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WOMEN'S DAY DESIGN

Designing Safer Cities for Women



Information Package
-Rules & Participation Guide



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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

Theme: Designing Safer Cities for Women–Rights, Justice, Action

Launch: 15 July 2026 (International Women's Day)

Awards Ceremony: 7 August 2026

Partners: Partner universities

Purpose: To reimagine urban systems that advance safety, dignity, visibility, and access for women and girls across streets, transit, workplaces, campuses, homes, and public spaces.

2. WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

Eligible Participants: Any university student.

Team Size: Individual or maximum a team of 4 students per team.

Original Work: Submissions must be original and unpublished.

3. COMPETITION STRUCTURE & ORGANISATION

Stage 1 – Preliminary Screening: Administrative and content compliance review.

Stage 2 – Jury Review: Shortlisted entries evaluated by expert jury.

Post-Award: Prototype development (August 2026) and pilot implementation (November 2026) for the selected project.

Jury Members: Rayana Hossain, Architect Tanya Karim, Md. Ashraful Islam, Mehrin Chowdhury

4. REGISTRATION & DEADLINES

Registration: www.isho.com/womens-day Submission

Opens: 8 March 2026

Submission Deadline: 30th August 2026 [11:59 PM, BST]

Award Ceremony: 15th September 2026

5. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Each submission must include the following:

1. The Problem – Define the safety gap, who is affected, and under what conditions.
2. System Design – Spatial design, behavioural logic, technology (if relevant), and policy/community integration.
3. Cost Logic – Rough cost bands, scalability, and public-private feasibility.
4. Implementation Path – Pilot strategy, rollout plan, stakeholders responsible for build and maintenance.
5. Submission Format Options:
Option A: 5–10 slides (PDF)
Option B: 3-page concept document (PDF)

Portal: Maximum file size: 5Mb

ONLINE SUBMISSION LINK: <https://www.isho.com/womens-day>

6. AWARDS & BENEFITS

Three jury awards and one project selected for real-world implementation.

Awards include certificate of recognition.

Prize money of BDT 50,000 for one winner.

Media coverage and pilot development opportunity.

7. TIMELINE

8 March 2026: Launch

30 August 2026: Submission Deadline

15th September 2026: Awards Ceremony; August 2026: Prototype

Development; November 2026: Pilot Implementation

8. PRESENTATION RULES FOR FINALISTS

Winners will be selected and announced based on submission.

9. LEGAL TERMS, IP & IMAGE RIGHTS

Jury decisions are final and incontestable. Participants grant ISHO the right to reproduce submitted materials for promotional purposes. Plagiarism or misconduct will result in disqualification.

10. CONTACT & SUPPORT

General Enquiries: ridwan.alam@isho.com

CASE STUDY 01: Vienna – Designing a City for Women

1. Context

Vienna recognised that traditional urban planning was based on limited mobility assumptions, prioritising cars and linear commuting patterns. Women's daily movements often involve multi-stop, caregiving-related journeys, which were not adequately supported by existing infrastructure.

2. Core Challenge

Urban spaces had narrow sidewalks, poor lighting, limited seating, and car-focused traffic systems, making movement and public spaces less safe and accessible for women.

3. Strategic Approach

Vienna implemented Gender Mainstreaming in Urban Planning, integrating gender-sensitive criteria into city governance and development policies through pilot projects and long-term planning.

4. Key Interventions

- Lighting upgrades in unsafe areas
- Widened sidewalks
- Pedestrian-priority traffic systems
- Distributed seating infrastructure
- Inclusive park redesign
- Gender-sensitive housing such as Frauen-Werk-Stadt

5. Measurable Outputs

- 60+ gender-sensitive projects implemented
- Lighting and pedestrian improvements across districts
- Increased park participation by girls
- Gender planning criteria integrated into city governance

6. Systems Insight

Urban safety and accessibility are created through planning systems, not isolated design solutions.

7. Directional Takeaway

Designing cities for women creates more inclusive, safe, and functional environments for everyone.

References:

<https://apolitical.co/en/articles/vienna-designed-city-women>

<https://www.wien.gv.at/english/administration/gendermainstreaming/>



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CASE STUDY 02: Delhi – The Pink Ticket Scheme

1. Context

Low-income women faced limited mobility due to transport costs and safety concerns, access to work and services.

2. Core Challenge

Economic barriers prevented women from regularly using safe public transport.

3. Strategic Approach

The Government of Delhi introduced free bus travel for women, funded through government subsidies to bus operators.

4. Key Interventions

- Free bus tickets for women
- Government reimbursement to operators
- Visible gender-focused transport policy

5. Measurable Outputs

- Increased female ridership
- Reduced travel costs for low-income women
- Improved access to jobs and services

6. Systems Insight

Urban safety depends not only on design but also on affordable mobility.

7. Directional Takeaway

Economic access to transport is a key factor in urban safety and inclusion.

Reference:

<https://changing-transport.org/pink-ticket-india/>

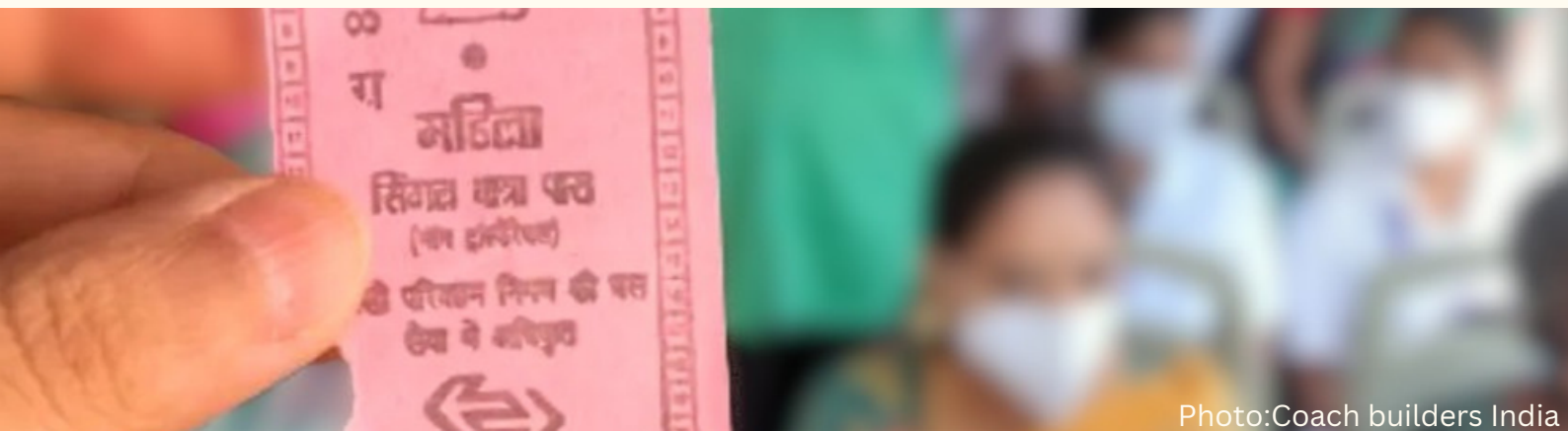


Photo:Coach builders India

CASE STUDY 03: Barcelona – Superblocks

1. Context

In Barcelona, streets were heavily dominated by vehicles, reducing pedestrian safety, air quality, and public social space.

2. Core Challenge

Street design prioritised traffic flow over human activity, limiting safe and accessible public space.

3. Strategic Approach

The city introduced the Superblocks (Superilla) model, restricting through-traffic and street hierarchy to prioritise people.

4. Key Interventions

- Traffic diversion
- Pedestrian-priority zones
- Street activation with seating and play areas
- Tactical pilot urbanism
- 5. Measurable Outputs
- Reduced internal traffic
- Improved air quality
- Increased pedestrian activity
- More public space per resident

6. Systems Insight

Reducing traffic speed and prioritising people embeds safety directly into street design.

7. Directional Takeaway

When streets are designed for people instead of cars, cities become safer, healthier, and more socially active.

Reference:

<https://reasonstobecheerful.world/superblocks-are-for-people/>

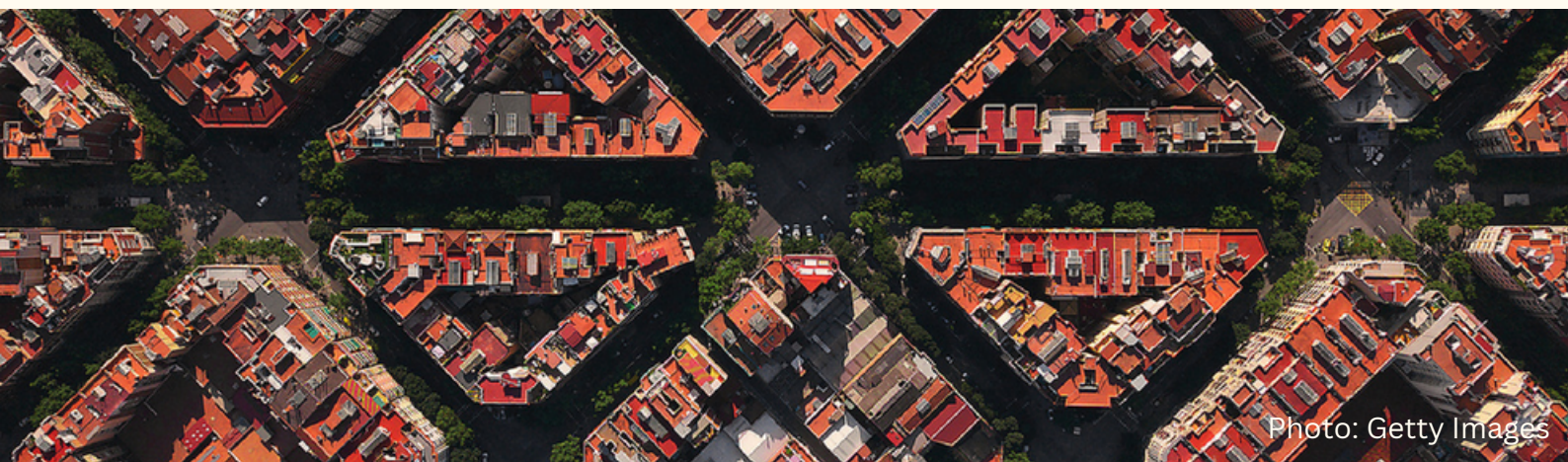


Photo: Getty Images

CASE STUDY 04: Bogotá – Gender-Responsive Transit

1. Context

In Bogotá, many women experienced harassment in public transport, reducing trust and usage.

2. Core Challenge

Improving transit safety required institutional, behavioural, and environmental changes, not just infrastructure upgrades.

3. Strategic Approach

The city participated in the UN Women Safe Cities Programme, integrating policy, communication, and design reforms.

4. Key Interventions

- Anti-harassment campaigns
- Staff training
- Reporting mechanisms
- Improved lighting in transit areas

5. Measurable Outputs

- Increased awareness and reporting of harassment
- Stronger institutional response systems
- Greater public attention to transit safety

6. Systems Insight

Transit safety requires a combination of governance, operations, communication, and spatial design.

7. Directional Takeaway

Safe public transport requires layered solutions beyond physical infrastructure.

Reference:

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/creating-safe-public-spaces>



Photo: Transport Gender Lab