

# URBACT APN Network Application Summary Halle (Saale) – Gender Equality in Climate Change

## Who are we?

The city of Halle (Saale) is situated in the heart of Germany, around 150 km south of Berlin. Halle (Saale) has a population of around 240,000 and a very compact urban layout. Alongside an almost entirely preserved historic old town and densely built-up Wilhelminian-style districts, there are several large housing estates dating from the GDR era, as well as traditional detached housing estates on the outskirts of the city.

Climate change is leading to long dry spells in Halle (Saale); the number of tropical nights is steadily increasing, and high temperatures often persist for days on end in the densely built-up inner-city districts.

Women account for approximately 51.6 per cent of the urban population, whilst men account for approximately 48.4 per cent. Halle has become the ‘youngest major city’ in Saxony-Anhalt. The average age is around 45. The proportion of foreign residents has risen in recent years, but currently stands at around 8.8 per cent.

Economically, Halle is one of the structurally weaker major cities. The median income is low, and the rates of social security benefits and high levels of debt are above the national average. The unemployment rate for women, considered separately, stood at 9.3%. In August 2025, 890 people were registered as non-working single parents. Women accounted for 90% of this figure. According to the Paritätische Wohlfahrtsverband and the Federal Statistical Office, women in Halle (Saale) and across Germany are at greater risk of poverty than men, due to lower wages and pensions. Although there are no current specific data for women in the city, the poverty rate for the entire Halle region in 2021 is high at 20.3%, with young women in particular at risk of poverty (Der Paritätische Gesamtverband 2023).

We are working together in an interdisciplinary group: Daniela Suchantke, Equality Officer for Halle (Saale), Christiane Lütgert and Ina Kuhn from the Urban Development and Planning Department, and Sabine Falk from the city’s Climate Protection Team.

## What is our topic?

The climate crisis is unevenly distributed: different genders and people in different life situations are affected to varying degrees by the consequences of climate change. Vulnerable groups, whose behaviour contributes relatively little to climate change, often suffer particularly from its consequences. Women, caregivers, older people and socially and economically disadvantaged groups are frequently more severely affected by heat stress, energy poverty, mobility restrictions and climate-related health risks. At the same time, gender aspects have so far often been insufficiently taken into account in local climate adaptation and climate protection strategies.

An ideal mobility and transport plan should therefore incorporate the concept of the ‘city of short distances’, which not only serves the goal of climate neutrality but also contributes to gender-sensitive planning. Shorter daily journeys, more green spaces and a safe, climate-friendly transport infrastructure benefit everyone. Women already make greater use of eco-friendly transport modes (walking, cycling, public transport) and therefore benefit from them to a particular extent. Added to this is the consideration of income levels and thus the focus on low-threshold, free and accessible recreational and leisure opportunities.

The network therefore addresses the growing need to link climate- and gender-just urban policies more closely. The focus is on integrated urban approaches that combine climate adaptation, social justice and inclusive governance – for example through gender-sensitive heat action plans, safe and sustainable mobility, equitable access to green spaces, and greater participation of under-represented groups in local decision-making processes. S We want to adapt our city to changing conditions and, in doing so, identify measures for different urban spaces and groups of people.

We seek to exchange experiences and solutions from our partner cities regarding climate change. We bring vulnerable groups from across Europe into contact with one another so that they can support each other in adapting to their various living environments. We raise public awareness of gender equality in public spaces and jointly develop methods for inclusive urban planning.

## What ideas do we already have?

Climate Walks with young women and girls – where do they feel comfortable, and where do they not? What are the reasons for this?

Workshops with people from vulnerable groups and experts – planning from different personal perspectives

Neighbourhood meetings with information on heat preparedness – who has what tips? Who needs help? How can we adapt to the heat?

Using digital planning formats – a digital twin of Halle (Saale) to simulate hot spots and shaded areas, and to assess the effectiveness of prevention and adaptation measures

Testing gender-sensitive participation formats – how can we also reach disadvantaged groups? Which methods are suitable for which groups of people?

## Contact persons

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