

# OBSERVATION TECHNIQUE FOR URBAN APPRECIATION

# Introduction

- Understand city through observation while having a short walk
- Started by looking at what you like and dislike.
- Develop the feeling by looking at the details i.e., elements (signage, landscapes, activities, building colours, form).
- **Field observation** – “high level of looking” – more systematic way, using diagnostic tools for professionals.

## Direct observation

- a structured observation (as looking for) – observer looking for specific behavior – identify specific issues – preparing checklist etc
- a unstructured observation (as looking at) – looking at the surrounding environments and issues- developing open ended questions

## Strengths and limitation

- Direct observation can be used to rapidly collect different types of information.
- Has limited power where the changes rapidly
- Limited information about capacities and priorities of the people

# Field observation : Public Realm Assessment

## Look out for:

- Meaningful, memorable places (streets, alleys, spaces between buildings, plazas etc.)
- Enjoyable/fun places; places you would like to stay in for a bit longer
- “Get-me-out’a-here-now!” spaces
- Not-so-nice spaces that work; nice spaces that don’t work
- Places that appear interesting to you
- Places that are unique/special; places with distinct character/identity
- Bland, characterless spaces
- Spaces/places that surprise/shock you (for good and/or for bad)
- Out-of-place spaces
- Hopeless spaces
- Ugly spaces
- Lost, lonely spaces
- Scary spaces
- Empty spaces in which you would like to see things happening
- Places with a view, and hope
- Important connecting spaces etc.



# Field observation : Public Realm Assessment

Ask the following questions with regards to the above observation:

- Why? (reasons/causes behind something happening)
- How? (process leading to something happening the way it happens)
- What? (elements, aspects and/or factors related to what happens)
- Who? (people, parties involved/to be involved)
- Where? (specific locations/points where something happen; relationship with surrounding context)
- When? (day, time when something happens)



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- City can be comprehended by 4 narrative layers:-
  - People
  - Zoning (city planning)
  - Story of the space/building
  - framing



# Lisboa



# Lisboa



# Antwerp







