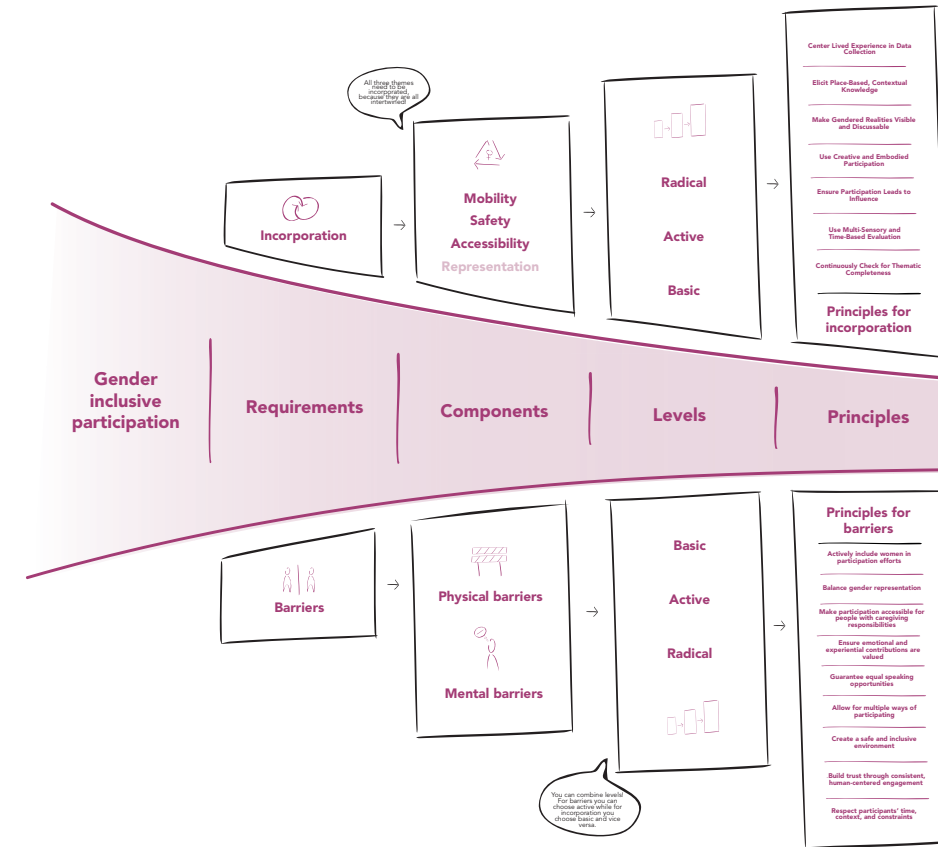
Principles

The fourth step in the structure introduces some key principles that act as helpful guidelines for choosing or creating methods in gender-inclusive participation. These principles come straight from the important needs we identified earlier. Think of them as a bridge between ideas and real-life action — helping you take what’s important and apply it in a way that fits your specific situation.

These principles give you the freedom to adapt methods to your local context or even come up with new ones, as long as they stick to the main ideas behind them. Instead of handing

you a strict checklist, this step offers a flexible framework. It lets organizers respond to the unique gender issues, barriers, and space challenges they face, while still keeping gender inclusivity at the heart of the process.

On the next pages all the principles and their reasoning behind them are explained.



THE MANUAL

Principles for incorporation of the gendered themes

1. Center Lived Experience in Data Collection

People's personal, sensory, and emotional experiences often reveal nuanced challenges and needs that traditional data collection may overlook. Prioritizing lived experience ensures that insights are rooted in real-world encounters rather than abstract assumptions, enabling more human-centered and empathetic design and decision-making.

2. Elicit Place-Based, Contextual Knowledge

Understanding how individuals interact with and perceive specific environments is critical, as experiences can vary greatly depending on place, time, or identity. Contextual knowledge brings to light patterns and barriers that static or generalized data miss.

3. Make Gendered Realities Visible and Discussable

Gender influences how space is experienced, often in invisible ways. People need some help to get a good idea on what gender inequalities look like or what in

encompasses. By making these realities visible with examples, data etc. participants get a good sense of what gender inequality in urban environments is about.

4. Use Creative and Embodied Participation

Traditional engagement methods often fail in addressing the Gendered City. Creative and physical participation opens up avenues for deeper engagement, helping participants externalize thoughts and emotions through movement, drawing, or making—making an intangible subject like gender inequality more visible and relatable.

5. Ensure Participation Leads to Influence

Genuine participation should go beyond token input. When communities contribute their perspectives, those insights should shape decisions and interventions. This principle ensures that participants see the value of their involvement and helps build trust and accountability in the process.

6. Use Multi-Sensory and Time-Based Evaluation

The Gendered City is not always visible but something that is felt. It engages all senses and changes over

time. Most notably the difference between night and day makes a certain difference but also the differences between the seasons for example. By employing multi-sensory and time-based evaluation these gendered experiences can be captured better.

7. Continuously Check for Thematic Completeness

Complex issues like accessibility, mobility, and safety require attention across multiple dimensions. Regularly revisiting data collection with structured prompts or checklists ensures that no important perspective is missed, helping avoid biases and blind spots.

Principles for taking away barriers

1. Actively include women in participation efforts

Women's participation should never be assumed or incidental; it must be purposefully facilitated. Structural barriers and social norms often limit women's ability to engage freely, so outreach and design strategies must prioritize their presence to ensure their perspectives are heard and valued.

2. Balance gender representation

An equal mix of genders in participatory processes helps prevent power imbalances and ensures that both men's and women's voices influence outcomes. Without intentional balance, perspectives and experiences can be missed, potentially marginalizing key insights and needs.

3. Make participation accessible for people with caregiving responsibilities

Many women juggle caregiving roles that limit when and how they can engage. Recognizing these constraints—by offering flexible timing, childcare support, or remote options—ensures that they're not excluded from participating.

4. Ensure emotional and experiential contributions are valued

Traditional formats often prioritize 'rational' input over emotional or sensory experience. Validating feelings, daily experiences, and subtle observations as legitimate contributions helps capture the full richness of lived realities, especially those often expressed by women.

5. *Guarantee equal speaking opportunities*

In mixed settings, dominant voices can overshadow others—often to the detriment of women and marginalized genders. Equal speaking opportunities ensure everyone has the opportunity to speak and be heard without interruption or intimidation.

6. *Allow for multiple ways of participating*

Not everyone is comfortable with verbal communication. Verbally, women often get overshadowed by men. Offering a range of expression—such as drawing, writing, storytelling, or physical interaction—makes the process more inclusive and responsive to diverse communication styles, often shaped by gendered experiences.

7. *Create a safe and inclusive environment*

Safety is foundational to genuine participation. For women it is often difficult to talk about experiences they have had in certain spaces. This means physical, emotional, and psychological safety—is a key element when trying to address gender-based spatial inequalities. An inclusive space empowers individuals

to share openly without fear of dismissal or ridicule.

8. *Build trust through consistent, human-centered engagement*

Trust doesn't form overnight. Especially for marginalized groups, consistent, respectful, and empathetic engagement is essential to build confidence in the process. Demonstrating care for people's perspectives and well-being leads to more honest and meaningful contributions.

9. *Respect participants' time, context, and constraints*

Participation also asks something of the participant. By being considerate of the participants' time and context, the chances are that outreach is larger. Designing participatory processes that align with participants' daily lives—work schedules, cultural practices—shows respect. Flexibility and contextual sensitivity are key to equitable involvement, particularly for women balancing multiple responsibilities.



Image 4. Women participating in a night walk © Urbana

THE MANUAL

Methods

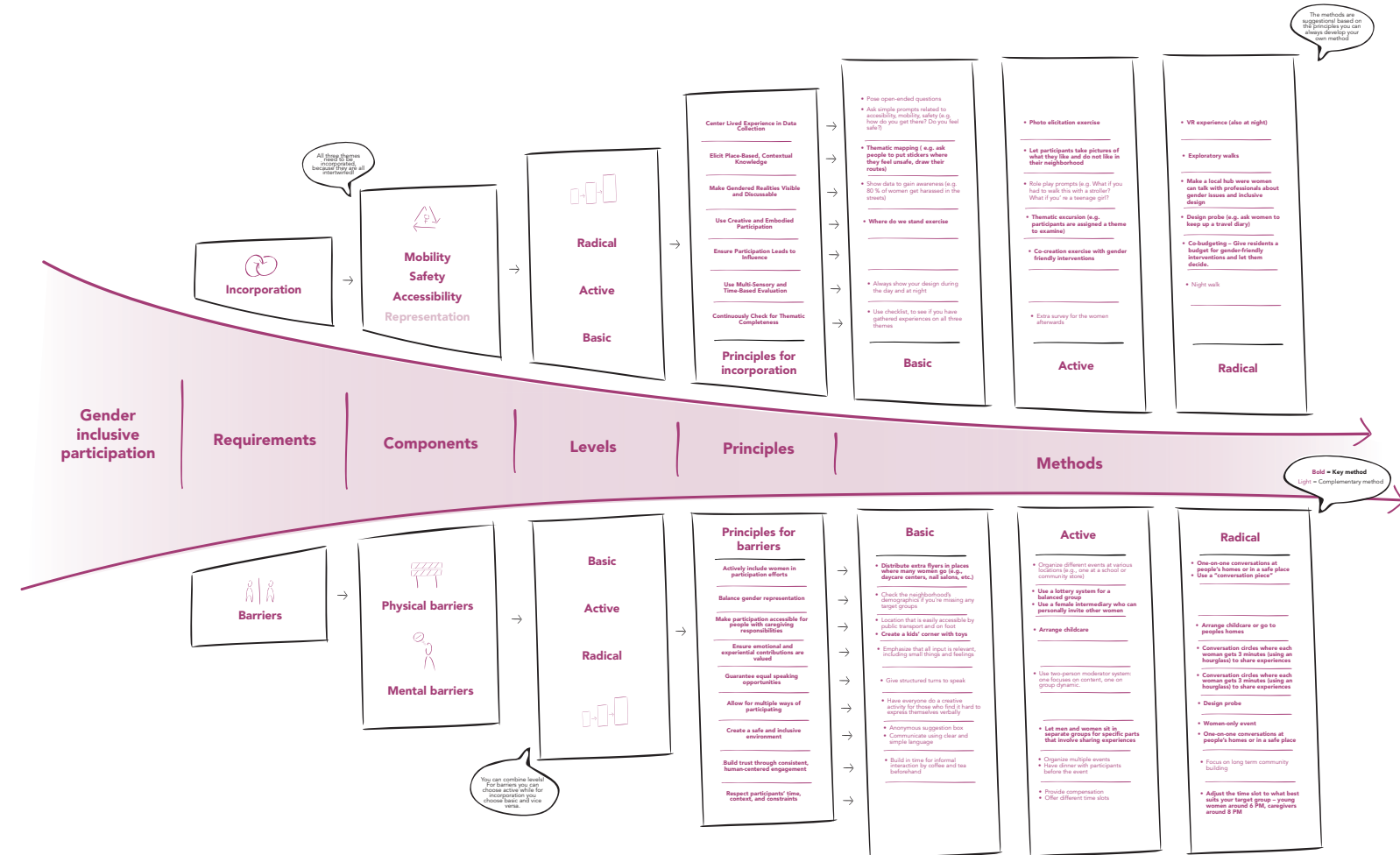
The final step of the structure turns everything you've learned so far into practical tools you can actually use. It offers a variety of methods to help make participation more gender-inclusive. These aren't strict rules to follow, but thoughtful suggestions based on research, expert advice, and real-world testing.

Some methods directly tackle important gender-related urban issues—like providing childcare, creating thematic maps, or organizing guided walks—while others work best when combined with other approaches, like using open-ended questions or simple prompts. To make it easier, the methods are grouped by their level and

purpose.

These methods are a great place to start, but they're not the only options. You're encouraged to adapt them or come up with your own, as long as you keep the key principles from the previous step in mind. The goal isn't to create a one-size-fits-all checklist, but to support thoughtful, flexible approaches that engage with the everyday experiences of women.

On the following pages each method is described in more detail. You don't have to read them all, just the ones that seem interesting to you!



Methods related to incorporation

1. Pose Open-Ended Questions

What: Use broad, interpretive questions that cannot be answered with yes or no.

Why it's effective: Open-ended questions allow participants to share their stories and nuanced experiences. This can uncover systemic or subtle issues that standardized questions overlook, such as emotional responses, microaggressions, or situational fears.

2. Ask simple verbal prompts related to accessibility, mobility and safety

What: Incorporate questions that relate to one of the three themes into existing formats like “How do you get to work?”, “Do you feel safe at this bus stop?”, or “Can you bring a stroller through here?”

Why it's effective: These questions can be asked during any activity and tap directly into everyday experiences. They help reveal gendered experiences that affect travel choices, feelings of safety, and ease of access—areas where women, elderly people, and caregivers are often disproportionately impacted.

3. Thematic mapping

What: Provide participants with maps and ask them to mark areas they feel unsafe, their common routes, amenities they use, or places they avoid. Tools like stickers, colored pens, or digital mapping platforms can be used.

Why it's effective: Visual mapping localizes gendered experiences spatially. It helps planners identify problem zones and patterns related to fear, inaccessibility, or lack of resources, which are often missed in general planning efforts. By letting each participant map, you also ensure that every participant is able to deliver input.

4. Show data to raise awareness

What: Share existing gender-specific data with participants or decision-makers—such as “80% of women feel unsafe at night.”

Why it's effective: Data serves as powerful evidence, validating individual experiences while highlighting systemic trends. It also pushes participants to think about and acknowledge the urgency of addressing gender-specific urban issues.

5. “Where Do We Stand” exercise

What: A physical or visual activity where participants respond to statements by placing themselves along a continuum (e.g., agree/disagree, safe/unsafe).

Why it's effective: This participatory format encourages empathy and visibility. It makes abstract or sensitive issues tangible and promotes collective reflection on how gender influences experiences of urban space.

6. Always show your design during the day and night

What: Present proposed designs or conduct site visits under different lighting and time conditions.

Why it's effective: Women often face dramatically different risks and comfort levels at night. Reviewing designs in low-light conditions ensures they're evaluated through a lens of nighttime safety and visibility, which is vital for inclusive planning.

7. Use checklists on key themes (Accessibility, Safety, Mobility)

What: Create and use a checklist to ensure all core gender-related themes (accessibility, mobility and

safety) have been addressed in the participation session

Why it's effective: This tool prevents oversight, unchecked biases and ensures attention to the full spectrum of factors affecting women's and marginalized groups' experiences.

8. Photo elicitation exercise

What: Show participants photos of urban spaces that have something to do with accessibility, safety or mobility and ask them to comment on their reactions, feelings, or memories associated with the image.

Why it's effective: Photos stimulate reflection and conversation, especially about complex emotional responses. This is particularly useful for discussing sensitive gender issues like fear, exclusion, or surveillance in public space. It is also highly effective in exposing the duality of gendered experiences (e.g. openness gives oversight but also a feeling of being exposed)

9. Let participants take photos of what they like/dislike

What: Provide cameras or smartphones and ask people to document spaces they enjoy or avoid in their neighborhoods.

Why it's effective: This method empowers participants to share their reality on their own terms. It gives insight into gendered preferences, discomforts, or dangers that might otherwise be invisible to planners. You force participants to engage and stand still on their everyday surroundings.

10. Incorporate role play prompts

What: Ask participants to imagine navigating the space in another role, such as a caregiver with a stroller, a wheelchair user, or a child walking alone. This can be done with simple questions but you can also let a participant walk with a stroller or sit in a wheelchair as a radical experience.

Why it's effective: Role-playing encourages empathy and reveals infrastructural or design flaws. It makes sure that some perspectives are discussed and incorporated even if participants from that group are not present. It also highlights the gendered nature of care work, often carried out by women, and how urban design accommodates it.

11. Thematic excursions

What: Organize guided walks or visits where each participant or duo is assigned a theme to observe—such as safety, accessibility, mobility, or gender representation. This can be a focused excursion but this format could also be incorporated in existing excursions by just adding a few questions in the excursion.

Why it's effective: The focused observation sharpens awareness and encourages participants to analyze space critically. It makes sure that all the three themes of accessibility, mobility and safety are incorporated. It reveals how different gendered lenses pick up on different challenges or opportunities in the environment.

12. Co-creation exercise with gender-friendly interventions

What: Facilitate collaborative design sessions where participants brainstorm and shape gender-sensitive interventions—like better lighting, seating, or signage. This exercise can also be done by proposing gender-sensitive interventions and let participants choose which ones they find most important.

Why it's effective: Co-creation ensures interventions reflect real needs. Women and gender-diverse

participants become active agents in shaping public space rather than passive recipients of top-down decisions. This makes sure that the interventions relate to actual needs and are not only effective in theory but also in practice.

13. Extra survey for women after the session

What: Distribute a follow-up questionnaire specifically for women to elaborate on or add insights they may not have shared during group activities.

Why it's effective: Some participants may feel uncomfortable voicing certain issues in public or mixed-gender settings. A follow-up survey provides a safe space for deeper reflection and disclosure. It also makes sure that the themes will be addressed from a gender-perspective.

14. VR experience (including night scenarios)

What: Use virtual reality to simulate walking through different urban areas during the day and night, allowing users to “experience” the design.

Why it's effective: VR helps stakeholders literally experience a design. Simulating night-time experiences,

for instance, can highlight feelings of vulnerability that might be invisible on paper. By being able to experience the design, participants can give more detailed feedback on what they like and do not. This is especially useful in new developments where a whole new urban setting is created. This makes sure the participants have something they can react on.

15. Exploratory walks

What: Organize a one-on-one walk where participants move through their neighborhood freely, encouraged to observe and reflect without a fixed structure but sometimes guided by some questions from the researcher.

Why it's effective: This open format allows authentic, in-the-moment insights to surface. It reveals how people navigate public space instinctively, and what they notice or avoid, often shedding light on subconscious gendered behaviors.

16. Local hub for women to speak with professionals

What: Create a dedicated, accessible space where women can meet planners, architects, and local

authorities to discuss gender concerns in the built environment.

Why it's effective: It fosters trust, continuity, and open dialogue. A localized, gender-focused hub breaks down barriers between experts and community members and offers a platform for sustained engagement.

17. Design probe

What: Give people an assignment they can fulfill themselves in their own time. For example, ask participants to keep a diary of their movements over a week or more.

Why it's effective: This longitudinal method captures the complexity of daily experiences, including emotional responses and patterns in behavior that might reflect safety concerns or caregiving responsibilities. It also ensures that participants can participate on their own terms and time.

18. Co-budgeting

What: Give residents—particularly women and marginalized groups—real budgetary power to prioritize and select gender-friendly interventions.

Why it's effective: It builds ownership, democratizes decision-making, and ensures resources are directed toward issues that matter most to underrepresented voices.

19. Night walks

What: Organize guided or group walks through public spaces at night to evaluate safety, lighting, visibility, and atmosphere.

Why it's effective: First-hand experience of the night-time city reveals aspects of gendered vulnerability and fear that are rarely captured during daytime assessments. It also sparks critical discussions about who gets to safely occupy public space after dark.

Methods related to taking away barriers

1. Distribute extra flyers in places where many women go

What: Place outreach materials in locations like daycare centers, hair salons, clinics, or community kitchens.

Why it's effective: These are trusted, frequented spaces for women, especially caregivers. This targeted

outreach meets women where they already are, increasing awareness and participation among those often excluded.

2. Check the neighborhood's demographics

What: Compare the attendees of participation with neighborhood demographics. This reveals if you are missing any important target groups.

Why it's effective: Ensures the planning process reaches a representative sample of women. Avoids skewed participation that overlooks specific barriers or experiences tied to gender, age, or ethnicity.

3. Choose a location that is easily accessible

What: Select venues near public transport routes and within walkable distance for most residents.

Why it's effective: Women use public transport and walking more than men. A convenient location reduces logistical burdens and safety concerns.

4. Create a kids' corner with toys

What: Set up a space where children can play safely during events.

Why it's effective: Enables mothers and caregivers—who are often women—to attend and participate without needing external childcare. It sends the message that their dual roles are acknowledged and supported.

5. Emphasize that all input is relevant

What: Openly state that emotional, experiential, or “small” feedback is valid.

Why it's effective: Women may hesitate to speak up if their concerns don't seem “technical.” This encouragement legitimizes their lived experiences and promotes richer, more inclusive dialogue.

6. Give structured turns to speak

What: Give structured turns to participants. For example ask: “[insert name], what do you think of this?”

Why it's effective: This reduces dominance by louder voices (often men) and gives women a fair chance to express their opinions. It also eases anxiety for those who are shy or less confident.

7. Include creative activities

What: Use non-verbal or artistic expression methods during sessions like making collages or sticking stickers

Why it's effective: Helps participants who may struggle to express themselves verbally, or who are intimidated by group discussion. It fosters emotional expression and lowers cognitive barriers to participation.

8. Anonymous suggestion box

What: Allow participants to submit feedback privately by placing an anonymous suggestion box.

Why it's effective: Provides a safe outlet for women who fear judgment or have sensitive concerns. Especially useful in mixed-gender settings where power dynamics can silence open discussion.

9. Communicate using clear and simple language

What: Avoid jargon, legal terms, and overly technical vocabulary.

Why it's effective: Women with limited formal education or for whom the local language is a second language may feel alienated by technical speech. Clear communication ensures accessibility and dignity.

10. Build in time for informal interaction

What: Set aside unstructured time for mingling before or after the session with tea and coffee

Why it's effective: Encourages trust and relationship-building. Women may feel more comfortable sharing once they've established a personal rapport with others.

11. Organize events at various locations

What: Hold events in diverse venues like one in a school and another one in a community store.

Why it's effective: Increases access and comfort, particularly for women who have to travel a lot.

12. Use a lottery system for a balanced group

What: Randomly select participants from various demographic groups to ensure fairness and balance.

Why it's effective: Prevents over-representation by more vocal or privileged community members. Ensures women from different backgrounds are heard.

13. Use a female intermediary for outreach

What: Engage a trusted local woman to invite and support other women's participation.

Why it's effective: Women may be more receptive to invitations from peers. This peer-to-peer model builds trust and breaks down social barriers.

14. Arrange childcare

What: Provide on-site or subsidized childcare during events.

Why it's effective: Childcare is a major barrier for mothers. Offering it signals that their needs are valued, and it removes a major logistical obstacle to attending a participation session.

15. Two-person moderator system

What: Use one facilitator to lead content and another to focus on emotional safety and group dynamics.

Why it's effective: Ensures sensitive issues are managed respectfully. A supportive environment is especially important for women sharing vulnerable experiences.

16. Separate groups for men and women (when sharing experiences)

What: Split into gender-specific groups for parts of the session, especially when discussing personal or

emotional topics.

Why it's effective: Women often feel more secure to talk about gendered experiences amongst women. This reduces fear of judgment and frees women to speak more openly.

17. Organize multiple events for trust building

What: Schedule several smaller gatherings over time rather than a single session.

Why it's effective: Trust—especially among women with past exclusion—is built gradually. Ongoing engagement fosters confidence and stronger participation.

18. Have dinner with participants before the event

What: Share a meal together prior to the session.

Why it's effective: Eating together builds a sense of community and lowers social barriers. It is a chance to get to know each other outside the situation of organizer vs. participant.

19. Provide compensation

What: Offer monetary compensation, gift cards, or transit reimbursement for attending.

Why it's effective: Recognizes participants' time and reduces economic barriers. Women with precarious work or caregiving duties are very busy. This shows their efforts are valued and lowers barriers.

20. Offer different time slots

What: Run events at varied times (day, evening, weekend) to suit diverse schedules.

Why it's effective: Women's availability is shaped by caregiving, jobs, and domestic responsibilities. Flexibility enables broader participation.

21. One-on-one conversations in safe spaces

What: Meet women in their homes or other familiar, safe locations for interviews or feedback sessions.

Why it's effective: Increases comfort and trust. Useful to get in-depth data. For women with mobility issues, cultural constraints, or trauma public participation is difficult.

22. Use a conversation piece

What: Introduce an unrelated, physical object as a neutral discussion starter. For example, make a snackbar

stand that starts conversations on gender equality.

Why it's effective: Gender inequality is a difficult subject for many and not everyone is eager to talk about this. This playful or symbolic approach lures people into deeper conversations on the subject with something that is unrelated.

23. Conversation circles with timed turns

What: Participants sit in a conversation circle and each has a set time (e.g., 2 minutes) to speak, using a visible timer like an hourglass.

Why it's effective: Promotes equal participation and prevents domination. Encourages those who might otherwise stay silent to share their views.

24. Design probe

What: Ask participants to complete creative tasks or keep diaries about their environment or behavior.

Why it's effective: Allows reflection in private, which can uncover insights not shared publicly. Particularly good for introverted participants or those with language barriers.

25. Women-only event

What: Host a session exclusively for women.

Why it's effective: Reduces fear of judgment, builds solidarity, and allows freer discussion of gendered experiences.

26. Focus on long-term community building

What: Build ongoing relationships rather than one-time events. Support leadership training, peer networks, and continuous dialogue.

Why it's effective: Sustainable trust empowers more women to speak up and stay engaged. It creates lasting impact beyond isolated interventions.

27. Adjust time slot to suit specific groups

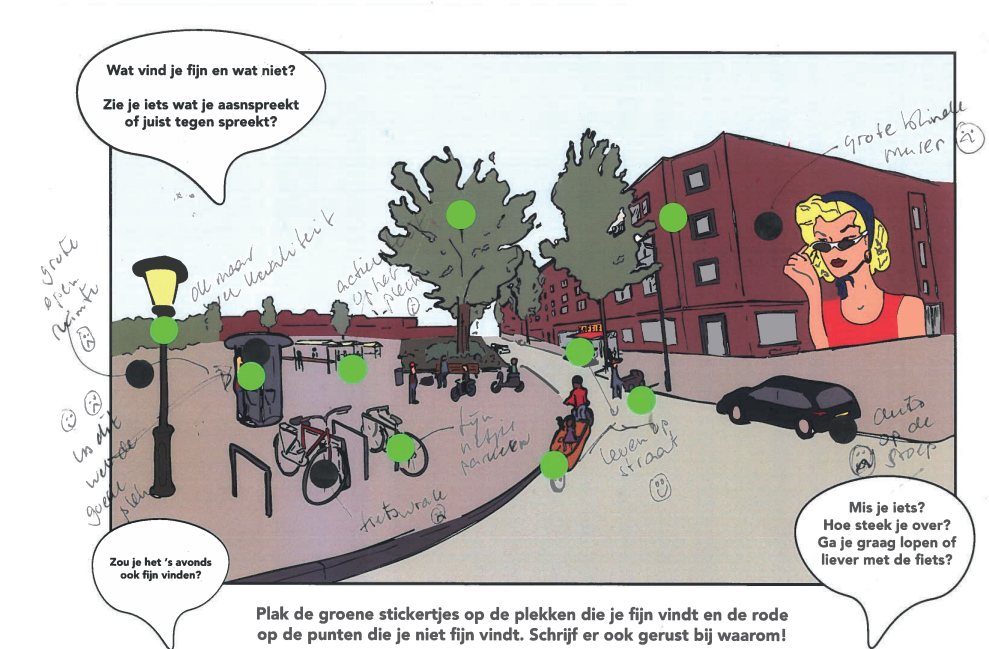
What: Tailor event timing to participant routines (e.g., young women often prefer the early evening; caregivers after bedtime).

Why it's effective: Matches real-life schedules, making it easier for women to participate fully without neglecting other responsibilities.

EXAMPLES

Examples

To help you take the next step, this final chapter showcases a selection of methods as they've been applied in real-life settings. These examples aren't meant to be prescriptive, but rather to spark ideas and give you a concrete sense of what gender-inclusive participation can look like in practice. By seeing these methods have been implemented, you can better understand how to adapt, build upon, or customize them for your own context.

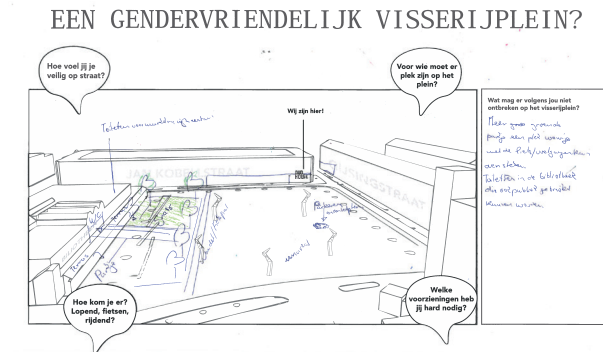


Example of a creative stickering exercise where participants were asked to put positive (green) and negative (black) stickers on a fictional situation.

EXAMPLES



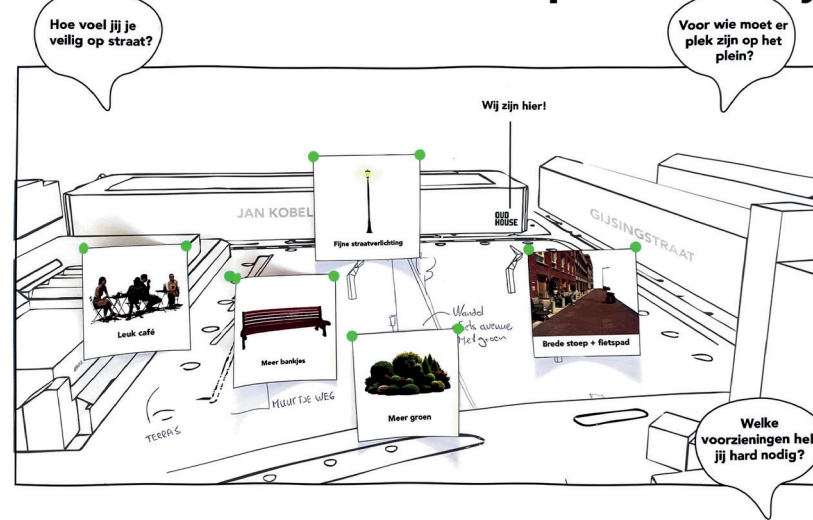
EXAMPLES



Example of a creative drawing exercise where participants can draw or write what they would like to see

EXAMPLES

Wat mag er niet ontbreken op het visserijplein?



Kies 5 van de 10 opties en plaats/teken ze ergens op het plein
iets erbij schrijven mag!

Example of a co-creation exercise where participants had to choose between 10 gender-friendly interventions

EXAMPLES

DUO 2

THEME: ACCESSIBILITY

Question 1:
Is the public space here accessible to you? Can you go everywhere, reach everything and/or are there things you are missing?

Question 2:
If you were a mother with a stroller or a caregiver managing children, what would be difficult or stressful here?

Question 3:
Are there clean and safe public restrooms for everyone?

Question 4:
If you were menstruating or breastfeeding, is there anywhere you'd feel comfortable stopping?

Question 5:
Do you have any other observations on accessibility on the square?

Example of sheet that was used during a thematic excursion on accessibility with role play prompts