



10 YEARS OF

# GLOBAL PUBLIC SPACE PROGRAMME

Annual Report 2022 and reflections on a Decade of Public Space



PUBLIC SPACE  
PROGRAMME

**UN HABITAT**  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

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Cover photo: Children playing on the rehabilitated Vendome public stairs after the blast in Beirut, Lebanon © Catalytic Actions

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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



Tactical urbanism intervention during the 9th Africities Summit in Kisumu, Kenya @ UN-Habitat / Joy Mutai

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## FOREWORD



In 2022, we commemorated the first decade of UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme (GPSP). Launched in 2012, the Programme promotes the incorporation of accessible, safe, inclusive, and sustainable public spaces in cities and is in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) -, particularly SDG11.7, and the New Urban Agenda (NUA).

In 2011, UN-Habitat's Governing Council Resolution 23/4 provided a clear opportunity to consolidate our agency-wide work on public spaces. The Member States mandated the agency to establish an approach that supports the role of public space in addressing the challenges of our rapidly urbanising world, to coordinate various global partners and experts on public space and to provide direct assistance to cities in their public space initiatives.

Since then, the Programme has recognised the role of public spaces in enhancing community inclusion and cohesion, economic empowerment, climate change adaptation and resilience, political engagement, as well as the health and well-being of urban dwellers. In partnership with governments and partners globally, GPSP has developed an integrated, multi-sectoral, and interactive approach to support local

governments and communities in creating vibrant and inclusive public space networks, long-term urban strategies, and national policies, focusing on the most vulnerable groups.

Some of the Programme's key focus areas include community-led city-wide public space assessments, civil society engagement and partnerships, participation through innovative and digital tools, public space upgrading, policies and strategies for improved public space development, and capacity building at the neighborhood, city, regional, and national levels.

This decade of work demonstrates that well-functioning cities have approximately half of its surface area dedicated to public spaces. Unfortunately, only few cities worldwide meet this target. The lack of well-design and maintained public spaces reduces the urban quality of life, increases crime, social tensions, health issues, and congestion. The Programme supports cities in developing green and quality public spaces, acting as an enabler for social justice, prosperity, and environmental change. Streets, sidewalks, cycling lanes, squares, parks, waterfronts, gardens, community courtyards are all fundamental to achieve quality of life in cities. Thus far, the GPSP has supported over 100 cities

by implementing public space upgrading projects and building local and national capacities, impacting the lives of millions of people.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, an increasing number of national and local governments have included public spaces as an important element to achieve sustainable cities. A growing global public space network of partners was instrumental in placing public space on the international agenda, advocating for a stand-alone SDG target on public space (11.7), and its prominent role in the New Urban Agenda. The success of UN-Habitat's public space work is anchored in our vast network of local government, civil society, academia, and private sector partners, as well as other UN agencies. The UN-Habitat public space network currently includes

over 100 organisations that regularly convene to advance the public space agenda.

The last two years of the pandemic have been crucial in rediscovering the value of public spaces. Countries and cities have mobilised funding and taken action in implementing recovery plans to address the consequences of COVID-19. Leveraging this renewed interest, there is momentum for cities and countries to redefine their agendas and develop a new strategic framework, with public spaces as a critical driver of change.

We will continue our efforts towards the upcoming milestones of the new decade related to public spaces. I look forward to a prosperous second decade of public space together with you all!



**Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif**

Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director,  
United Nations Human Settlements Programme  
(UN-Habitat)



## OUR MANDATE

As we celebrate ten years of UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme, we renovate our mandate on promoting and advocating inclusive, safe and accessible, green and public spaces for all. We recognise the crucial role of public space in our cities' ecosystems as an enabler for social cohesion, health and well-being, economic growth, democracy, climate resilience and equal society.

Over this decade of work, we have refined our interdisciplinary and multi-sectorial approach to promoting public space at the national, city, neighbourhood and local levels, engaging with several stakeholders and decision-makers. We have identified ten key entry points for impact to promote the dissemination of international agendas on public spaces and the localisation of SDG 11.7. Our entry points are digital engagement, climate resilience, gender response, child-friendly, governance, migration and refugees, crisis response, capacity building, universal accessibility and placemaking.

We renovate our intention to promote effective participation and capacity building, leveraging the opportunities given by innovative technology and the virtual world. We aim to disseminate principles for sustainable urban development with our interactive and inclusive practices. Our operational and normative tools, methodologies, and digital platforms are user-friendly and impact-oriented to reach the largest amount of people, despite their background, gender, age, belief and abilities.

We seek strategic partnerships, leveraging the success of the flourishing network of public space partners established so far. We treasure our best practices, implemented projects and impacted communities, identifying lessons learnt, key messages and tailored solutions for specific contexts. We welcome any efforts from entities to support and advocate towards a better urban future, starting from public spaces.

**“UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme promotes the integration of accessible, safe, inclusive, and sustainable public spaces in cities. As we celebrate the 10 years anniversary, we must keep the momentum for cities and countries to redefine their agendas and develop a new strategic framework, putting public spaces as a key driver of change. We look forward to a prosperous second decade of public space!”**



**Maimunah Mohd Sharif,**  
Under-Secretary-General and Executive  
Director, United Nations Human  
Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

## THE GLOBAL PUBLIC SPACE PROGRAMME MANDATE

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



**SDG 11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities**

UN-Habitat has developed an integrated approach to public space that covers the national, city, neighbourhood and site level. We believe that a multi-scalar approach creates the greatest impact for community quality of life. Our partnerships, enabled us to improve links with local implementing organisations, reach out to more marginalised communities and create a greater impact worldwide.



We promote evidence-based strategies and national policies for a more connected network of public spaces.



We use innovative methodologies to co-design space with communities, boosting public participation in urban planning and design processes. We encourage co-governance and co-management of public space to secure longevity of projects and community empowerment.



We disseminate knowledge and develop processes and solutions to a variety of urban issues related to youth, gender, conflict, health, climate and persons with disabilities to name a few.

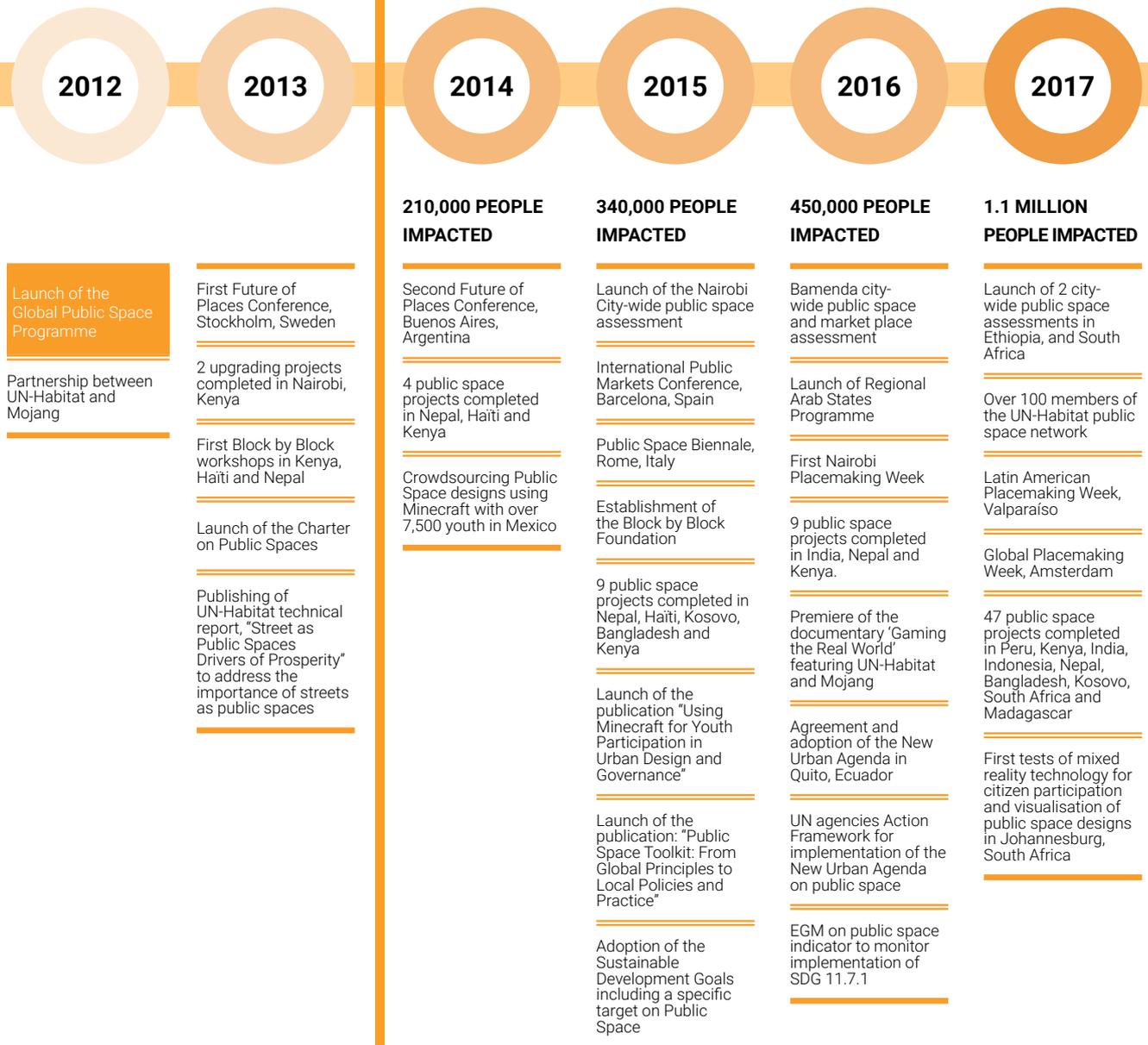


We build partnerships and create a networks of diverse group of city stakeholders, from national and local governments, civil societies, academic entities, grassroots organisations to community members.

Placemaking activities with girls and young women in Diepsloot in Johannesburg, South Africa © JDA

# IN A NUTSHELL

## STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2019



2018

**1.5 MILLION PEOPLE IMPACTED**

Launch of 6 city-wide public space assessments in Kenya, Mongolia, South Africa, China and Uganda

World Bank and UN Agencies Public Space Working Group launched

Launch of the European Placemaking Network

Launch of the China National Network Public Space / Placemaking

17 public space projects completed in South Africa, China, Brazil, Vietnam, Palestine, Bangladesh, Kenya, Mexico, Colombia and South Africa

Tests of improved mixed reality platform and Expert Group Meeting in Stockholm, Sweden

Indicator 11.7 on public space upgraded from Tier 3 to Tier 2 by the UN Statistical Commission

City-wide public space strategy - A global guide for city leaders

City-wide public space strategy - Compendium of International Practices

Development of the Regional Strategy for Asia Pacific

Mainstreaming Public Space in National Urban Policy

2019

**1.72 MILLION PEOPLE IMPACTED**

Launch of the Ethiopia flagship programme

Completed 17 city-wide assessments in Afghanistan, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Palestine, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Uruguay.

17 public space projects completed in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ethiopia, Mexico, Nairobi, Peru and Uruguay

Launch of the publication "Mixed reality for public participation in urban and public space design"

Launch of the site-specific assessment tool

Finalising the Block by Block Training Kit

Conducted 12 Training of Trainers on Public space tools in Ethiopia, France, Somaliland, Scotland, UAE, etc

Launch of the city-wide public space assessment guide

Public space featured prominently during the First UN-Habitat Assembly

604 cities are included in the database of public space

Launched UN-Habitat's partnership with the Journal of Public Space

**NEW STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2023**

2020

**1.85 MILLION PEOPLE IMPACTED**

Supported 10 cities with Covid-19 response through public space interventions

Completed 11 city-wide public space assessments in Palestine, UAE, Nigeria and Ethiopia

26 upgrading projects completed in 12 cities

Released a guidance note on COVID-19 and public space

Conducted 11 training on city-wide public space assessment for 200 people

Produced 8 normative outputs on tools and methodologies to support local governments in planning public spaces

Conducted 5 online digital workshops using Minecraft as a participatory tool

Conducted 2 regional trainings on localising the Public Space Toolkit for the Arab States

Launched the city-wide public space inventory in Nairobi, Kenya

900 cities are included in the database of public space

Released four special issues on public spaces in the Journal of Public Space

2021

**2.3 MILLION PEOPLE IMPACTED**

Conducted 30 digital workshops using Minecraft as a participatory tool

Completed 4 city-wide public space assessments in Uruguay, Dominican Republic, Colombia and Greece

3 upgrading projects completed in 3 cities

Conducted 8 trainings of trainers on the Block by Block methodology

Launched Nairobi River Regeneration Initiative and GoBlue Project

Conducted 7 trainings of trainers on public space assessment methodologies

Launched the Block by Block Playbook on how to use Minecraft as a participatory tool

Launched Her City Toolbox with over a 1,000 stakeholders

Conducted 6 regional training on Her City toolbox

5 articles published by ArchDaily on GPSP initiatives

Released three special issues on public spaces in the Journal of Public Space

**10 YEARS OF PUBLIC SPACE**

2022

**2.5 MILLION PEOPLE IMPACTED**

Conducted 28 digital workshops using Minecraft as a participatory tool

8 upgrading projects completed in 4 cities

Conducted 23 trainings of trainers on the GPSP methodologies

Launched the Young Gamechanger Initiative with Fondation Botnar

Produced 2 policy briefs on nature based solutions, resilience and public spaces

Facilitated 13 lectures in 3 academic semesters using UN-Habitat's tools

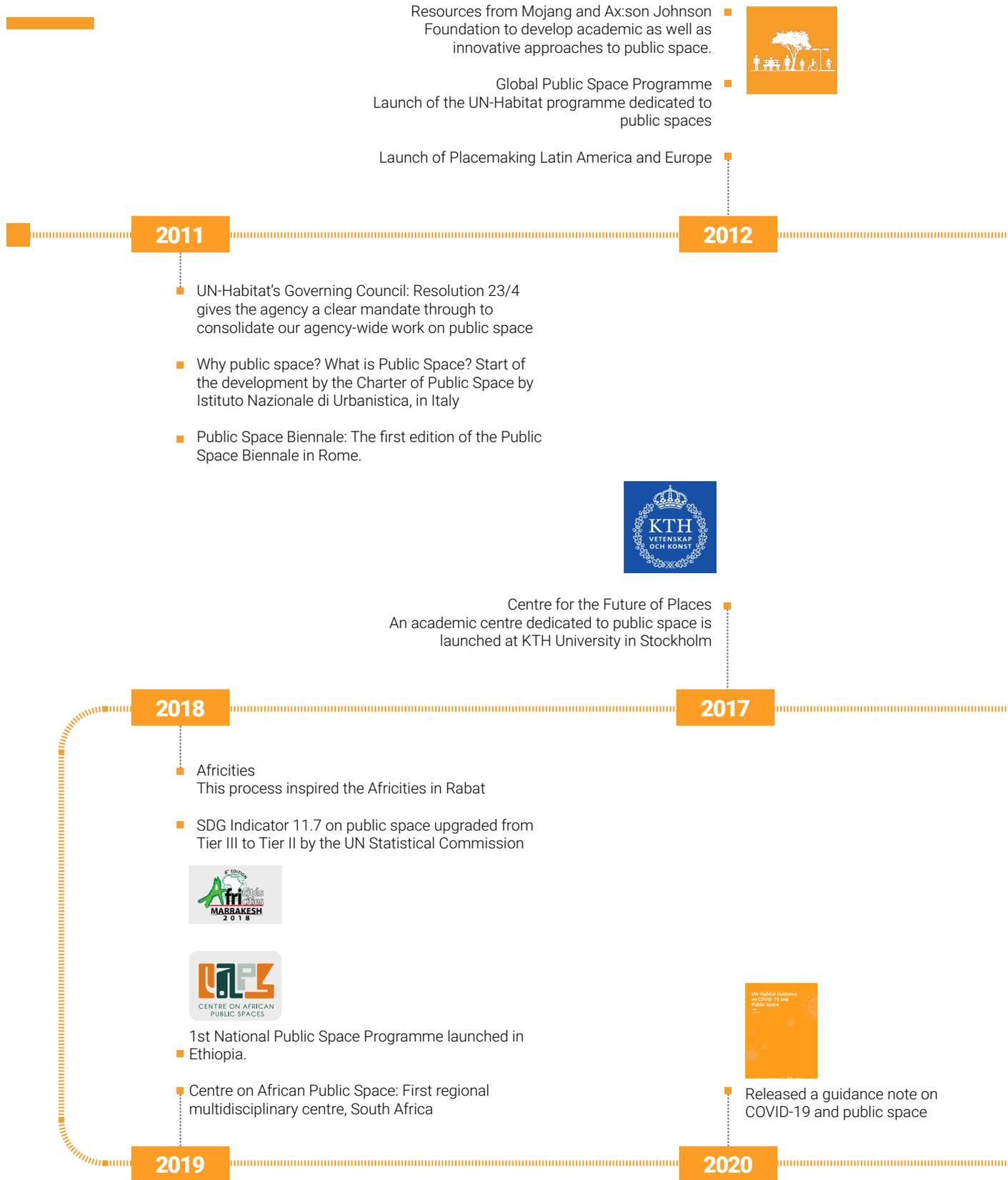
Conducted 3 trainings on site-specific public space assessment using Inhabit Place

Participated at the 10th World Urban Forum in Katowice

Launched the Global Public Space Programme website and database with over 170 initiatives

Released two special issues on public spaces in the Journal of Public Space

# OUR MILESTONES





Expert Group Meeting on Public Space:  
Convened by INU (Rome January)

Publication: Streets as Public Spaces and Drivers of  
Urban Prosperity

2013

- Charter of Public Space  
Developed at the Biennial of Public Space
- The Future of Places  
(FoP I, Stockholm, June)



2014



Launch of Global Public Space Toolkit:  
Public Space in the New Urban Agenda

2030 Agenda  
Public space SDG target 11.7

2016

- Habitat III  
Public space in the New Urban Agenda
- Launch of The Journal of Public Space



2015

10  
years

- A decade with the UN-Habitat's  
Global Space Programme
- Launch of the Young  
Gamechangers Initiative,  
funded by Fondation Botnar, in  
partnership with WHO

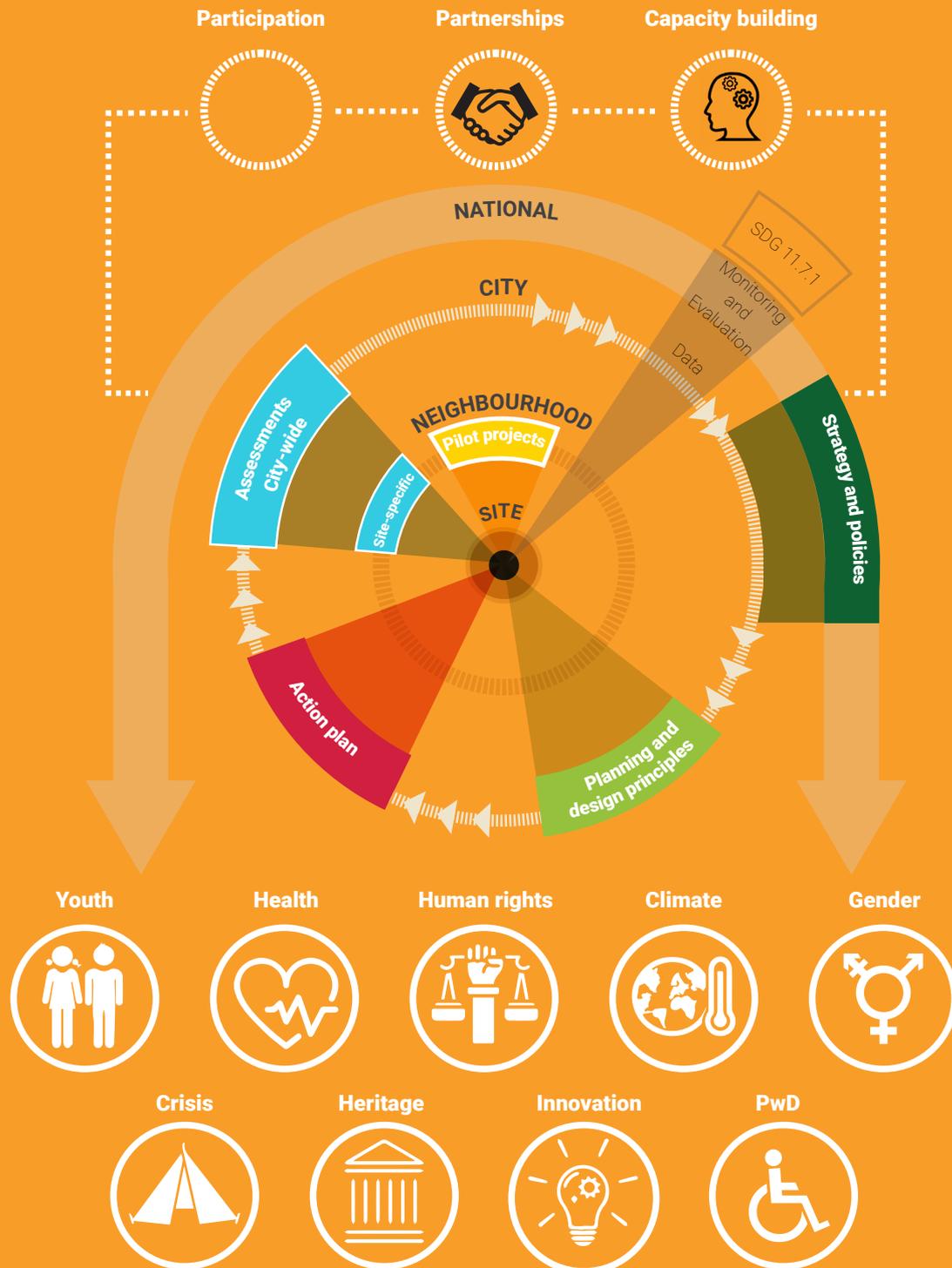
2021

- Launch of the HerCity Toolbox and  
the Block By Block Playbook



2022

# OUR APPROACH



## 2022 IN NUMBERS

**8**

**PUBLIC SPACES**  
upgraded in  
**Bangladesh,  
Lebanon, Vietnam  
and Kyrgyzstan**

**172,000+**

**IMPACTED  
PEOPLE**  
including  
beneficiaries of  
implemented  
projects

**1750+**

**PEOPLE  
ENGAGED**  
in **participatory  
workshops** and  
activities

**122**

**ENGAGEMENT  
ACTIVITIES**  
including  
workshops, walks,  
groups discussions,  
surveys

**28**

**MINECRAFT  
WORKSHOPS**  
organised, of which  
**20 facilitated by  
local partners**

**360+**

**PEOPLE  
ENGAGED**  
in **Minecraft  
workshops**  
in 20 cities

**235+**

**TRAINED  
LOCAL ACTORS**  
on UN-Habitat's  
tools, including  
the Block by Block  
methodology

**23**

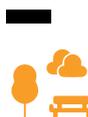
**TRAININGS**  
conducted on  
**UN-Habitat's tools,**  
including the  
Block by Block  
methodology

**12**

**ACADEMIC  
LECTURES**  
in 3 semesters on  
**UN-Habitat tools**

**3**

**NORMATIVE  
PRODUCTS**  
including Her City  
report and policy  
briefs on **nature-  
based solutions**

**12**

**SITE-SPECIFIC  
ASSESSMENTS**  
coordinated by  
local partners

**1**

**CITY-WIDE  
PUBLIC SPACE  
ASSESSMENTS**  
coordinated by  
local partners

# A DECADE OF PUBLIC SPACE 2012 - 2022

**30,000+**  
people actively engaged

**610+**  
Engagement activities

**95+**  
conducted trainings

**144**  
upgraded public spaces

**100**  
cities

**359**  
Minecraft workshops

**4550+**  
trained urban actors

**36**  
city-wide public space assessments

**55**  
countries



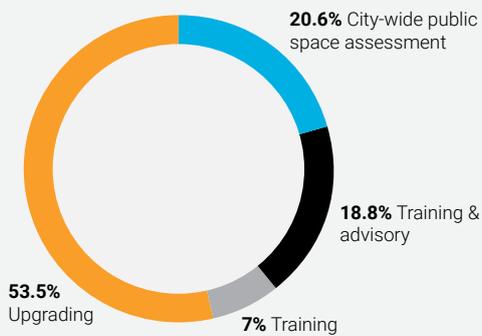
THEMATIC AREAS

- Governance
- Health and wellbeing
- Spatial equality
- Economy and livelihoods
- Capacity development
- Social inclusion
- Environment and climate
- Culture and heritage
- Urban regeneration
- Safety and security
- Accessibility

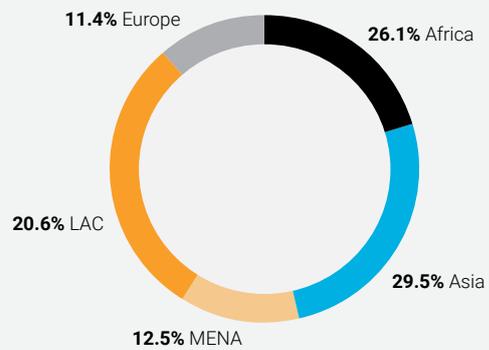
*The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations*



TYPE OF INITIATIVE



REGIONAL COVERAGE



# 2022 COMPLETED PROJECTS

## REDESIGNING AN OPEN STREET MARKET IN TAN MAI WARD, HANOI, VIETNAM

HealthBridge worked with local authorities, community, local vendors and partners to design and improve an informal street market Tan Mai ward, Hoang Mai district. While the project has had general impacts on 6,000 local residents living in the area of 15 minutes walking radius from the street market, the newly-improved street market directly benefited 1,650 inhabitants most of whom are women buying and selling fresh food at this market.

**Region:** Asia  
**BBB Budget:** 75,500 USD  
**Co-funding:** 28,700 USD  
**Partner:** Healthbridge - Vietnam  
**Theme:** Economy and livelihoods  
**Typology:** Market



**6,000+**  
**people impacted**

living within 15 minutes  
 walk to the rehabilitated  
 Tan Mai market



**1**  
 PROJECTS

**13**  
 ENGAGEMENTS

**220**  
 PARTICIPANTS

**6000+**  
 IMPACTED PEOPLE



**5,000+**  
people impacted  
benefitting the new public stairs, of which over 1,000 on a daily base



## REVIVING AND RENOVATING PUBLIC STAIRS AFFECTED BY THE BEIRUT PORT EXPLOSIONS: MEMORY AND SPACE, BEIRUT, LEBANON

Catalytic Action worked with local authorities, and the community, to rehabilitate three public stairs in Mar Mikhael and Gemmayzeh which were severely affected by the Beirut explosion in 2020.

The new design for the three staircases involves making them more safe and inclusive. The designs for the stairs' interventions have also been influenced by the different characteristics of each staircase, striving to ensure that each retains its initial character.

**Region:** Arab States  
**BBB Budget:** 60,000 USD  
**Co-funding:** 19,950 USD  
**Partner:** Catalytic Action  
**Theme:** Reconstruction  
**Typology:** Public Stairs



**3**  
PROJECTS

**2**  
TRAININGS

**19**  
TRAINEES

**19**  
ENGAGEMENTS

**46**  
PARTICIPANTS

**5,000+**  
IMPACTED PEOPLE



## INCLUSIVE PUBLIC SPACES - FAIR SHARED CITY, BAKAI-ATA, BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN

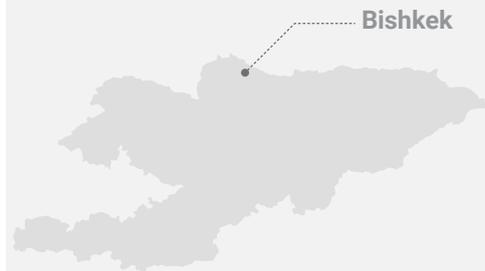
The Inclusive Public Spaces project has had a tremendous impact on the local community of the Bakai-Ata neighborhood, leaving behind a functioning public space and caring active residents who are ready to preserve this public space. Also, the impact of the project is aimed at other active interested residents of Bishkek, who would like to improve the public spaces of other districts in the future, using the Participatory Design Toolkit.

**Region:** Asia  
**BBB Budget:** 65,920 USD  
**Co-funding:** 3,860 USD  
**Partner:** Urban Initiative Foundation  
**Theme:** Children and youth  
**Typology:** Neighbourhood park



**5,100+**  
 people impacted

living within Bakai-Ata neighbourhood



**1**  
 PROJECTS

**2**  
 TRAININGS

**7**  
 TRAINEES

**16**  
 ENGAGEMENTS

**131**  
 PARTICIPANTS

**5100+**  
 IMPACTED PEOPLE



- 1. Reconstruction of Footpaths.
- 2. Sitting Arrangement around tree.
- 3. Sitting along community center wall with shade.
- 5. Wash basin.
- 6. Street Barrier to protect vehicle.
- 7. Tree plantation.



## ACTIVATING STREETS AND FOOTPATHS AS PUBLIC SPACES IN DHAKA, BANGLADESH

UN-Habitat through a public-private partnership with the Centre for Urban Studies (CUS), and the leadership from Dhaka North City Corporation undertook a pilot projects to regenerate footpaths and streets in neighbourhoods of Dhaka City. This regeneration aimed to ensure that strips of footpaths and streets can be enjoyed as public spaces for all, especially for children, youth and elderly people. One street, Jalladkhana was revamped with amenities to ensure a child-friendly space is created.

**156,350+**  
people impacted

living in the surrounding  
neighbourhoods of the four  
streets



Dhaka

**4**  
PROJECTS

**1**  
TRAININGS

**12**  
TRAINEES

**83**  
ENGAGEMENTS

**750**  
PARTICIPANTS

**156,350+**  
IMPACTED PEOPLE

**Region: Asia**  
**BBB Budget: 99,768 USD**  
**Co-funding: 34,230 USD**  
**Partner: Centre of Urban Studies**  
**Theme: Accessibility**  
**Typology: Streets**



# ONGOING PROJECTS

With the support of the Block by Block foundation, this year we have kick-started the implementation process of other seven public space projects in Indonesia, Egypt, Peru, Brazil, Jordan, Senegal and Mozambique, and we have launched two regional public space initiatives: the Latin American Public Space Network and the Centre for African Public Space (CAPS).



Country: Indonesia  
 City: Surakarta  
 Donor: BlockbyBlock  
 Implementing partners: Kota Kita  
 Duration: Oct 2021- Mar 2023



**350+**  
 people engaged  
 through stakeholder meetings,  
 community consultations, and  
 field studies

Transformation of Kali Pepe riverbank areas as an inclusive and resilient public spaces through a citywide vision and strategy and the development of a demonstrative project as a pilot.

Country: Egypt  
 City: Cairo  
 Donor: BlockbyBlock  
 Implementing partners: Built Environment Collective  
 Duration: Oct 2021 - April 2023



**100+**  
 people engaged  
 through community  
 consultation

Regeneration of Al-Khalifa Market to improve accessibility and regulating mobility as well as develop a solid waste collection system for the market that integrates with the neighbourhood.

Country: Peru  
 City: Lima  
 Donor: BlockbyBlock  
 Implementing partners: AVINA, Ocupa tu calle, Mano a Mano  
 Duration: Oct 2021 - Nov 2023



**300+**  
 people engaged  
 through community  
 consultations, stakeholder  
 meetings, and constructions

Promoting resilience, social cohesion and through the participatory (re)generation of four small-scale interventions in Lima, led by female builders of inclusive public spaces.

Country: Brazil  
 City: Belo Horizonte  
 Donor: BlockbyBlock  
 Implementing partners: Belo Horizonte Municipality  
 Duration: May 2022 - May 2023



**100+**  
 people engaged  
 through community  
 consultations and digital  
 workshops

Creation of new public spaces along the riverbanks of Belo Horizonte, involving the community and the students from the primary and secondary school.



Parque El Óvalo



Country: Jordan  
 City: Amman  
 Donor: BlockbyBlock  
 Implementing partners:  
 Department of Palestinian  
 Affairs  
 Duration: Oct 2021 - Sept 2023



**220+**  
 people engaged  
 through consultations, digital  
 workshops and planting  
 activities

Upgrade of public spaces  
 in two palestinian refugee  
 camps, improving  
 accessibility and integrating  
 playground equipment for  
 persons with disabilities,  
 greenery and adequate  
 sanitation services.

Country: Senegal  
 City: Dakar  
 Donor: BlockbyBlock  
 Implementing partners: GRET  
 Duration: Dec 2021 - June 2023



**100+**  
 people engaged  
 through community  
 consultation, and  
 engagements.

Territorial project  
 which aims to enhance  
 multifunctional public  
 spaces around public  
 transport stations by  
 experimenting with the use  
 of innovative collaborative  
 tools to co-design and co-  
 produce spaces.



Country: Mozambique  
 City: Beira  
 Donor: BlockbyBlock  
 Implementing partners:  
 UN-Habitat Mozambique  
 Duration: July 2021 - Mar 2023



**120+**  
 people engaged  
 through community  
 consultation, volunteering and  
 construction.

The project aims to  
 enhance the potential use  
 of public spaces for disaster  
 resilience and recovery  
 turning them into both  
 places of social integration  
 and primary places for  
 rescue and adaptive  
 response.



**2 public space  
 regional networks**

**The Latin America Network**

The Latin America Network  
 aims to bring together the  
 different entities working  
 toward the achievement of the  
 SDG 11.7 and build synergies in  
 the region.

**Centre for African Public  
 Space (CAPS) - [Link](#)**

Launched in collaboration with  
 the Johannesburg Development  
 Agency and GIZ Inclusive  
 Violence and Crime Prevention  
 Programme, the new centre  
 aims to promote research  
 and advocacy on public space  
 matters, leveraging existing  
 network and expertise of the  
 region.

# 10 IMPACT ENTRY POINTS

Since 2012, Global Public Space Programme has promoted the development of green, safe, inclusive and accessible public spaces, addressing several social, environmental and political challenges in different contexts.

Over the last ten years, we have developed expertise and knowledge around ten key entry points for impact: Digital engagement, climate actions, gender equality, child-friendly solutions, governance, migration and refugees, crisis response, capacity building, universal accessibility and placemaking.

These allow us to consolidate an **interdisciplinary approach**, identifying key strategies and solutions with an intersectional perspective.

From national urban policies, to public space assessments, city-wide strategies, upgrading public spaces, and placemaking, we have delivered qualitative projects that have impacted the lives of millions of people.

## Gender equality



## Digital engagement



## Child-friendly solutions



## Climate actions



### Governance and institution



### Crisis response



### Universal accessibility



### Migration and refugees



### Capacity building



### Placemaking





## PROVIDING GROUND-BREAKING TOOLS FOR **GENDER RESPONSIVE** PLANNING AND DESIGN

Girls and women in socio-economically disadvantaged areas of our cities are often one of the most vulnerable groups affected by the challenges of rapid and unplanned urbanisation. Research shows that girls and women use our cities differently than boys and men. As still considered in households of several countries the primary caretakers, women utilise multiple urban facilities daily and follow a complex pattern of movements. While women juggle between taking the children to school, doing groceries, supporting elderlies, and working, men predominantly move radially in our cities from home to work and back.

However, cities do not accommodate such complexity of uses, and too often, girls and women feel unwelcome in public life. From the age of eight, boys can dominate

80% of public spaces, and girls express that they feel significantly more insecure and excluded. Participatory processes are vital for planning a city that works for everyone. Involving girls and women in urban development will make the city more inclusive, equal and accessible as they plan and design with diversity and different needs in mind.

UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme promotes gender-sensitive public spaces and cities by mainstreaming women's participation in planning and design processes. Our ambition is to contribute to the localisation of SDG 3, 5, 10, 11, 16 and 17.

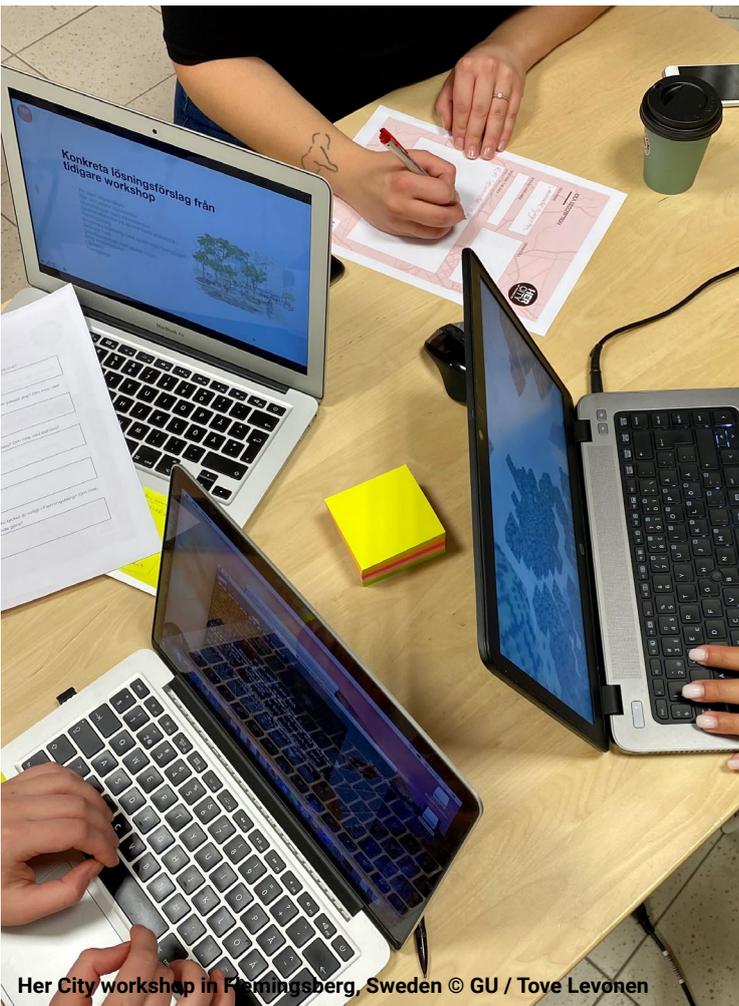
We have partnered with international organisations, local authorities and private



Girls discussing on the final design of public space in Lima, Peru © Mano a mano



Tactical urbanism intervention engaging girls and young women in Diesplot in Johannesburg, South Africa © JDA



Her City workshop in Flemingsberg, Sweden © GU / Tove Levonen

companies with a clear agenda on women empowerment in urban development, such as Swedish International Cooperation Development Agency, Plan International, Vinnova, Global Utmaning, Safetipin, and Safecity, among others.

We promote an intersectional approach to equal representation in urban planning processes. We launched Her City Toolbox in 2021, which gathers tailored tools and methodologies with a gender lens. We have implemented more than 20 initiatives with a gender component, and 45% of our engagement in our participatory activities is women and young girls.



## CASE STUDY

### HER CITY TOOLBOX: A DIGITAL PLATFORM TO PLAN AND DESIGN OUR CITIES FROM A GIRL'S PERSPECTIVE



Girls engaging in Minecraft workshop in Diepsloot in Johannesburg, South Africa © JDA

The Her City toolbox is a web platform that provides a comprehensive overview of digital tools to engage women and girls across crucial stages of the planning and design process. Use it as a digital guide for the entire urban development process to ensure the inclusion of the diverse experience of women, girls and other intersecting perspectives.

Her City Toolbox is a joint urban development initiative by UN-Habitat and the independent think tank Global Utmaning, financed by Vinnova, the Swedish Innovation Agency, and with contributions from Block by Block Foundation, White Architects, Swedish Union of Tenants and MethodKit.

The toolbox follows a unique process containing nine building blocks as a digital guideline on co-plan cities from a girl's perspective. The nine blocks represent the three phases of the urban development process. They guide you through the assessment, the design and the implementation phase. Each block contains several activities with detailed steps, linking tools to deliver on a Her City project.

Her City provides an opportunity to build capacity on a larger scale. Her City provides municipal professionals, urban actors and local decision-makers with a solid toolbox for mainstreaming youth, gender and socioeconomic perspectives by strategically involving girls and young women in urban planning and design.

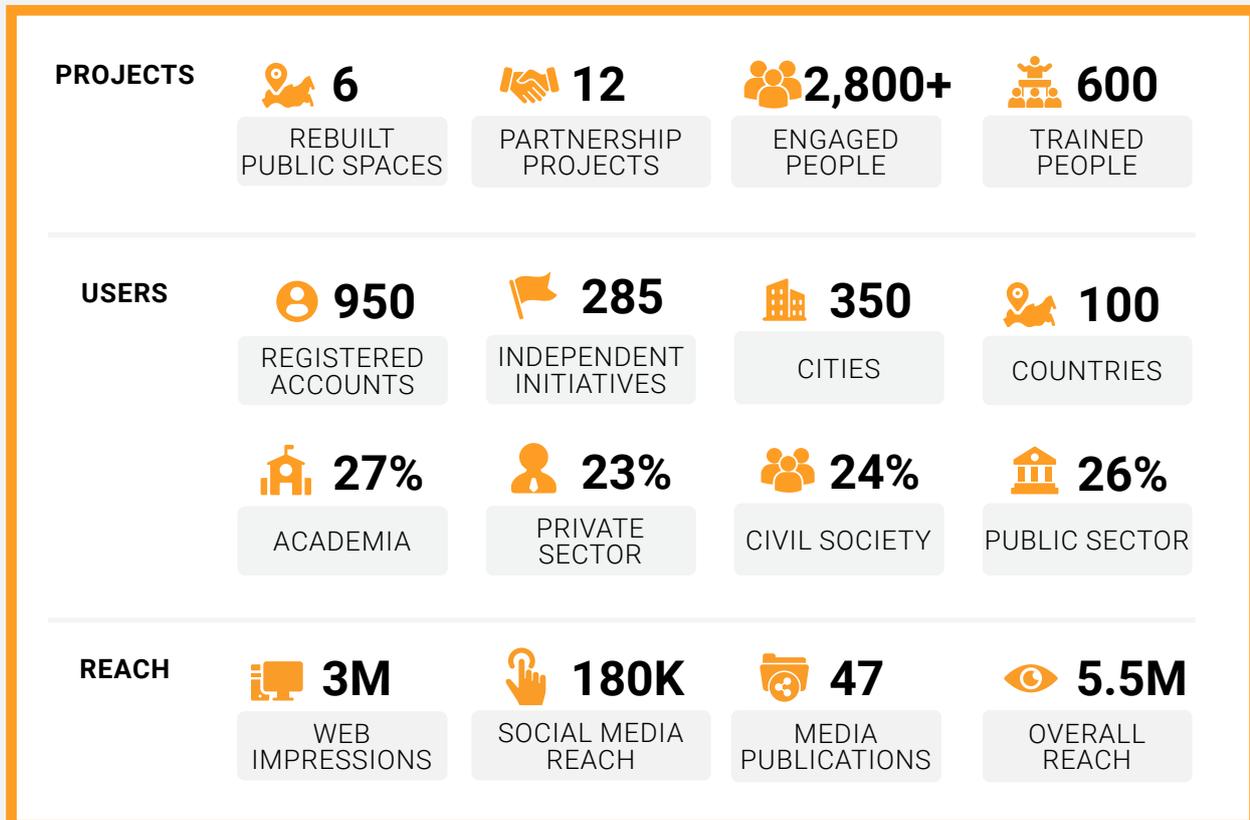
Since the launch in March 2021, we have built global capacity through 26 local and regional training with 600 participants. We have further organised and participated in 45 events with 4800 participants. At least 60% have been female.

In 2022, we implemented 12 partnership projects on all continents with UN agencies, local governments, NGOs, the private sector and universities. We engaged over 2800 participants in 15 participatory activities in Botkyrka, Beirut, Chania, Delhi, Gaza & West Bank, Helsingborg, Huddinge, Johannesburg, Kakuma & Kalobeyei, Lima, Nairobi and Weimar. The finalised projects account for 30,000 impacted people, considering the population in the proximity

of the sites. The project has developed the Her City Guide, an academic syllabus, and the final Cities for Girls, Cities for All report.

As of September 2022, the toolbox has 1000 registered user accounts from 350 cities in 100 countries, and 285 independent initiatives have registered to use the toolbox. 23% of the users are from the private sector, 24% from civil society, 26% from the public sector and 27% come from academia. The digital toolbox had over three million impressions and a social media reach of 180,000 and 70,000 clicks. We have appeared in 47 media publications and broadcasts. Altogether we have had a reach of over 7 million.

## KEY FINDINGS





## TACKLING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION THROUGH **DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT**

Over the last decade, digital technologies have become increasingly important for cities. They supported the development of infrastructures, public services and urban facilities and are now highly integrated into our daily life. We silently witnessed a shift where new technologies are no longer the results of efficient procedures and innovative systems but are the primary driver and enabler in urban planning practices. Many technologies have supported urban planners, architects and decision-makers to shape new smart cities and our societies, like sensor networks, big data analytics, drone and satellite imagery, data accessibility, open-source smartphone applications, participatory platforms and tools, privacy and accountability mechanisms, virtual reality,

and autonomous vehicles, among others. However, digital resources and capacities are not equally distributed worldwide, and access to basic technologies is still not taken for granted. The digital divide and digital literacy are becoming urban matters, increasing inequality and social segregation among countries and rural and urban areas.

Moreover, digital technologies offer the opportunity to bridge the divide between inhabitants and their cities. Too often, decision-makers consider public participation as a box-to-tick or a constraint of the planning process rather than an opportunity to develop quality outcomes and build trust and accountability. Cities limit public consultation by sharing documents on



Minecraft workshop in Beira, Mozambique © UN-Habitat Mozambique



Children and caretakers learning Minecraft to design public space in Kali Pepe, Indonesia © Kota Kita

the city's website for feedback or by using traditional engagement tools that do not attract citizens. Cities should complement these methods and acquire innovative digital participation tools, to create greater engagement and transform planning processes into interactive, fun and engaging activities, reaching more youths and diverse users, stimulating critical thinking and building responsible communities.

At UN-Habitat, the Global Public Space Programme has been an early adopter of digital technologies at UN-Habitat. We have managed to pilot several tools and methods for urban planning and digital participation, thanks to our strong partnerships with key partners like Microsoft, Mojang, the Block by Block Foundation, Erickson Foundation, Inhabit Place, SIDA, Vinnova, Fondation Botnar, our local implementing partners among others. The integration of digital tools into our processes has helped us reach a more diverse group

of the community that are often hard to reach. Some of the tools are open-access data collecting software, video games, smartphone applications, mixed and virtual reality, and interactive digital whiteboards.

Our innovative use of Minecraft, Kobo Toolbox, GIS softwares, Mural, Miro, and applications like Safetipin, Safecity, Inhabit Place among other, has been widely recognised as a fun and transformative way of involving communities in urban planning processes.

**«I have learnt a lot, I have learnt how to use a computer, and I am happy to have got something I can teach my kids. I hope this project will progress, so our kids and family will have a place to go and have fun.»**

- Asma, participant of Minecraft workshop in Kilifi

## CASE STUDY

### ENGAGING VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES IN URBAN PLANNING THROUGH MINECRAFT IN BYDEL ALNA, NORWAY



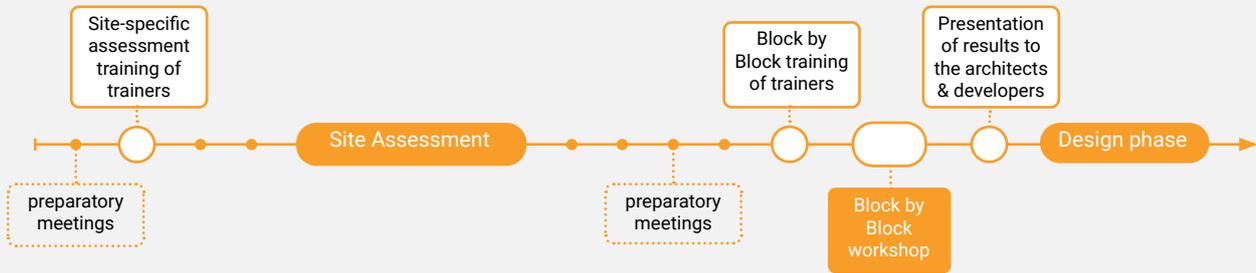
Certification of participation to the Minecraft workshop for the children of Bydel Alna, Norway © Oslo Municipality

Alna is an administrative district (bydel) in the northeastern part of Oslo municipality. In 2020, 53% of the population was of immigrant origin. In 2018, the average gross income was 394,000 NOK, lower than the average for the city of Oslo (529,400 NOK).

Trygve Lies plass is the main square of Bydel Alna, located in the Furuset neighbourhood. Furuset centre is a mobility hub connecting the underground metro and the bus line. The area presents a considerable pedestrian flow, also increased by the presence of a mall, a library and Alna Bydelshuset, a recently completed community centre. The area is prone to host several social functions; however, the public spaces offer limited opportunities to stay, gather and socialise.

Bydel Alna started a process of regeneration of the Trygve Lies Plass to redevelop the urban areas and to provide a green, inclusive, and attractive public space. UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme has supported the district by increasing the capacities of local actors on innovative ways for public participation in assessing the quality of the existing assets and co-designing new solutions responsive to the community's needs. The objective was to increase the quality of the public space while building trust between the community and the local government, leveraging the potential of digital participatory tools.

We have trained over ten representatives from Bydel Alna on our site-specific



assessment and the Block by Block methodologies and supported their application. The interaction between the participants during the workshop was remarkable. Participants have developed inspiring design solutions to transform Trygves Lies Plass into an inclusive, fun, and attractive public space.

After the site visit and the brainstorming session, some solutions were prevalent among the children, such as trampolines, bouncing castles, playground area, fountain, kiosk and roller coaster. During the workshop, we launched two challenges to inspire them to think outside the box. New original ideas came out, such as a gaming

room, cinema, sister corner, climbing wall, and LGBTQI+ decorations.

Following the workshop, we conducted an expert design studio with the architects and the developers, who were impressed with the methodology and the results of the exercise, confirming their interest in integrating the outcomes into the design of the public space.

Finally, Bydel Alna hosted a validation meeting with the broader community to present the final design proposal. The community was content to see their ideas integrated into the final drawings, offering further support for the project's next steps.

**Existing public space**



**Workshop results**



**Expert design studio**



**Final design proposal**





## BRINGING BACK “PLAY” IN CITIES THROUGH **CHILD-FRIENDLY** INITIATIVES

### KEY FINDINGS

 **26**

CHILD-FRIENDLY  
INITIATIVES

 **138**

PEOPLE TRAINED

 **1,600+**

PEOPLE ENGAGED

Although the rate of population of children under age 14 is decreasing, it still represents 25% of the total population (World Bank, 2021), from which over 650 Million are under the age of five (UNICEF, 2021).

Children’s cognitive and physical development is impacted by the place and the environment where they grow into. Therefore, the built environment has crucial importance in stimulating friendly spaces where children can thrive. Public spaces can play an essential role in increasing social interactions, promoting physical activity and creating safer environments for kids. Healthy and safe public spaces for children mean providing more than just playgrounds but committing to child-friendly cities and recognising children’s human rights as articulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In a child-friendly city, children become active agents, and their voices and opinions can influence decision-making processes. Recent years have shown significant

growth in the Child-Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI), launched by UNICEF and UN-Habitat, declaring that the well-being of children is the ultimate indicator of a healthy habitat, a democratic society and good governance.

Since 2017, UN-Habitat’s Global Public Space Programme has consolidated public and civil society partnerships across the United Nations on child-friendly initiatives. The aim has been to increase access to safe public spaces for children, especially the most marginalised, as stipulated in the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Most notable initiatives have been in China, United Arab Emirates, Mozambique, South Africa, Turkey and Bangladesh. The need for cities to provide safe and inclusive public spaces provided a foundation for launching the “Principles and Guidance for Public Spaces for Children”, a collaboration between UN-Habitat, UNICEF and WHO. In 2022, UN-Habitat worked with partners in Kyrgyzstan and Bangladesh to provide healthy, child-friendly public spaces.



Tactical urbanism activities in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan © PFUI



Child-friendly public space in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan © PFUI

«I liked the workshop, I had a lot of fun. It was my first time. I built a slide, a swing, streetlight... I will present the project to the community tomorrow. Our square is open for everyone»

- Erikson, student from Praia

## CASE STUDY

### ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL THROUGH CHILD-FRIENDLY PUBLIC SPACES IN BANGLADESH

UN-Habitat through a public-private partnership with the Centre for Urban Studies (CUS), Bhumijo Planning & Design World Vision & Berger Paints Bangladesh Limited and the leadership from Dhaka North City Corporation undertook a pilot project to regenerate footpaths and streets in neighborhoods of Dhaka City. The initiative aimed to secure space for pedestrians along the streets, enjoyable as public spaces for all, especially for children, youth and elderly people. Currently serving only as transportation means, streets become vibrant public spaces for interactive and healthy activities. Active participation of local communities was crucial to ensure qualitative outcomes of the project. The project engaged over 750 people in 80 participatory activities.

**Jalladkhana Public Space:** Located opposite a historically important site this space was an unused road side area mostly occupied by illegal parking, and used by drug users in the evening. Throughout the process local community were engaged in the design and decision making process, and later on, other partners joined spontaneously to support the initiative. An underutilised space like the Jalladkhana has been revamped with necessary amenities and made accessible to the community. This public space has various facilities for children including various play equipment's and play area, a public stage, seating arrangements and a public toilet.

**Mirpur Section 13:** The site of Mirpur Section 13 is also part of a residential

area. Here, the footpath across the road around the councilor's office was already lying unused. To make the place active and playful and at the same time to create an open space for the children, women and older people living in the area, murals have been drawn on the large expanse of walls along the side of the Councilor's office. In one corner, there is a climber for children to play and some seating arrangements for people to relax. Trees are planted in different colored planter boxes along the sidewalk.

**Nannu Market Lane 21:** Lane 21 of Nannu Market is a road way inside a residential neighborhood. Residents were found to sit on the pavement sides and children to play on the street. There was no specific place for children to play and no control over vehicles entering the road. At the outset of the project, the councilor closed the road entry on one side and the road area became very safe, and some seating arrangements were constructed.

**Road on Ward 3:** Located a few lanes away from Paris Road, the children on this street are also deprived of the opportunity to play. The proposal of street painting has been given here for children to play and enjoy on the road which is vehicle free. In order to re-present some of the traditional games to the younger generation, grids of traditional games were drawn on the streets. Children can play as they like on these painted game boards whenever they want. One or two climbers, seating benches and tree planters were also provided along the road sides.



Inauguration of child-friendly public space in Dhaka, Bangladesh © Centre of Urban Studies



Child-friendly public space in Dhaka, Bangladesh © CUS

«I have a small shop beside the ground. Earlier, I had to shut it after dusk due to the drug users gathering here. But now no drug user comes here. This place is always filled with local people and children.» - Md Raju, a resident from Dhaka



## BLUE AND GREEN SOLUTIONS FOR INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC SPACES

Over the past decade, floods, droughts, cyclones, earthquakes and natural disasters have multiplied. Millions of people have suffered the devastating effects of adverse weather phenomena, raging on socio-economically vulnerable areas and causing migration and instability. Urbanisation and global warming put valuable ecosystems under threat. In the most rapidly urbanised areas, climate change is a “risk multiplier” and a “fragility amplifier”; vast areas are upset by processes of drying up, abandonment of territories, reduction of permeable regions, pollution, ground exploitation, and loss or impoverishment of biodiversity.

Through sustainable urban development, cities can limit their environmental impact and reduce the effects of climate change. Public spaces provide several opportunities to implement mitigation strategies and

nature-based solutions to increase urban resilience in our cities. Blue and green infrastructures, e-mobility, circular economy, green incentives, and green open spaces would not only support the fight against temperature rise but also improve the quality of life of urban dwellers, boosting social interactions and health and wellbeing.

The Global Public Space Programme took action in many countries with different urban planning initiatives, highlighting the benefits of nature-based solutions and developing policy recommendations through public space practices.

«Before the clean-up there were more crimes in the park, now people come here and relax».

- Josephat, environmental activist in Nairobi

### Our Urban resilience initiatives

2018

- **São Paulo, Brazil - Recovering green public spaces in São Paulo**
- The actions of the project focus on two public parks located on the northern outskirts of São Paulo to contribute to implementing the urban green infrastructure and the related public spaces. Workshops, mobilisation activities and the use of Block-by-block participatory design methodology of “Movimento Boa Praça” to engage the community in the recovery of the surrounding green spaces.

2019

- **City-wide public space assessments of five cities in Ethiopia**
- **Rehabilitation of iconic public spaces:** focus on river basins

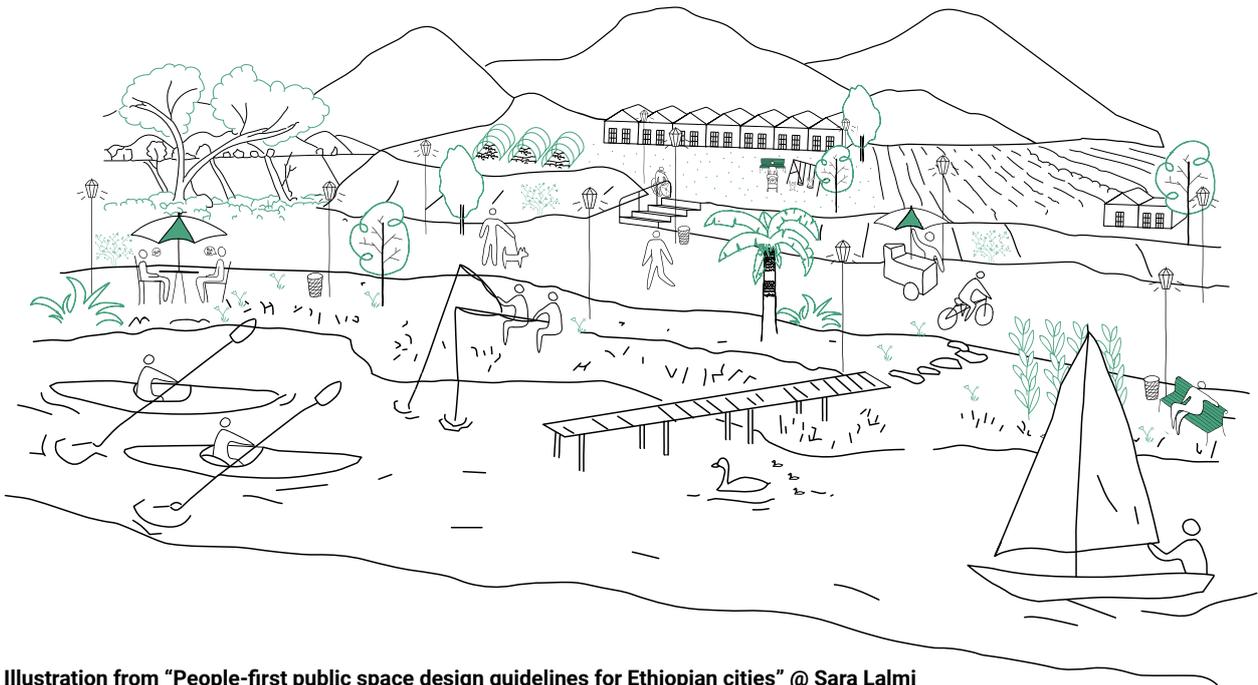


Illustration from “People-first public space design guidelines for Ethiopian cities” @ Sara Lalmi



Korogochu riverside before © KGS



Korogochu riverside after © KGS

2020

2021

2022

- Riverside Corridor Design Guideline | SHEGER, Ethiopia**  
 A handbook that established a course of action for new urban greenways and riverbank zones in Addis Ababa and intended to render the capital city more resilient and better adapted to climate change. It aims to raise the quality of life in the city and along the rivers.
- Yangon HTEE PROGRAMME:** build climate adaptation and resilient solutions for responsive neighbourhoods using Minecraft
- Policy Brief 1:** Using Nature-Based Solutions in Public Spaces to Enhance Urban Resilience
- Policy Brief 2:** Public Spaces for Urban Resilience
- 1<sup>st</sup> African Forum on Urban Forest**
- Launch of the GoBlue programme in Kenya:** Promoting land-sea planning and management
- Nairobi River Regeneration Initiative:** Signing of MOU with government of Kenya
- Nature-based solution playbooks:** Ongoing
- Nairobi Rivers Basin Regeneration Programme:** Political commitment at national level through the formation of the Nairobi Rivers Commission and resource mobilisation
- 11<sup>th</sup> World Urban Forum,** People and River event
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Asia Pacific Forum on Urban Forest**

## CASE STUDY

### THE GOBLUE PROGRAMME: BOOSTING BLUE ECONOMY IN THE COASTAL COUNTIES OF KENYA

In Kenya, the coastal counties of Mombasa, Kilifi, Lamu, Taita Taveta, Kwale and Tana River are significantly at risk of being affected by climate-related issues and hazards, owing to their low altitude, high temperatures, high humidity levels and the rapid urbanisation of the towns.

While urbanisation has created more opportunities for economic development within the coastal counties, the unplanned nature of its occurrence has resulted in poor resilience to climate-related hazards such as flooding and sea-level rise, as well as increased degradation of coastal resources and assets. This hinders effective socio-economic development as most of the population's livelihood is heavily dependent on coastal resources and ecosystems. For instance, as the sea level rise increasingly threatens the counties,

their beaches, historical and cultural sites, waterfront hotels, industries, ports and human settlements could be negatively affected, hindering tourism, trade and agriculture opportunities.

To address these challenges, the Global Public Space Programme, through its experience in the sustainable and holistic spatial planning of blue and green spaces, has been supporting the GoBlue Programme in Kilifi and Mombasa, adopting an integrated, ecosystem-based approach to the management of blue and green resources. The initiative is spearheaded by the European Union and the Government of Kenya, seeking to advance the Blue Economy agenda, enhance the resilience of the coastal regions to climatic changes and promote the protection of coastal resources and assets.



© UN-Habitat / Chiara Martinuzzi



Brainstorming with beach operators in Mombasa, Kenya © UN-Habitat



An example of waterfront public space in Mombasa, Kenya © UN-Habitat / Sharon Ogoti

The team has actively worked towards upgrading Mazingira park, a beachfront public space in Kilifi County overlooking the Indian Ocean. We used our GIS expertise and our [site-specific public space assessment toolkit](#) in collecting and analysing spatial data, both secondary and primary, with a keen focus on green coverage, water assessment, climatic factors, related hazards, user comfort, land cover and land use of the site and its immediate neighbourhood. Afterwards, we conducted two Block by Block co-design workshops, engaging 51 participants in Mombasa and Kilifi who provided design ideas to tackle the site challenges and leverage the opportunities. These activities provided insights for the design phase while building capacity amongst community members.

Central to our approach to climate-sensitive design is the application of nature-based solutions. Thus the design proposal for Mazingira Park heavily integrates mangroves and other native vegetation that provide shade while serving ecological functions, protect the park from coastal erosion, open up to nature-related recreational activities and preserve the adjacent coastal wetland and marine ecosystems, including seagrass. Alongside this, other strategies include integrating safe and inclusive NMT routes within the park, using climate-friendly materials, effective stormwater management, and integrating activities with minimal ecological interference.



## FOSTERING RESILIENCE THROUGH PUBLIC SPACES: STRATEGIES FOR **CRISIS RESPONSE**

The world has been facing a variety of crises which have caused significant economic, social, and health disruptions. The effect of an emergency crisis on public spaces and cities can be profound. Emergency crises could be natural (Earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, etc.), financial (Economic downturns, stock market crashes, currency devaluations, etc.), political (Wars, civil unrest, political assassinations, revolutions, etc.), health (Pandemics, infectious disease outbreaks, food-borne illnesses, etc.), and man-made (Industrial accidents, blasts, terrorism, cyberattacks, etc.).

During an emergency crisis, public spaces and cities are often subject to heightened security measures, curfews, and other restrictions. This can lead to decreased foot traffic, social interactions and economic activities. Additionally, if the emergency crisis is related to a natural disaster, public spaces and cities can be severely damaged, leaving entire neighbourhoods without access to services and resources.

Public space plays a vital role in fostering resilience as they provide a sense of security, protection and support for those affected by the crisis. It provides a place for people to come together to share resources and experiences, seek help and support, and make plans for the future. It allows people to rebuild mutual aid networks, share stories, raise awareness, and organise support for those in need. Public space also offers a platform for



Brainstorming with children in Beira, Mozambique © UN-Habitat Mozambique

creative expression and civic action, allowing people to express their feelings and opinions and actively engage in their communities' response to a crisis. Finally, public space can be a space for healing, a place for people to find strength in solidarity and hope in the midst of despair.

Our Programme has supported crisis responses in many countries through public space strategies and interventions. This includes rapid assessment of damages in the city, strategies to safely re-open public spaces during the pandemic, re-purposing public spaces during a crisis to accommodate shelters and rebuilding social solidarity in times of conflict.



Regenerated beachfront in Les Cayes, Haiti © UN-Habitat



Distribution of imagination kit for children in São Paulo, Brazil © AVINA



Mobile market in Dhaka, Bangladesh © UN-Habitat / Sohel Rana

## Our crisis response initiatives

### 2016

- Rebuilding Tradition in The Kathmandu Valley, **Nepal**
- Building quality of life in Les Cayes and Pout-au-Prince, **Haiti**

### 2019

- Reconnecting people with their place: enhance community potential for a resilient reconstruction after IDAI cyclone of most affected neighbourhoods in Beira city, **Mozambique**
- **Afghanistan** urban safety and security programme

### 2020

- Supporting Post Disaster Recovery Efforts through Climate Resilient Public Spaces in Cyclone Affected Areas in Beira, **Mozambique**
- **Covid response in 10 cities:**
  - Organise ten pop-up or mobile playgrounds for small groups of children in Hanoi, **Vietnam**
  - Installing umbrella and hand washing facilities for customers and vendors in two temporary markets in Dhaka, **Bangladesh**
  - A kit to feed children's imaginations in Sao Paolo, **Brazil**
  - Supporting LGBTQ community affected by COVID-19 in Quito, **Ecuador**
  - Accessing public spaces in informal settlements in Bhopal, **India**
  - Ketandan Peoples Learning Centre in Surabaya, **Indonesia**
  - Digitalise Traditional Market in Jember, **Indonesia**
  - Supporting vendors who have been relocated to open fields in Kisumu, **Kenya**
  - Food Security and Economic Reactivation from Public Space in Puerto Escondido, **Mexico**
  - Increasing Hygiene in local markets in Niamey, **Niger**

### 2021

- Reviving and renovating public stairs affected by the Beirut port explosions: memory and space, **Lebanon**

## CASE STUDY

### REBUILDING BEIRUT STAIRCASES: A CITY RESILIENT IN THE FACE OF TRAGEDY



In 2020, a massive explosion rocked the port of Beirut. The impact of the blast on the built environment extended 6 km from its epicentre, causing severe damage at the level of housing, public spaces and municipal services. It is estimated that more than 300,000 people were directly impacted by the blast, including 60,000 families with damaged houses, and thousands evacuated and displaced following severe structural damages within their homes.

The explosion's impact adds to the country's already critical economic and financial situation due to the longstanding political divide and the COVID-19 pandemic. The blast also significantly impacted numerous public spaces in the affected neighbourhoods, rendering them inactive, deserted, and inaccessible. In addition to the damages in thousands of residential buildings, severe damages occurred in public facilities such as gardens, urban

pockets, sports facilities, and public buildings such as schools, hospitals, health centres, public and private administration.

Meeting at the project site, participants reflected on their use of the stairs, imagining themselves in the architect role. They considered what they liked and disliked about the stairs and how to improve them. Participants visualised these ideas by drawing and annotating axonometric views of the stairs. In the second phase of the workshop, participants developed these ideas using Minecraft. Some common ideas included planting more greenery, implementing street furniture such as benches and adding lighting and trash bins. A few participants also created different coloured steps, street games, play items and art for the staircases.

In 2022, the rehabilitation was finalised, and the stairs are now open to the public as a commute path, a place to hang out, play and relax.



Vendome stairs rehabilitated after the blast in Beirut, Lebanon © Catalytic Actions



## LEVERAGING INSTITUTIONS AND GOVERNANCE TO PROMOTE JUST PUBLIC SPACES FOR ALL

According to UN-Habitat's guidelines, public land should represent around 50% of the urban surface, of which 10-15% should be dedicated to open public spaces. This is a considerable amount of land and assets that national, regional and local governments should leverage to improve the quality of life of their citizens.

In many cities, public land remains vacant, underused, inaccessible or poorly managed and maintained. Lack of clear public space governance leads to encroachment, social conflicts, an impoverished image of the city, pollution, and spatial inequality. With a lack of governance, we often see community-based organisations, local associations, and individuals taking matters into their own hands to improve the conditions of public space. This is done by establishing informal or semi-formal management schemes, organising cleaning and maintenance sessions, providing missing services, and coordinating activities to activate public spaces.

These processes are not recognised or endorsed by the official authorities; therefore, institutionalising the role of public spaces is a key step to achieving sustainable urban development. Local governments must allocate resources to improve the quality of public spaces, define a clear governance structure and leverage the potential role of private and non-governmental entities. National governments, on the other hand, must enforce best practices and adopt national



Celebrating first public space policy in Palestine © UN-Habitat

policies to implement inclusive, safe and accessible public spaces, with a multi-sectorial approach.

Over the last few years, UN-Habitat supported the national government of Ethiopia and Senegal in strengthening their public space agenda. We supported different countries in the reporting of the progress toward SDG 11.7 by developing a clear methodology to monitor the indicator. Through the work of the city-wide public space assessments, we provided public space strategies and recommendations for the local authorities to improve the status quo and influence policy and decision-making processes. We have promoted civil engagement in initiatives such as the HAYA Programme, in Palestine, using our tools for public space assessment and co-design. This has led to the formulation and adoption of the first public space policy in Palestine.

## CASE STUDY

### THE GOVERNMENT OF KENYA PUSHES ITS AGENDA ON PUBLIC SPACES STARTING THROUGH THE NAIROBI RIVERS

Nairobi rivers have become an urgent issues, being a concerning threat for people's health and wellbeing, ecosystems and bioversity, economic development, security of tenure, food security, among others. Waters are polluted due to sewage and industrial discharges and poor waste management. Heavy rains increases volume of the water streams, flooding or causing landslides in the surrounding areas which are highly populated by informal dwellers.

Since 2020, UN-Habitat has been working closely with the government of Kenya, the former Nairobi Metropolitan Service, and the Nairobi City Council on the Nairobi rivers. The Nairobi Rivers Regeneration Initiative launched in 2021 drawn the foundation for a committed agenda of the Kenyan authorities, building synergies among different sectors and stakeholders.

This year, the newly elected President of the Republic of Kenya, under the Office of the Deputy President, has established the Nairobi Rivers Commission, tasked with a broad-based plan to restore the natural ecosystem, socio-economic activities and improved livelihoods along the Nairobi rivers. The Commission is also a key step towards the institutionalisation and coordination of ongoing activities led by different stakeholders towards the regeneration of the Nairobi River Basins.

The establishment of the Commission position rivers as public spaces and their crucial role in the city ecosystem for social, environmental and economic development.

Meanwhile, the County Assembly of Nairobi City has started the revision of the Nairobi's Bill of Public Space of 2017 and amended in 2021. This is a strategic document that identifies actions for the development, management and maintenance of public spaces in Nairobi. The assembly is reviewing the contents of the bill of its adoption. This process has realized the need for the development of the Policy framework and subsequently an Act of the Assembly.

The collaboration between UN-Habitat and the Government of Kenya has strengthened the public commitment on institutionalising the role of public space in urban planning and design practices in Kenya, recognising the urge to invest and strategise efforts for a greener and more inclusive public space network.

**«This state of affairs must come to an end and the unsafe and unhealthy environmental situation must be corrected to restore Nairobi to its true identity. We have resolved that the city must not only reclaim its glorious reputation as Africa's green city in the sun, but must also live up to its ancestral identity as the river of cool, fresh and safe water.»**

- William Ruto, President of the Reblc of Kenya



## PROMOTING **UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE** PUBLIC SPACES AND STREETS FOR ALL



Today, 15 per cent of the urban population lives with a type of disability. By 2050, 70 per cent of the world's population will live in urban communities, including over two billion persons with disabilities and older persons requiring inclusive and accessible infrastructure and services to live independently and participate equally in society. When we discuss the right to the city, public spaces become a key driver to ensure accessibility and inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, into public life. The Covid-19 pandemic reminds us of persisting accessibility barriers that exclude marginalised groups from basic services during a crisis.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its articles 3 and 9, together with the New Urban Agenda, highlight the importance of public spaces and public participation in urban planning to ensure equal access and inclusion in urban matters. While the topic has been recognised globally, many cities still lack the understanding and the capacity to deliver suitable accessible public spaces and the means to engage with persons with disability and older persons.

UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme has promoted the representation of persons with disabilities in all our initiatives. Persons with disabilities participated in our engagement activities

to co-design and upgrade public space in Jordan, United Arab Emirates, South Africa, Kenya, Bangladesh, Nepal, Vietnam and India. Over the last decade, we have strengthened our partnership with entities such as HealthBridge, UNICEF and the World Blind Union to scale up our efforts to comply with the articles of CRPD.

«Everything you do is not a favour; it is a must. You must ensure there is universal accessibility in every element you include in public spaces»

- Carolyne Agwanda, Chair of the Kisumu County People With Disabilities Council in Kisumu

## LAUNCHING A NEW ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL OF PUBLIC SPACE AT THE WORLD URBAN FORUM 11 IN KATOWICE



In 2022 we worked together with City Space Architecture and the World Blind Union to publish an issue entirely dedicated to universally accessible public spaces in the Journal of Public Space. Volume 7, number 2, titled “Universally accessible public space for all” and launched at the World Urban Forum 11 in Katowice, counts two editorial pieces, eight academic papers, seven non-academic/case study contributions and two viewpoints about various matters related to universal access and public spaces.



Launching a new issue of the Journal of Public Space in collaboration with WBU Katowice, Poland © CSA

## CASE STUDY

### FAST-TRACKING UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY IN KISUMU'S PUBLIC SPACES AND STREETS THROUGH TACTICAL URBANISM



@ UN-Habitat / Joy Mutai



Exploratory walk in Kisumu, Kenya © UN-Habitat / Chiara Martinuzzi

UN-Habitat, in partnership with the City of Kisumu, the Institute of Transport and Development Policy (ITDP), the Civil Society Urban Development Platform (CSUDP) and other partners, coordinated a series of stakeholder engagement activities to re-design Freedom Park (also known as Uhuru Park) and the surrounding streets. The activities leading to the Africities conference happening from 17-21 May 2022, were supported by the UN Road Safety Fund financed “Reclaiming Streets for Pedestrians and Cyclists” project and the International Climate Initiative funded “Urban Pathways” project and Block by Block Foundation.

Thirty-two local community members and technical staff of the City of Kisumu took part in a two-day Minecraft workshop to review and provide new ideas for the proposed public space design of Uhuru Park and the surrounding streets

in the centre of the city. The team gave special attention to principles of universal accessibility and inclusive design, and it ensured adequate representation of persons with disabilities during the workshop.

The workshop participants identified lighting, pedestrian crossings and footpaths as core priorities. They also highlighted the need for washrooms, benches, shelter from the weather and accessible infrastructure for people with disabilities.

The findings from the workshop were presented to local authorities and community leaders, who committed to integrating the community’s ideas into the final design. During the 9th Africities Summit, the participants joint a placemaking day to improve the safety and accessibility of the area through tactical urbanism activities, following some of the ideas coming out of the workshop, in partnership with Sarova Imperial Hotel.



Tactical urbanism intervention during the 9<sup>th</sup> Africities Summit in Kisumu, Kenya © UN-Habitat / Joy Mutai



## ENHANCING INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS THROUGH PUBLIC SPACES

The rate of migration has been increasingly accelerating in the last few years. Forecasts predict that by 2050 over one billion people will be displaced due to climate change and natural disasters. Even if climate change remains the leading cause of migration and displacement, including phenomena such as droughts, hurricanes, floods, and fires, it is not the only one. Conflicts, civil wars, industrial accidents, and eviction are also affecting the lives of thousands of people daily in several areas of our globe, increasing the demographic pressure on cities. Public spaces become a resource to provide emergency housing and basic services. They become the platform for exchange between host communities and migrants, promoting social cohesion and solidarity.

UN-Habitat has collaborated with key stakeholders to enhance the integration of refugees and migrants in our cities and societies. Our partnership with UNHCR

started in 2017 in Kenya to promote inclusive public spaces in the Kalobeyei Refugee Settlement. We encourage collaboration with the local and national governments to ensure the endorsement of long-term strategies. We started collaborating with the Department of Palestinian Affairs of Jordan in 2020 to address the integration of palestinian refugees in the country and to enhance their living conditions. With them, we have built capacity and strengthened skills in urban design and public participation in refugee camps. Our work in Latin America started in 2018 to leverage the potential of digital tools like Minecraft in building social cohesion between the host community and the migrants in Uruguay, Venezuela, Peru, Colombia and the Dominican Republic. Finally, in 2022 we started a collaboration with UNDA to promote inclusive public spaces in contexts affected by migration in Brazil and Lebanon.

### Our initiatives on migration and refugees:

2016

- Building social cohesion between urban refugees and host communities in Nabaa, **Beirut, Lebanon**

2017

- Kalobeyei Refugee Settlement public space project in **Kakuma, Kenya**

2018

- Community-led (re)generation of small scale public spaces in five countries of Latin America in **Montevideo, Uruguay**



2020

- City-wide public space assessment in **West Nile, Uganda**

2021

- MC2CM capacity building on participatory processes in **Jordan**
- Enhancing the safety and resilience of Palestinian refugees through improving access to water and sanitation facilities in public spaces in **Amman, Jordan**
- Using Minecraft as a participatory tool for young refugees and migrants from **Venezuela** and host communities

2022

- Inclusive Public Spaces for social and economic inclusion of migrants in border cities across the humanitarian and development nexus in **Brazil and Lebanon**
- Using Minecraft as a participatory tool for migrant communities and host countries in **Andean Countries HUB**

## CASE STUDY

### PUBLIC SPACES FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION OF MIGRANTS IN BORDER CITIES IN BRAZIL AND LEBANON



Delivery of the first city-wide public space assessment report in Barracão, Brazil © UN-Habitat Brazil

UN-Habitat is collaborating with UNDESA for the implementation of a multi-country project in Lebanon and in Brazil, funded by UNDA. The project aims to develop inclusive public spaces for the social and economic inclusion of migrants in the border cities of Barracão, Bom Jesus do Sul and Dionísio Cerqueira (Brazil) and Bernardo de Irigoyen (Argentina), Foz do Iguaçu (Brazil) and Ciudad del Este (Paraguay), Bebnine and Mehamrah (Lebanon). Migration phenomena in these countries are different: while in Brazil/ Argentina, people move across the border cities to seek economic opportunities, in Lebanon migration is pushed by social and political conflicts.

The teams have worked on capacity development, advocacy and policies review, to mainstream and institutionalise the role of public space in border cities affected by migration. Currently, the teams are finalising neighbourhood public space assessment, to evaluate current status of the public space networks in the border cities. This will inform the prioritisation of one or two public spaces to focus on during the next steps. Public space site-specific assessments and co-design workshops will lead to the design of an inclusive public space and the policy revision.

The teams have overall engaged over 250 participants during the launching events, key informants interviews, data collection, capacity building sessions.



Urban collaboration workshop on public space network in Barracão, Brazil © UN-Habitat Brazil



# BUILDING CAPACITY OF URBAN ACTORS ON PUBLIC SPACE DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

## Knowledge development and capacity building:



UN-Habitat commits to strengthening city stakeholders' skills, knowledge and abilities to localise SDGs and provide them with adequate tools for sustainable urban development. Through training workshops, presentations and courses, a comprehensive knowledge foundation can be built across the city by multi-sectoral and multi-scalar actors, including decision-makers, experts, professionals, NGOs, governing bodies and public and private institutions.

Over the years, the Global Public Space Programme has conducted 95 trainings, counting over 4,550 people acquainted with UN-Habitat tools and methods. In 2022, we completed 22 training workshops in 17 countries, both virtually and in-person. Over 235 trainers have participated in our sessions, learning tools and methodologies to assess, co-design and implement vibrant public spaces.

While most of our training leads to applying the tools for project implementation, we

also conducted interactive sessions to inform and guide local urban actors. We facilitated two capacity-building sessions on our tools in the Arab States. We ran seven SDG assessment training, two of which were in 2022, on monitoring and reporting progress towards achieving SDG 11. Seven Her City regional training shared the approach, methodology and digital tools under the Her City toolbox to promote girls' perspective in public space development. We facilitated 12 lectures in three academic semesters on GPSP tools and methodologies in 2022.

The Programme, in alignment with the Agency, is making steps towards providing open-access tutorials and training for self-paced capacity building, allowing all members of the community, experts and authorities, amongst others, to enact on-the-ground positive change. We are developing self-paced e-learning modules open to all on our tools that will be accessible on the [UN-Habitat's e-learning platform](#). The e-learning course on [how to measure SDG indicator 11.7](#) is already available. We are also using YouTube as a



**95**  
 TRAININGS

**4550+**  
 TRAINED PEOPLE

**35**  
 GOVERNEMENTS  
 TRAINED ON OUR TOOLS

**21**  
 KNOWLEDGE  
 RESOURCES



channel, where the [Her City tutorial](#) and [Her City Training](#) are available, together with the [Our City Plan training](#), which includes some of the Global Public Space Programme Tools. Finally, our recurrent engagement at the World Urban Forum keep on raising awareness among professionals and local governments about our work and impact.

## CASE STUDY

### PROMOTING AWARENESS OF THE HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH IN OVERCOMING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN CAPE VERDE



Praia, Cape Verde © UN-Habitat



Consolidated Minecraft model of Praia public space, Cape Verde

The project aims to promote awareness and advocacy on the relevance of the human security approach in overcoming the threats posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, using urban planning as a key entry point for prevention. This is a joint initiative by the United Nations of Drugs and Crimes, United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security and UN-Habitat, in partnership with the Ministries of Justice and Labour (MJT), Infrastructure, Spatial Planning and Housing (MIOTH), Health and Social Security (MSSS), the Municipalities of Praia, Sal and Boa Vista, local NGOs and the three communities.

Spatial equality and inclusion enhance the establishment of peaceful communities that benefit of equal access to public services and opportunities. Particularly, public space is a key enabler of human

security, as it promotes social cohesion and equal opportunities, reducing conflicts among different community groups. Inclusive public spaces promote democracy, while becoming a platform for exchange, to speak out and discuss people's rights. Quality public space boosts the image of a neighbourhood and a city, strengthening community identity, togetherness and collective thinking. Moreover, it impacts the perception of safety, as it increases natural surveillance and it creates a safe environment for children and youth to grow and develop, reducing criminal activities and antisocial behavior.

The programme focuses on building capacities locally on innovative stakeholder engagement tools and placemaking strategies for public space development,



Validation session with the broader community on the workshop results in Praia, Cape Verde © UN-Habitat / Chiara Martinuzzi

to enhance community resilience and human security. The Global Public Space Programme conducted two trainings of trainers on the use of the Site-specific assessment tool and the Block by Block methodology, engaging 13 representatives from the UN-Habitat's country office and local government. The country office then tailored our tools, developing an evaluation matrix based on seven key dimensions and indicators related to the human security approach.

UN-Habitat's country office uses the tailored tools to engage three local communities on assessing quality and co-designing public spaces. Overall, they have engaged

193 people in 10 participatory activities in three cities. While the current conditions of the public spaces were evaluated, the ideas and suggestions from the youth and children participating the in-sessions, were translated in conceptual public space design proposals.

**«I liked the workshop, I had a lot of fun. I built a slide, a swing, streetlight... I will present the project to the community tomorrow. Our square is open for everyone»** - Erikson, student in Praia



## FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS FOR INCLUSIVE PUBLIC SPACES THROUGH **PLACEMAKING**

### Engaging in Placemaking initiative since 2016:



The Global Public Space Programme is committed to creating inclusive cities through collaborations with communities, working partners and local authorities, seeking to advance the agenda on placemaking and public spaces. Placemaking offers communities the chance to take ownership and forward site-specific tailored solutions to meet their needs, as they often help to define a community's identity and act as multifaceted assets.

Placemaking offers a viable low-impact approach for communities to achieve quick-win benefits in testing interventions to address social challenges, natural disasters and economic crises, helping to meet SDG 11. Learnings from the Covid-19 pandemic further spotlight placemaking as a approach to achieve resilience and community longevity without reliance on official top-down planning approaches. Through community-led interventions and participatory processes, placemaking

unequivocally responds to providing safer, more inclusive and accessible public spaces for all community groups.

Over the past ten years, the Programme's placemaking portfolio and the network have expanded, seeing projects come to fruition across Latin America, Asia, Europe, the Arab States and Africa. Placemaking activities have been guided by participatory tools and methodologies developed within the Programme and other placemaking networks, including Placemaking X, a network of placemaking champions with over 100 regional leaders, public space activists, advocates and professionals from over 85 countries around the world.

Our experience promoting transformative change via temporary, cyclic and cost-effective means brought us to support physical implementations and present at global and regional events such as the recent Placemaking Europe 2022, held in Pontevedra. Our upcoming policy brief entitled 'Community-led placemaking for



social and environmental resilience' intends to highlight further the capabilities of placemaking, both from the perspective of collective community members, individuals and decision-makers.

Locally, the annual Nairobi Placemaking week, co-organised by UN-Habitat and partners, has been a pacesetter, driving change far beyond the city by encouraging

replication in other cities such as Kisumu. During Africities 2022, the Programme conducted co-design workshops with 32 community members to upgrade Freedom Park and adjacent streets in Kisumu, complemented by community-led tactical interventions and providing an opportunity to test some of the proposed solutions.

## CASE STUDY

### CELEBRATING PUBLIC SPACES THROUGH THE YEARLY PLACEMAKING WEEK IN NAIROBI



Critical mass event during the 2022 placemaking week in Nairobi, Kenya © UN-Habitat / Sharon Ogoti

The Nairobi Placemaking Week, co-organised by several organisations within the Placemaking Network in Nairobi, has received commendations from the participants and beneficiaries for making public space processes more inclusive while promoting social, economic and environmental opportunities. The initiative intends to celebrate public spaces and create awareness around the importance of optimising pedestrian traffic to promote walkability, better air quality and the overall functionality of public spaces.

The week-long event was first held in 2016, led by the Safer Nairobi Initiative, leveraging the expertise, experience and interests of various grassroots organisations, businesses, non-governmental organisations, professionals, academic institutions, youth organisations and individuals to create awareness of the value of public spaces and galvanise

efforts towards completing the upgrading of Jeevanjee Gardens in Nairobi. This transformation in the heart of downtown Nairobi, more commonly known for traffic snarl-ups, polluted air, and streets choked with parked cars, has since promoted the implementation of similar activities in various parts of the city over the years, particularly the annual Nairobi Placemaking week, which has been instrumental in creating quick and cost-effective impact in the city. For instance, in 2019, during an impact assessment undertaken following the temporary pedestrianisation of the venue, it was noted that both PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> levels had decreased post-placemaking week, while businesses improved significantly during the week due to traffic calming and increased interaction of the people with the space.

In 2022, the event convened stakeholders within Nairobi, cutting across the public, private and civil society sectors to celebrate

## 2022 PLACEMAKING WEEK PARTICIPATION


22+

ORGANISATIONS


300+

CYCLISTS


20+

ARTISTS

the 'Nairobi Streets of the Future'. Urban enthusiasts, invited stakeholders, place makers, artists, cyclists and passers-by led and engaged in several events in the city. The activities included street activations, urban dialogues, the Nairobi River activation, drum circles, art installations, a street parade and a bike ride dubbed 'Ride your city', which brought together over 300 cyclists.

The event provided the opportunity to activate streets through various low-cost, high-impact interventions, thus successfully promoting cross-sector dialogue about the quality of life in the city, especially amongst professionals, community members and the local authorities, and advocating for a healthier, safer, and more inclusive and vibrant city.



Renovating Jeevanjee Gardens during the first placemaking week in Nairobi, Kenya © UN-Habitat

## EXAMPLES OF UN-HABITAT'S COUNTRY OFFICES PUBLIC SPACE PROJECTS



The Global Public Space Programme promotes public space development through initiatives worldwide. However, it is not the only one. UN-Habitat's regional and country offices have also committed to pushing the global agenda on public spaces. This year, Global Public Space Programme collected a sample of the initiatives conducted by three country offices, with the intention to report on the overall UN-Habitat portfolio on public space in future reports.

Our country offices in Iraq, Mexico and Palestine have completed multiple years of collaboration with local organisations and governments to integrate safe, inclusive and accessible public space in various cities. The initiatives have worked on innovation and the data centre industry, climate resilience and nature-based solutions, security and safety for young women and girls, and post-disaster recovery and disasters.

The outcomes from the various initiatives included implemented public spaces, strategic spatial plans, design guidelines, public space policies, placemaking activities, training and awareness raising, and much more.

## POSITIONING PUBLIC SPACES AS A KEY DRIVER OF SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN MEXICO



Participation day for brainstorming on the Parque de la Equidad in Cancun, Mexico © UN-Habitat Mexico

UN-Habitat's Mexico country office has engaged in several urban planning initiatives, highly linked with public space development to build safer and more inclusive cities and communities.

### The Datacenter Community Development Programme

The Microsoft Corporation worked with UN-Habitat to understand how to improve the quality of life of the communities near the data centres that the company plans to build in Colon and El Marqués.

UN-Habitat carried out spatial analyses of the territory based on geostatistical information, interviews with key stakeholders and local authorities of eight communities surrounding the upcoming data centre, and facilitated a strategic scenario workshop to envision the Queretaro State's future. The participatory process led to the formulation of some [recommendations on public space urban interventions](#) in the eight localities.

### Parque de la Equidad in Cancun

AGEPRO in collaboration with UN-Habitat has developed a [strategic spatial plan](#) for

the future of the linear "Equity Park", 16 kilometers long and covering 89 hectares, positioning public spaces as a crucial element for the sustainable development of the city. The park will increase quality of life of the surrounding community, improving conditions of existing infrastructures and facilities and removing social barriers between districts, while following a participatory planning process.

### Masterplan of San Nicolas de los Garza, Monterrey

UN-Habitat supported the municipality of San Nicolas de los Garza to consolidate the [2030 vision of the city](#) and the project action plan. Using Our City Plan methodology, UN-Habitat has followed a highly participatory process involving representatives from the Monterrey Metropolitan area, the Nuevo Leon State and the Federal Government. One of the project's outputs is the [Masterplan of tactical urbanism](#). This highlights the importance of community engagement and placemaking to improve the quality of public spaces and its impact on public life in the short, medium and long term.

## SUPPORTING RECOVERY AND STABILITY IN IRAQ THROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT



Rehabilitated Al-Yarmouk Park in Mosul, Iraq © UN-Habitat Iraq

In collaboration with UN-Habitat, UNDP is implementing a four-year programme founded by the European Union to contribute to Iraq's stability and socio-economic development of Iraq by enhancing democratic governance at the local level.

During the conflict with ISIS, many essential urban basic services were damaged and looted. UN-Habitat is leading the implementation of urban recovery projects in Mosul, Tal Afar, Heet, Baiji and Yathrib comprising the rehabilitation of war-damaged housing, public facilities, basic services and public open spaces, along with job creation, vocational training and a range of community engagement activities.

### Rehabilitation of Al Yarmouk Park in Mosul

The rehabilitation of Al Yarmouk Park, the largest public park in east Mosul (67,000 sqm), has the potential to become the core of a wide range of public initiatives, sports activities, environmental actions, art events and recreation that will benefit more than 500,000 Mosul citizens. UN-Habitat actively

encourages contractors to use construction materials and items sourced from the local market and Iraqi producers. Workers are recruited from a roster of unemployed residents. So far, the interventions have created over 350 jobs, of which 30 are unemployed women.

### Rehabilitation of Al-Shuhada garden and Al-Buari in Telafar

In Telafar, vacant pockets of land had become crucial to re-establish the living conditions of its inhabitants. The empty plot adjacent to Al-Shuhada Kindergarten was designed to be open exclusively to women and their children. It offers them a chance to do small-scale kitchen gardening and open-air gym activities around a central fountain. The park is equipped with a toilet and a guard room.

Similarly, Al-Buari is the largest public park in Telafar (27,000 sqm) and is currently a large wasteland, known for the water pipes that traversed it in the past. Its rehabilitation plays a crucial role in creating socio-economic value, improved health and quality of life, and a unique opportunity to enhance social inclusion, cohesion and peacebuilding.

## HAYA PROGRAMME: FIRST POLICY TO PROMOTE INCLUSIVE PUBLIC SPACES IN PALESTINE



Rehabilitated beachfront through the Haya Programme in Khan Younis, Palestine © UN-Habitat

Funded by the Government of Canada and jointly implemented by the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), UN Women, UNFPA, UN-Habitat and UNODC, the HAYA Joint Programme seeks to eliminate violence against women and girls through various outreach and awareness-raising activities to increase access to necessary services for survivors of violence, as well as to strengthen the institutional capacity of government officials to develop and implement legal and policy frameworks promoting and protecting women's and girls' rights to live free from violence.

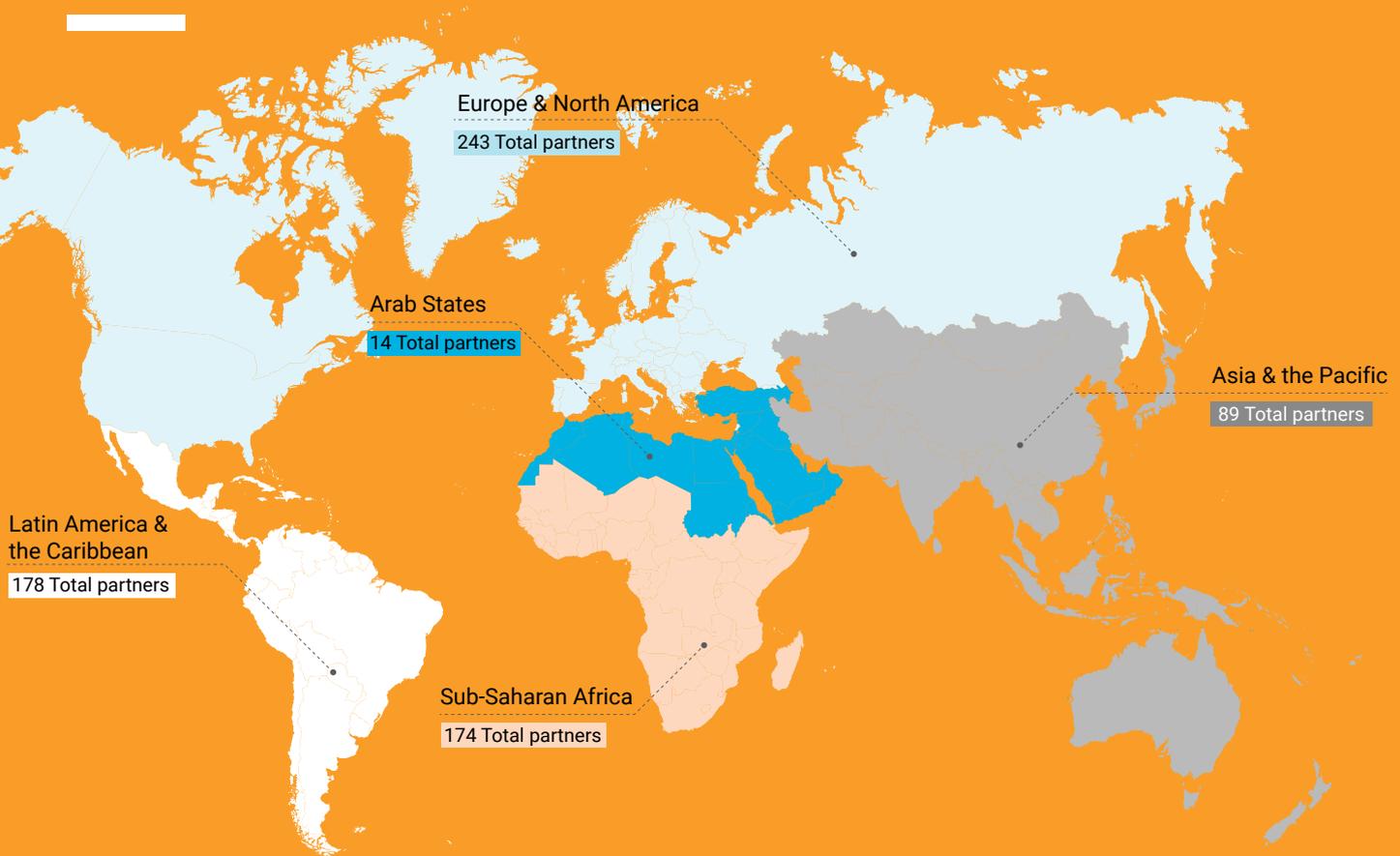
As one of the milestones of the Programme, MoLG has adopted a new policy to ensure the provision of safe and inclusive public spaces in Palestine. The policy can provide more safe and inclusive public spaces for the Palestinian community. The policy will support the Palestinian Authority and 157 West Bank and Gaza Strip municipalities to make informed planning and urban design decisions.

The Programme implements various activities to assess, design and implement safer public spaces in five cities across the West Bank and Gaza Strip, impacting the life of 280,550 women and almost 295,200 men.

This first-of-its-kind policy will guide and be integrated into all future public space plans and interventions throughout Palestine while considering relevant cultural, social, economic, governance, legal, environmental, and urban factors. This will not only improve the overall quality of Palestinian cities but also the social, economic, and cultural life within them.

During the launching event of the new policy, Mr. Majdi Al Saleh, the Minister of Local Government, said the public space policy will offer all vulnerable groups, especially women and girls, their right to the city, while the exceptional planning and implementation of the public space services could not have been achieved without the combined efforts of UN-Habitat, as well as national and local governments.

# OUR PARTNERSHIPS



-  **15**  
 UN ORGANISATIONS
-  **115+**  
 PUBLIC SECTOR
-  **280+**  
 CIVIL SOCIETY AND NON-GOVERNAMENTAL
-  **50+**  
 PRIVATE AND FINANCING ENTITIES
-  **230**  
 ACADEMIA AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES

The key towards successful urban development starts with fruitful partnerships. Public space initiatives begin within their communities. Over the last decade, we have built collaborations with partners from the public sector, private sector, civil society, academia and other inter-governmental organisations. Building a diverse network of partners enables addressing sustainable urban development from different entry points and leveraging the expertise and knowledge of each urban actor.

Our global public space network counts over 700 partners from different regions, of which 115 are public entities, 230 are from academia, 15 are from other UN organisations, and 330 are from the private sector and civil society.

**JOIN OUR GLOBAL PUBLIC SPACE NETWORK!**

Are you interested in supporting our programme or working with us?  
Send us an email at: [unhabitat-publicspace@un.org](mailto:unhabitat-publicspace@un.org)

## VOICES FROM OUR PARTNERS: HEALTHBRIDGE

**Civil society and non-governmental organisations** work from the ground up. They are driven by a mandate that reflects the community's needs. They advocate for vulnerable groups' rights, bridging communities and local authorities. They deliver quick and impactful actions, empowering unheard voices of our society.



"HealthBridge and our local partners have been working with UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme since 2017 to improve health and reduce health inequities worldwide. HealthBridge's Livable Cities program enhances the quality of cities by ensuring access for those living in vulnerable situations to public spaces such as streets, parks, and markets.

Our first project with the Global Public Spaces Programme focused on three African cities where we co-created public spaces with the local communities. Minecraft proved to be an incredibly useful tool to help communities imagine their space and define a community engagement process with government officials.

These projects have resulted in lasting changes in these communities and, in some cases, have resulted in increased investments by the government in public spaces. In total, we've reached over 20,000 residents through our projects and improved the lives of the people using these spaces."

## VOICES FROM OUR PARTNERS: SHARJAH CHILD-FRIENDLY OFFICE

**Public entities and governments** are the treasurers of decision-making. They have the opportunity to enforce good practices through regulations and incentives, promoting equal societies. They deliver sustainable change through long-term strategies and effective collaborations.



"The Emirate of Sharjah wishes for safe, vibrant, inclusive and resilient open public spaces that are child-friendly. It aims to ensure that the city-wide open public space development promotes public space benefits to all citizens, including children. In 2018, Sharjah was recognised as a child-friendly city by UNICEF. Since 2019 Sharjah Child Friendly office has collaborated with UN-Habitat on the following:

- Exploratory walks with children and youth
- Block by Block Minecraft workshop
- City-wide assessment for open public space
- Participation at the 10th World Urban Forum in Abu Dhabi
- Launched Sharjah Principles for child-friendly open public spaces

Sharjah Child Friendly office welcomes the successful partnership and wishes for more collaborations in the future."

## VOICES FROM OUR PARTNERS: **INHABIT PLACE**

**The private sector and financing entities** have the resources to support sustainable urban development. Endorsing ethical principles and strategic partnerships, they unlock the potential of decision-makers and community groups, contributing with their expertise and capacities.



"Inhabit Place is a technology platform for place stakeholders to better understand the public spaces they are responsible for. Our tools create a greater understanding of who is there, what they are doing, why they have come and how the space makes them feel. It is only when we understand how people experience and appreciate a place that we can truly curate, modify and develop cities that respond to their needs.

The creation of Inhabit Place in 2018 was inspired by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, in particular, 11.7. So far we have conducted over 300 audits all over the world, collaborating with the Global Public Space Programme on projects in Nairobi, Delhi and Lima.

In these projects we have been able to partner with local organisations, training and supporting them in the use of our tools, building their capacity and providing them with reporting they can use to improve their spaces. These collaborations have been fruitful, eye opening and highly enjoyable for us."

## VOICES FROM OUR PARTNERS: **FAO**

**UN and other intergovernmental organisations** set global agendas and international standards for a better future for all. They promote peace and collaboration of public, private, academic and civil society entities. They encourage dialogue between countries to support the ones with limited resources and reach our goals together.

First  
**African  
 Forum on  
 Urban  
 Forests**  
 5 - 9 July 2021 | Virtual Event  
 © UN-Habitat

"The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. FAO's goal is to achieve food security for all and ensure that people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives. FAO is also involved in the sustainable management of natural resources and urban forestry, to make cities greener, healthier and happier places to live.

In general, FAO and UN-HABITAT have undertaken joint efforts to support the recognition of the key role of local governments in strengthening urban-rural linkages and mainstreaming food systems and green spaces in local policy, planning and actions. Collaboration on public spaces began with the concept of the Great Green Wall in 2018, the IKI proposal on green cities in 2019, UN-Habitat's participation in the World Forums in Urban Forests and the Green Cities Initiative.

Moving forward, we will keep working jointly in different technical areas such as spatial planning, capacity development, public space planning, urban forestry, and urban greening."

## VOICES FROM OUR PARTNERS: TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF CRETE

### Academia and research entities

develop knowledge and capacities to achieve global agendas. Using an evidence-based approach, they create user-friendly tools and methods to support inclusive processes for sustainable development. They monitor practices and evaluate impact in the short- and long-term.



“The Technical University of Crete collaborated with UN-Habitat on two occasions. Firstly, through the organisation of the summer workshop “Update my City, Public Space, Smart Technologies and Urban Health” in collaboration with the Center for Mediterranean Architecture and the Global Pandemic Network. The workshop focused on alternative ways to govern, use, and manage public space, using the Her City Toolbox. Later on, UN-Habitat contributed to the academic course “Smart and Digital Cities” at the School of Architecture through a series of lectures on the use ICTs in urban planning and public space design from a gender neutrality perspective.

Although in global literature it seems that there is no established metric for counting the innovation of a toolkit nor a consensus of what frontier technology might mean exactly, it is well documented that technologies like the Her City might have an immense social impact (Kibala Bauer, 2020). We argue that Her City Toolbox could be considered among these new, radical and forward-thinking technologies, groundbreaking from an urban planning point of view that can address largescale challenges or opportunities in the design of public spaces.”



Signatory ceremony on Minecraft between UN-Habitat and the Fondation Botnar © UN-Habitat / Christelle Lahoud

# KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

The Global Public Space Programme believes that normative and operational work delivers greater impact when multi-stakeholder partnerships underpin tool development, testing innovative approaches and project implementation.

The role that local authorities play in utilising UN-Habitat normative products is vital in supporting country and city

level projects that result in transformative change.

This year we have continued our efforts in developing user-friendly and impact-oriented resources for sustainable urban development. Moreover, we are digitalising our tools and methods as of e-learning self-paced modules that will be available online for open-access capacity building.

## 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

### Cities for Girls, Cities for All: Her City Toolbox Final Report ([Link](#))



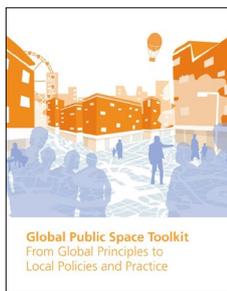
The publication Cities for Girls, Cities for All is the report from the Vinnova Innovation for Gender Equality Project implemented jointly by UN-Habitat and the Swedish independent think tank Global Utmaning. It showcases the results of the [Her City toolbox](#) and the implementation of our partnership projects worldwide. The report also provides guidelines for gender and intersectional sensitive participatory planning, design and implementation to support a variety of urban actors in building cities for all, together with girls and young women.

# OUR NORMATIVE AND OPERATIONAL PRODUCTS

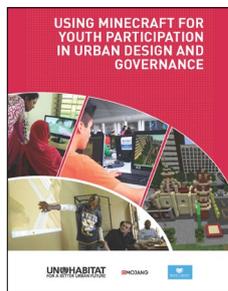


Over the last decade, we have developed a series of normative and operational tools to support local and national governments and other partners in scaling up efforts to achieve Goal 11.7, making public spaces more safe, inclusive, accessible and green.

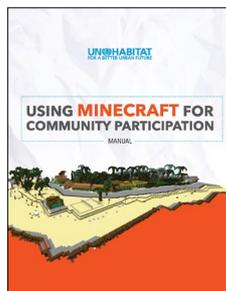
Scan the QR to visit our website and learn more about our services and guidelines.



[Global public space toolkit](#)



[Using Minecraft for youth participation](#)



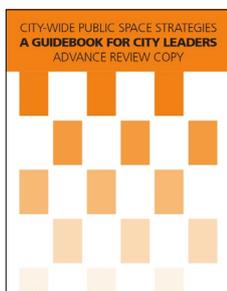
[Using Minecraft for community participation](#)



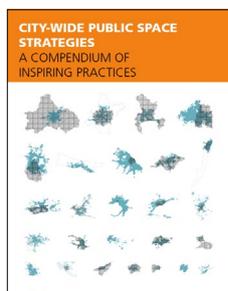
[Mixed reality for public participation in public space design](#)



[City-wide public space assessment toolkit](#)



[City-wide public space strategies: guidebook](#)



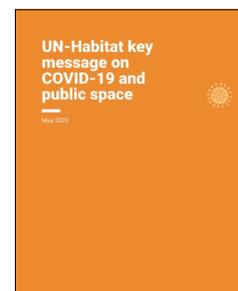
[City-wide public space assessment: compendium](#)



[Public space site-specific assessment guidelines](#)



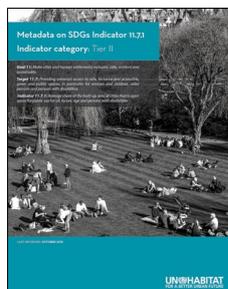
[Block by Block training kit](#)



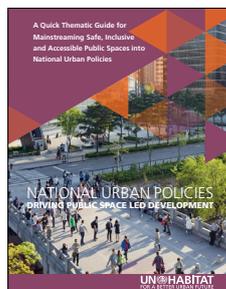
[UN-Habitat key message on covid-19 and public space](#)



[Her City guide](#)



[Metadata on SDGs indicator 11.7.1](#)



[National urban policies, driving public space led development](#)



[Policy briefs on nature-based solutions and public spaces](#)



[Policy briefs for urban resilience](#)

# THE GLOBAL PUBLIC SPACE DASHBOARD

Since 1993, UN-Habitat has compiled and disseminated data on urban trends through its urban indicator database. The database has evolved with new mandates for reporting and monitoring at the local, national, and global levels necessitating the need to integrate new indicators, but also new measurement methods and data types. The Data and Analytics Unit (DAU) is currently finalising the latest version of the Urban Indicators Database and has revamped the database' website to keep abreast with new information flow trends.

Global Space Programme is featured within the new Urban Indicators Database. The page provides information on the Programmes' tools and approaches, data visualisation for users to interact with and explore, a series of publications, news, impact stories, our network of partners and upcoming events related to public spaces.

It links the [Global Public Space Dashboard](#), gathering over 170 urban initiatives worldwide.

**Project details**  
Find project details here. If a city has more than one initiative, you can browse through them with the arrows.

**Map**  
Zoom in an out to see our initiatives in the different regions. The color relates to the type of initiative.

**Impact story**  
We describe here a brief summary about the initiative selected.

**Filters**  
Use the filters to find easily information based on the area or the topic you are interested on.

**Statistics**  
Select a specif initiative or filter the information to get impact numbers related to your area of interest.

Year	2,019
Country	Dominican Republic
City	Santo Domingo
Name of Project	The Public Space Assessment Of Three Cities In Lac
Type of Initiative	City-wide public space assessment
Number of Projects	1
Beneficiaries	0
Theme	Spatial Frivality

**Supporting market vendors' relocation to open fields**  
Kisumu, Kenya  
27 aprile 2022

<b>Initiatives</b> 170	<b>Engagement Workshops</b> 213	<b>Trainings</b> 101	<b>Number of Beneficiaries</b> 15,2M	<b>Main Donors</b> Ibro 18,2% SP 3,5% at 8,8% DA 6,5% Block by 62,9%
<b>Initiative Status</b> Completed 138 Ongoing 28 Planning 12 Initiated 12	<b>People Engaged</b> 25,5k	<b>People Trained</b> 3,6k		



Block by Block workshop in Belo Horizonte, Brazil © UN-Habitat / Barbara Ferreira

# MEDIA COVERAGE

## ARTICLES:

1. [Block by Block: Mind the Step](#)
2. [Dumping ground now a child-friendly public space](#)
3. [Inclusiveness and participation in the design of public spaces: Her City and the Challenge of the Post-Pandemic Scenario](#)
4. [Block by Block – Architecture by children in Seferihisar, Turkey](#)
5. [Beirut public stairs youth designed interventions with UN-Habitat Beirut Lebanon](#)
6. [Somaliland locals to enjoy upcoming developments of the public Berbera beachfront](#)

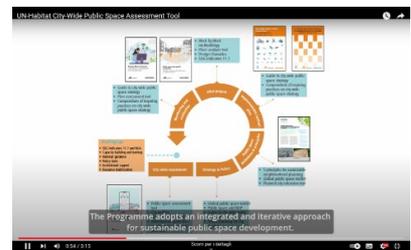
## VIDEOS:



[How a Minecraft Expert got the 'Best Job in the World'](#)



[The Government of Japan, UN-Habitat & KDI support inclusive accessibility to public space in Turkana](#)



[UN-Habitat City-Wide Public Space Assessment Tool](#)



[Reclaiming streets for walking and cycling in Kisumu](#)



[UN-Habitat, ARVET Developers & partners use local labour & renewable materials for community hall](#)



[Transformation of Underutilized space into active public space at Jalladkhana](#)



[Transformation of stairs in Beirut: St. Nicolas, Vendome and Laziza](#)



[Georges Nehme speaks about the historical evolution of Laziza Park, highlighting UN-Habitat's role](#)



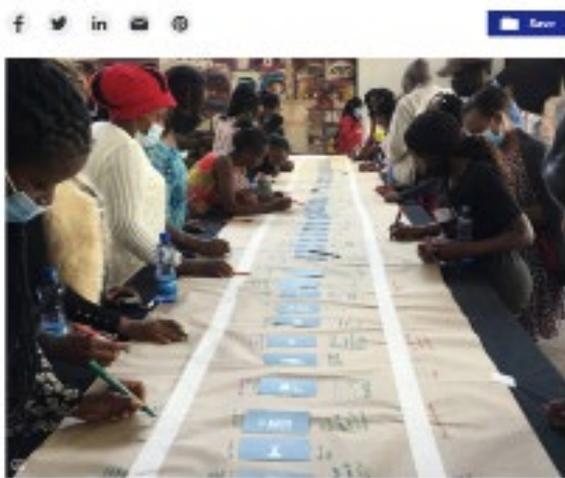
[UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme - José Chong](#)

 **ARCHDAILY**



[Archdaily](#), one of the most visited architecture weblog worldwide, has teamed up with UN-Habitat to bring weekly news, articles, and interviews that highlight the Global Public Space Programme's work, processes and methodologies, developed by Archdaily's editors.

Naomi Hoogervorst on Democratization of Design: "Equal Cities Need Equal Voices"



- [Naomi Hoogervorst on Democratization of Design: "Equal Cities Need Equal Voices"](#)
- [Shigeru Ban Architects and Philippe Monteil Design Refugee Shelters in Kenya with the Support of UN-Habitat](#)
- [Envisaging the Future of Cities: UN-Habitat Launches the 2022 World Cities Report](#)
- [On Inclusive, Safe, Resilient, and Sustainable Cities: In Conversation with the Winners of the UIA 2030 Award](#)

 **JOURNAL OF PUBLIC SPACE**

The [Journal of Public Space](#), launched at Habitat III in Quito, is a research project developed by City Space Architecture, a non-profit organisation based in Italy, in partnership with UN-Habitat. The journal is the first international, inter-disciplinary, academic, open access journal entirely dedicated to public space, providing a platform for researchers, showcasing promising practices and informing discussion about issues related to public space.



[Universally accessible public spaces for all \(Volume 7 n. 2\)](#)



[Public space and Placemaking in African Cities - pt. 1 \(Volume 7 n. 1\)](#)



[Mapping Urban Injustices in public spaces: Challenges and Opportunities \(Vol. 6 n.3\)](#)



[Mapping Resilient Communities \(Volume 6 n.2\)](#)

# EXPRESSING GRATITUDE TO OUR 2022 PARTNERS...

UN-Habitat would like to extend the deepest gratitude to our 2022 funders, partners and co-financiers for their continuous support to grow the Programme's portfolio. Through their commitments we were able to scale-up and improve the lives of millions of urban residents.



## CO-FINANCIERS



# ... AND THANKS TO OUR TEAM!



**Harshit Bawa**  
Graphic designer



**Pamela Carbajal**  
Urban Health Planner



**Jose Chong**  
Programme Manager



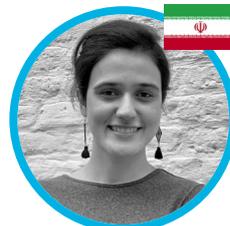
**Tales Costa**  
Architect



**Joyce David**  
Team assistant



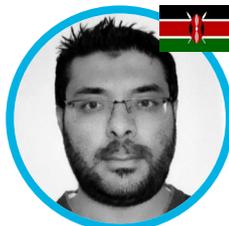
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Gender expert



**Saba Fazel**  
Urban designer



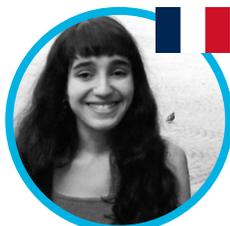
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**Sara Lalmi**  
Urban Designer



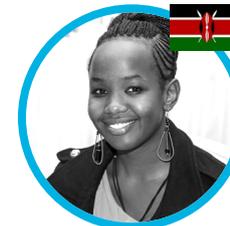
**Chiara Martinuzzi**  
Architect



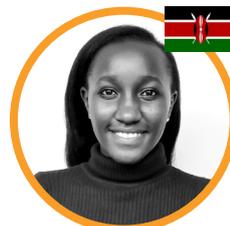
**Rosa Anna Mancini**  
Architect and urban  
designer



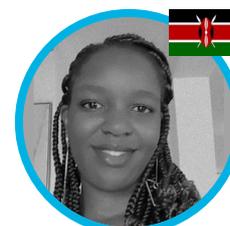
**Isabel McCauley**  
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**Joy Mutai**  
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coordination officer



**Sharon Ogoti**  
Landscape Architect



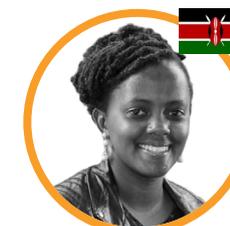
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**Rehema Thuo**  
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**Giorgia Ziliani**  
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