HORUS
URBAN HEALTH

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EXPLORING HOW OUR **URBAN ENVIRONMENT** SHAPES OUR WELLBEING

The HORUS Project – Health Outcomes from Raised Urban Settings, funded by the European Union, is at the crossroads of **urban and public health** to investigate how the physical and social characteristics of cities influence people's health behaviours.

Its main goal is to **identify the barriers and enablers that affect healthy lifestyles**—such as physical activity, habits and nutrition—particularly among vulnerable urban populations.

OUR APPROACH: PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH SUPPORTED BY GIS

HORUS uses qualitative and **Geographic Information Systems** to build a vivid picture of urban health as experienced by citizens themselves.

GIS-SUPPORTED FOCUS GROUPS

Each participating city organises **six focus groups**—three with residents and three with professionals—held in pre-identified vulnerable neighbourhoods. Groups of 8–10 participants take part in sessions that last around 2.5 to 3 hours and **follow three main stages:**

"Walking activates memory, stimulates observation, and helps people perceive how their environment supports or hinders healthy living."

EXPLORATORY URBAN WALKS:
SEEING THE CITY THROUGH NEW EYES

The methodology centres on exploratory walks where participants experience their environment through everyday roles—like an elderly neighbour, a child, or a cyclist—using narrative cards with tasks and questions.
During the walk, they annotate maps, take photos, and share impressions on how the surroundings influence their health and habits. These "spatialised narratives" help researchers visualise the links between space, behaviour and wellbeing.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS:

Each city conducts **30 semi-structured interviews** with residents from vulnerable neighbourhoods, discussing daily routines, mobility, and experiences of the urban environment using printed or digital maps. Interviewers record locations—walking routes, shops, parks, and facilities—to build GIS datasets that link personal stories with geographic detail. This approach offers a layered understanding of how people interact with urban space and health opportunities.

TECHNOLOGY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

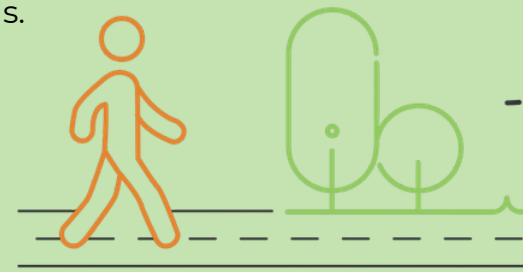
HORUS uses advanced GIS and participatory mapping tools like uMap and QField to record community perceptions on digital maps, compare lived experiences with health and environmental indicators, and feed results into the Healthy Cities Generator for planning healthier, more equitable cities. These tools merge citizen knowledge with scientific data, turning subjective experiences into actionable insights for local policy.

FROM RESEARCH TO REAL CHANGE:

The participatory sessions and interviews carried out in HORUS produce clear, community-grounded outputs:

- Spatial health diagnostics for each neighbourhood.
- Actionable recommendations to improve mobility, safety, public spaces, and access to healthy food.
- Cost-efficient interventions rooted in residents' real needs.

Together, these insights form a practical foundation for healthier urban development to turn evidence into action, empowering cities to embed health and wellbeing into everyday planning and governance, for the greater good of urban communities.



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