



PYLON ONE

INSPYRE

Inclusive Paths: Youth-Led Accessible Exploration in Thessaloniki

Implementation, Refinement & Testing of Paths

Project No: 2024-1-EL02-ESC30-SOL-000235532

www.inspyre-project.eu



EUROPEAN
SOLIDARITY
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Co-funded by
the European Union





INTRODUCTION

INSPIRE is centered on bringing the planned urban paths into real-world practice. After months of planning, community engagement, and co-creation, it is now time to refine the identified routes based on participant feedback and test their functionality under actual conditions.

The focus is on ensuring that the paths are safe, accessible, and barrier-free, meeting the diverse needs of all users. By engaging participants with different abilities, the project transitions from conceptual design to practical application, transforming research and planning into tangible, actionable outcomes.



PURPOSE

The purpose of this phase is to move from planning to practical implementation, ensuring that the walking paths developed earlier are refined, tested, and optimized based on real-world experiences.

- Refine previously identified walking paths, incorporate feedback and observations from earlier community engagement to remove barriers, improve safety, and enhance usability.
- Conduct comprehensive testing with diverse participants, engage people with different abilities, including physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities, to validate that routes are truly accessible.

- Collect actionable feedback, gather insights through surveys, interviews, and observations to guide improvements and ensure the solutions meet user needs.
- Ensure paths reflect real-world experiences, confirm that the routes are practical, navigable, and aligned with the day-to-day requirements of all urban residents.

This approach guarantees that the paths are user-centered, inclusive, and evidence-based, setting a solid foundation for further implementation and long-term sustainability.



KEY ACTIVITIES

- Refinement of identified paths, adjust routes to remove obstacles, improve safety, and integrate feedback from previous observations and community engagement sessions.
- Comprehensive testing with volunteers and people with disabilities, evaluate usability, accessibility, and navigability through structured walks and practical trials.
- Collection and analysis of feedback, gather both qualitative insights (participant experiences, suggestions) and quantitative data (barrier counts, accessibility scores) to inform improvements.
- Continuous iteration, use the collected data to make ongoing adjustments, optimizing safety, comfort, and accessibility, ensuring that paths are truly user-centered and inclusive.

REFINEMENT OF PATHS

During this phase, the previously identified walking routes are carefully reviewed and adjusted to enhance usability and accessibility for all participants:

- Adjust routes to remove physical obstacles, eliminate hazards such as uneven pavements, steps, or restricted passageways to ensure safe, barrier-free movement.
- Optimize connections between key city areas and services, ensure that important destinations like public transport stops, community centers, and essential services are efficiently linked.





- Integrate feedback from community engagement sessions, incorporate suggestions and observations from earlier city walks, awareness activities, and preliminary testing to address real user concerns.
- Ensure paths are coherent, navigable, and user-friendly, create logical, clear, and accessible routes that can be easily followed by people with diverse abilities.

IMPORTANCE OF REFINEMENT

Refining the identified paths is a critical step to ensure the routes are fully functional, safe, and inclusive:

- Addresses gaps or challenges identified during earlier testing resolves issues such as difficult terrain, missing ramps, or unclear wayfinding that were observed in prior sessions.
- Enhances safety and comfort for all users ensures that participants of all abilities can navigate the paths without risk or discomfort.





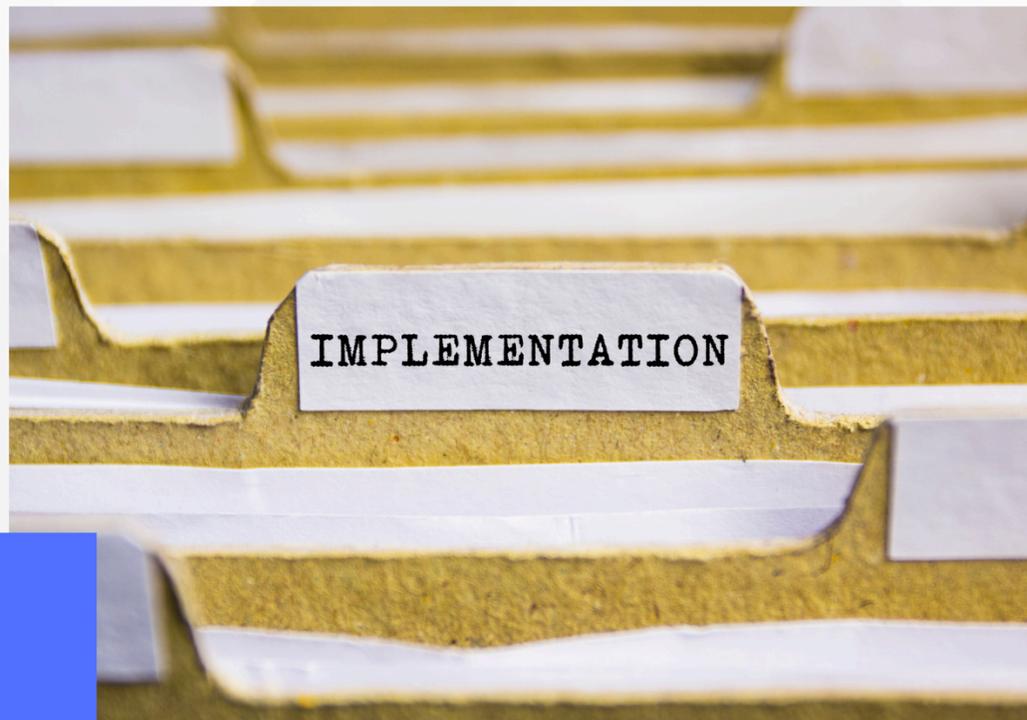
- Incorporates accessibility features, adds essential elements such as ramps, clear signage, tactile paving, resting areas, and visual cues to support diverse needs.
- Creates a more inclusive urban mobility experience, makes the city more navigable and welcoming for people with disabilities, older adults, and other groups with mobility challenges.



COMPREHENSIVE TESTING

Comprehensive testing is a hands-on, practical phase where the refined paths are evaluated by a diverse group of participants to ensure they are safe, accessible, and functional:

- Engages participants with diverse abilities, including people with physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities, ensuring a wide range of perspectives and real-world insights.
- Evaluates practical usability, safety, and navigability, tests how participants move through the paths, identifying potential barriers, discomforts, or confusion points.





- Observes real-time interactions with the urban environment, allows project staff to see firsthand how participants handle challenges such as curbs, signage, and crowded areas.



- Ensures paths meet real-world accessibility standards, validates that the routes are genuinely inclusive and comply with recommended guidelines for universal design and barrier-free mobility.

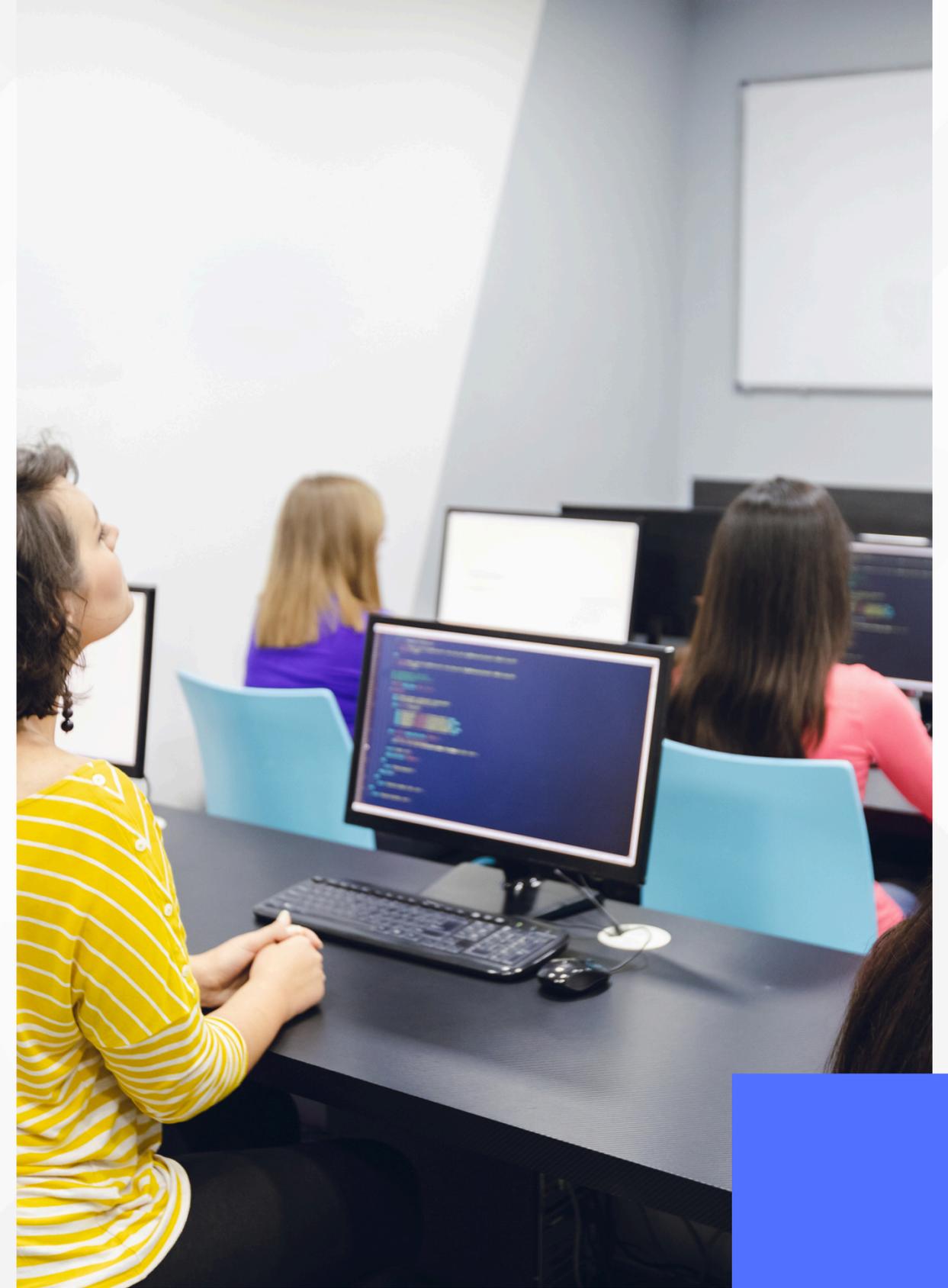


TESTING METHODS

To ensure comprehensive evaluation, INSPYRE employs multiple complementary methods that capture both qualitative and quantitative insights:

- Guided walks and route trials with structured observation, participants follow pre-determined paths while staff systematically observe accessibility challenges and user interactions.
- Surveys and interviews to capture participant feedback, collect personal experiences, suggestions, and perceived difficulties, providing rich qualitative data for refinement.

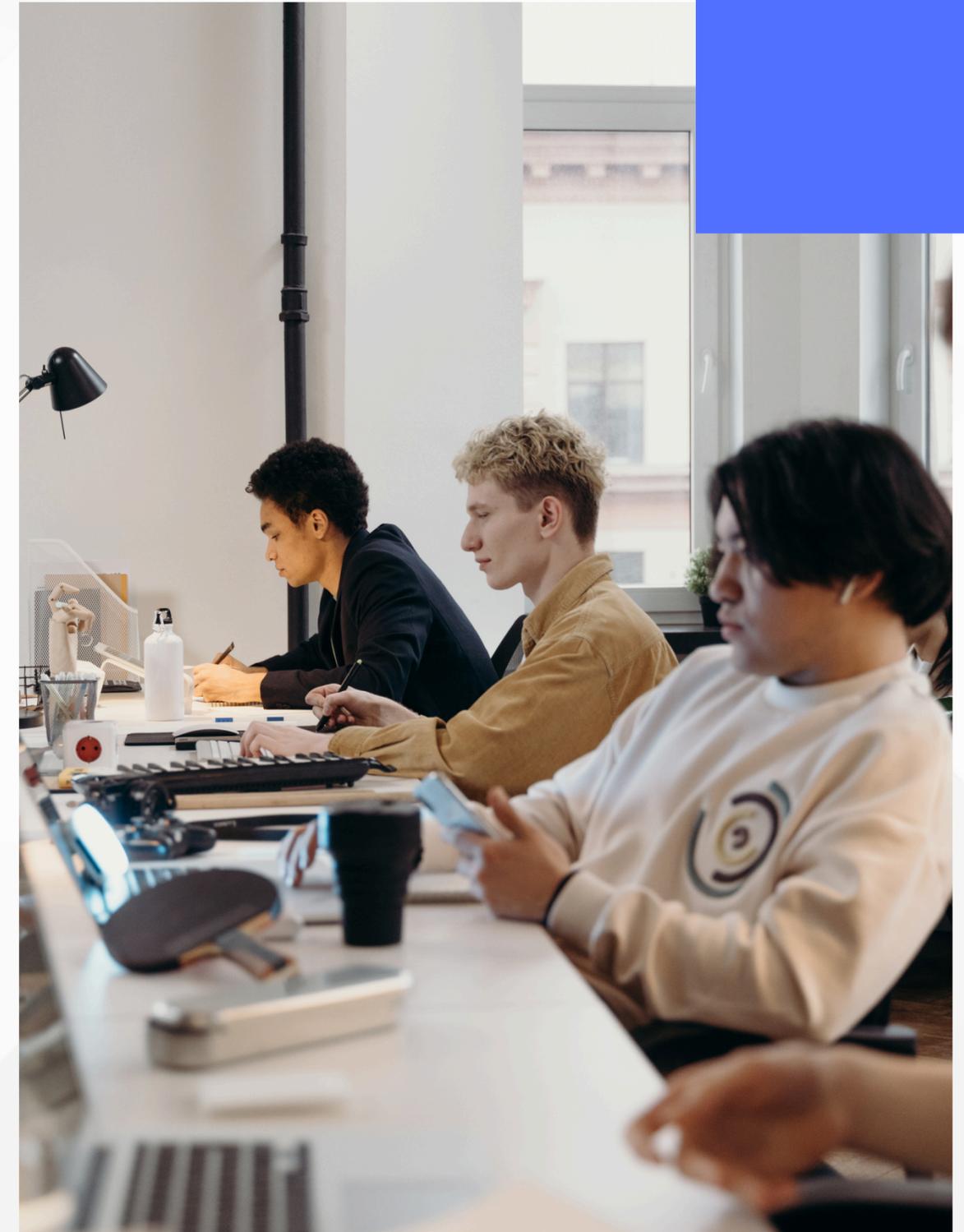
- Digital mapping and GIS tools, document barriers, improvements, and route characteristics to create visual, data-driven representations of accessibility conditions.
- Observation checklists to systematically assess barriers and path efficiency, ensure that every segment of the route is evaluated consistently, tracking safety, usability, and inclusivity.



ROLE OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants play a central role in the refinement and testing of INSPYRE paths, contributing unique perspectives and practical insights:

- People with disabilities provide first-hand insights on accessibility, their lived experiences reveal barriers and challenges that designers and planners might otherwise overlook.
- Volunteers and community members support and observe challenges, assist during walks, document obstacles, and provide additional perspectives on usability and safety.



- All participants contribute to co-creation, evaluation, and improvement, their combined input guides iterative adjustments, ensuring that paths are user-centered and practical.
- Encourages shared learning and collaboration, fosters understanding between different stakeholders, building empathy and reinforcing the collective goal of creating inclusive urban spaces.

DATA COLLECTION & FEEDBACK

Effective data collection is essential to refine paths based on real-world insights and ensure usability for all participants:

- Collect qualitative feedback, gather participant experiences, challenges, and suggestions to understand the human perspective and identify barriers not immediately visible.
- Collect quantitative data, measure factors such as the number of obstacles encountered, route completion times, and accessibility scores to provide objective evidence for improvements.



- Document environmental factors, record street conditions, lighting, signage quality, and other contextual elements that affect navigation and safety.
- Use data to prioritize refinements, combine qualitative and quantitative findings to identify high-priority issues, guiding targeted adjustments to the paths.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

After testing and collecting feedback, the INSPYRE team carefully analyzes the data to guide improvements and ensure accessibility:

- Identify patterns and recurring obstacles, detect barriers that consistently affect participants across different routes or segments.
- Determine high-priority areas needing immediate attention, focus resources on resolving the most critical accessibility challenges first.



- Highlight successful design elements, recognize aspects of the paths that work well, such as clear signage, smooth surfaces, or well-positioned ramps, to replicate best practices.
- Translate findings into practical recommendations, create actionable guidelines and improvements to optimize safety, usability, and inclusivity of the urban paths.



REFINEMENT IN ACTION

This stage puts the analysis and feedback into practice, ensuring that the paths are fully optimized for safety, accessibility, and usability:

- Adjust routes to avoid obstacles or difficult terrain, reroute sections that present hazards or challenges to ensure smooth and barrier-free navigation.
- Improve signage, tactile markers, and visual cues, enhance wayfinding and orientation for participants with sensory or cognitive impairments.
- Add safety features, install ramps, guardrails, resting areas, and other supportive infrastructure to improve comfort and accessibility.
- Re-test modifications with participants, conduct follow-up walks and trials to confirm that adjustments are effective and meet the needs of all users.



EDUCATIONAL VALUE

- Hands-on learning in accessibility assessment, participants actively evaluate urban paths, gaining direct experience in identifying barriers and assessing usability.
- Demonstrates the importance of user-centered design, emphasizes designing solutions that meet the needs of real users, particularly people with disabilities.
- Shows how feedback informs real-world solutions, participants learn how observations, suggestions, and data are translated into practical improvements.
- Reinforces understanding of inclusive urban planning principles, offers experiential insights into accessibility, participatory planning, and co-creation in urban environments.





SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Participants develop:

- Practical urban planning and accessibility evaluation skills
- Problem-solving in dynamic, real-world settings
- Collaboration and communication with diverse groups
- Empathy and awareness of everyday challenges faced by people with disabilities

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED

- Unpredictable environmental conditions (weather, construction)
- Diverse participant needs requiring adaptable testing approaches
- Technical limitations or difficulties using digital tools in the field

Coordinating schedules and locations for broad participant inclusion

SOLUTIONS AND ADJUSTMENTS

- Flexible scheduling and adaptive walking routes
- Orientation sessions and guidance for all participants
- Simplified and accessible data collection tools
- Continuous feedback loops to refine paths iteratively



KEY INSIGHTS

- Iterative testing ensures paths are practical, usable, and inclusive
- Hands-on participation builds empathy and understanding of accessibility needs
- Collaboration between community members, volunteers, and planners improves decision-making and co-creation
- User feedback is critical to sustainable, long-term solutions

IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS

- Enhanced knowledge of urban accessibility and design
- Gained practical skills in assessment, collaboration, and problem-solving
- Experienced the value of co-creation and community engagement
- Developed a sense of empowerment through contributing to tangible improvements



PRACTICAL OUTCOMES

- Paths refined to address identified barriers
- Comprehensive testing verified usability and accessibility
- Data-driven recommendations implemented for final design
- Clear framework established for future monitoring and expansion



CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

INSPYRE has successfully completed the refinement and testing of urban paths, ensuring that routes are inclusive, safe, and practical for all users. Through comprehensive testing with a diverse group of participants, including people with physical, sensory, and cognitive disabilities, the project has gathered user-centered feedback that informs iterative improvements and validates the functionality of the paths in real-world conditions.

The practical application of insights ensures that solutions are evidence-based, sustainable, and aligned with community needs. Participants' hands-on involvement has not only enhanced the accessibility of the urban routes but also strengthened skills, empathy, and awareness among volunteers and community members.

Looking forward, the next steps involve implementing the refined paths city-wide, expanding engagement to reach more community members, and continuously monitoring the effectiveness of the routes. The project will maintain a focus on co-creation, participatory planning, and inclusive urban mobility, ensuring that accessibility improvements remain dynamic, responsive, and centered on real user experiences.

Through this phase, INSPYRE demonstrates that inclusive urban design is achievable when planning, testing, and refinement are guided by active community participation and evidence-based feedback, creating a model for sustainable, barrier-free cities.



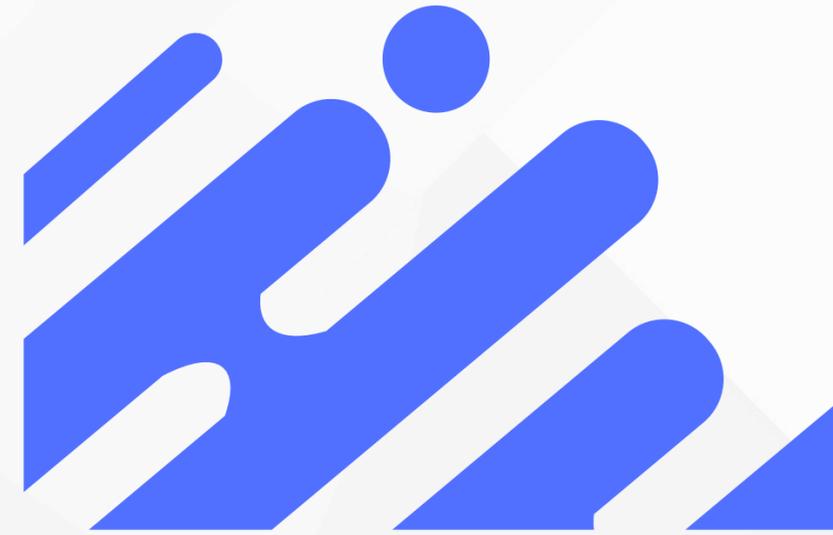
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