

# People want cities for people



By [Ilse van den Berg](#)

26 Feb 2014

Cities around the world all have one particular thing in common - they are made up of people. The problem is though that most cities have not been built to accommodate people - but to accommodate cars and traffic. (video)

According to the Human Scale film, that was screened at the Castle of Good Hope on 24 February as part of the [2014 Design Indaba](#) FilmFest, 50% of the world's population live in urban areas. It is estimated that by 2050 this figure would have increased to 80%.

The film poses the question: How do we plan cities in a way which takes human behaviour into account?

## Human needs for inclusion and intimacy

Since the 1940s, cities have been planned around cars, when in fact in many cities there are more pedestrians than cars. Danish architect and professor Jan Gehl has studied human behaviour in cities for roughly 40 years, starting in Italy. He has noted how modern cities repel human interaction, and reckons that we *can* build cities in a way which takes human needs for inclusion and intimacy into account. Gehl started measuring how people's lives were affected when streets became pedestrianised and the film illustrates these changes in the featured cities beautifully. Cities like Copenhagen, New York, Melbourne, Dhaka and Chongqing have all been influenced by Gehl's studies and ongoing creation of walkways, building and improvements of bike paths and the reorganisation of parks, squares and other public spaces.

The documentary, directed by Andreas Møl Dalsgaard, is broken up into five chapters and runs for 77 minutes.

This documentary is definitely a must-see whenever you do get the chance. It seems obvious, but perhaps not yet to all cities and city planners: people want cities for people - not cars.

If you did miss out on the first few screenings of the Design Indaba FilmFest, you still have a chance to grab your tickets for the [remaining shows](#) which will run until Sunday, 2 March.

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## ABOUT ILSE VAN DEN BERG

Ilse is a freelance journalist and editor with a passion for people & their stories (check out Passing Stories). She is also the editor of Go & Travel, a platform connecting all the stakeholders in the travel & tourism industry. You can check out her work [here](#) and [here](#). Contact Ilse through her website [here](#).

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