

GLOBAL PUBLIC SPACE PROGRAMME

UN-Habitat's initiatives towards safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces for all

Annual Report 2024

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United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)
P.O. Box 30030 00100 Nairobi GPO KENYA
Tel: 254-020-7623120 (Central Office)
www.unhabitat.org

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Cover photo: Kids Mapping Out © Safe Routes to School Initiative

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Programme manager:
Jose Chong

Response supervisor:
Antony Lamba, Laura Petrella

Principal authors:
Jing Ren, Katriya Bulutoglu

Contributors:
Ameera Alhassan, Aminata Baro, Edinilson Augusto Da Silva, Elin Andersdotter Fabre, Jing Ren, Jordi Bosch Pla, Jordi Sanchez-Cuenca Alomar, Juan Valle Robles, Lubna Shaheen, Ludovica Sodomaco, Pragya Pradhan, Salma Ahmed Ibrahim Nassar, Sharon Ogoti, Stephanie Loose, Wafaa Butmeh

Design and layout:
Yawen Liang

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Gorée Island a Symbol of Transatlantic Slave Trade





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Message from the Executive Director

As I reflect on this transitional year of delivery of public spaces at UN-Habitat, it is clear that access to public spaces remain as vital as ever for shaping sustainable, inclusive and vibrant urban futures.

Public spaces are more than physical places—they are platforms for social connection, economic activity, cultural identity, and environmental resilience. As cities continue to grow and evolve, the importance of safe, inclusive, and accessible public spaces for well-planned, socially cohesive, accessible and sustainable cities has never been more visible. In 2024, this has translated into concrete, innovative action across all regions.

Around the world, our teams and partners have worked tirelessly to create impactful public space interventions. Anchored across four thematic areas of climate resilience, economy and livelihoods, social inclusion and crisis response, this report showcases how our public space projects have translated into meaningful and transformative change for communities.

A highlight of this year was the success of the 12th World Urban Forum held in Cairo, Egypt in November. The event provided a vital platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and the showcasing of innovative public space initiatives from around the world. It brought together diverse stakeholders—including local authorities, urban practitioners, civil society, and youth—sharing

best practices on the integration of public space. The forum spotlighted Egypt's own public space revitalisation efforts, catalysing new partnerships and reaffirming public space as a central pillar in achieving the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

At UN-Habitat, we recognize that access to adequate housing is intertwined with access to inclusive, safe, and well-designed public spaces. Public space is not merely a backdrop to urban life—it is a foundational enabler of equitable development. It shapes how communities live, connect, and thrive. From helping to improve access to services and secure land tenure, enhance liveability and foster social inclusion, public space plays a critical role in advancing access to adequate housing, land and basic services for all.

As part of our Strategic Plan priorities, we also emphasize addressing the complex challenges faced by informal settlements, ensuring that interventions in public space contribute to improving living conditions and reducing urban inequalities. Well-designed public spaces in informal settlements can provide safe areas for children to play, create venues for community engagement, and enable access to essential services such as water points and sanitation facilities. They also help strengthen social cohesion, support local economic activities, and enhance

resilience to climate-related risks.

As we implement our Strategic Plan for 2026–2029, we are committed to reinforcing the integration of these two agendas to build inclusive, sustainable urban environments that work for everyone—especially the most vulnerable communities.

None of this progress would be possible without the commitment of our dedicated colleagues, the generosity of our donors, and the enduring support of our partners. Your collaboration continues to be the driving force behind every milestone. As we look ahead, let us build on the momentum gained in 2024 and continue to champion public spaces as essential enablers of the 2030 Agenda. By growing and formalizing a global network, spearheaded by UN-Habitat, we will collectively foster belonging, protect the environment, promote livelihoods, and strengthen community resilience. Together, we can create cities that truly leave no one behind.

Anacláudia ROSSBACH
United Nations Under-Secretary-General
Executive Director, UN-Habitat

An overview of UN-Habitat Public Space Projects in 2024

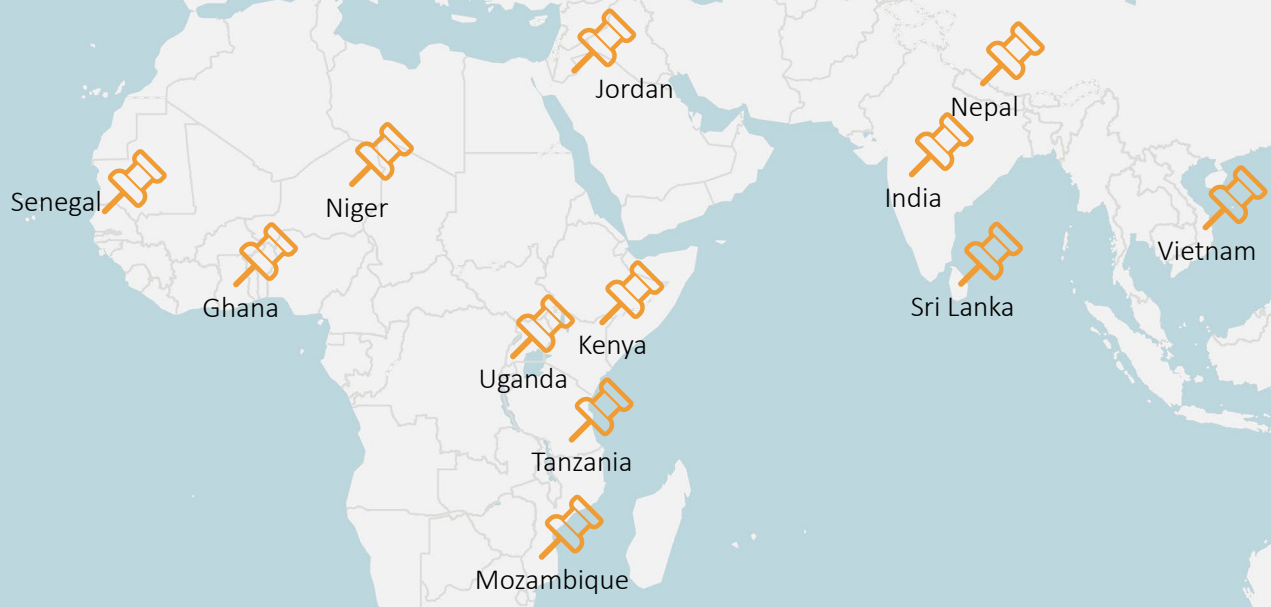
When inclusively and strategically implemented, public space projects are a powerful lever of progress against the **2030 Agenda**. Public space interventions foster sustainable urban sites, creating safe, inclusive, and accessible environments that support healthier lifestyles, social cohesion, climate resilience, and economic opportunity.

Public space interventions delivered by UN-Habitat throughout 2024 have supported progress against **11** of the **17** SDGs:



Projects delivered in **13** countries

Benefitted over **70,000** people



Measuring impact

UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme and its partners have benefited over **15 million people** through the rehabilitation and co-creation of more than **170 public space** initiatives across more than **100 cities** in **50 countries**. These beneficiaries include residents, street vendors, youth groups, and vulnerable populations who now access safer, greener, and more inclusive public environments that support livelihoods, mobility, and social interaction.

Measuring the true number of direct and indirect beneficiaries of public space interventions is vital to capture the breadth of impact and demonstrate just how valuable investing in these initiatives can be.

The GPSP calculates the number of people who are direct beneficiaries of a public space project by the number living 400m (5 mins walk away) from a public space. As the benefits of public space are long-term and indirect this number is just the beginning of the story.

1. Public space benefits extend over the long term—especially when well-maintained—enriching communities for generations to come.
2. Beyond the immediate community, people often travel from far and wide to enjoy a well-designed public space—meeting friends, participating in cultural activities, or simply finding a place of rest and recreation. These spaces can become important social and economic hubs that connect different parts of the city.
3. Importantly, the benefits of public space are often most significant for the most vulnerable—such as children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and those without access to private recreational areas or green spaces—offering them safe, welcoming environments for interaction, inclusion, and empowerment. This deeply personal impact often transcends what can be fully captured through numbers alone.



Taiwan, Taichung, City image © Pixabay/jy121807
<https://pixabay.com/photos/taiwan-taichung-city-building-park-5466886/>

Changing approach and the Global Public Space Network

The year 2024 marked a pivotal shift in UN-Habitat's approach to promoting inclusive and equitable access to public space. Since its inception in 2012, UN-Habitat's Global Public Space Programme has led a holistic, multi-sectoral effort to support local governments in creating vibrant, inclusive public space networks. By embedding long-term urban strategies into urban planning and national policies, the Programme has prioritized the transformation of public spaces, particularly for the most vulnerable groups.

Through technical support, capacity-building initiatives, and innovative participatory tools, it has

reached cities across the globe—ensuring that public space is not only a design feature but a basis for equitable and sustainable urban lives.

Notably, the Programme has championed the global recognition of public space as a driver of sustainable development. In 2013 the Charter of Public Space was first launched and in 2015 the 2030 agenda incorporated a specific target on public space SDG 11.7.

As the custodian of SDG 11.7 which states that "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", the Programme has been vital not just in ensuring its initial establishment but in protecting, upgrading and platforming it as a global commitment.

Collaborative efforts from the Programme team ensured the indicator was upgraded to a Tier II indicator in 2018, and again to a Tier I indicator in 2023. This achievement reflects the Programme's impact on strengthening global monitoring and policy commitments to embed public space on the global stage.

As we enter a new phase, focus is shifting from direct implementation to decentralization—empowering partners, and regional, and country offices to take the lead. The Programme now positions itself as a global knowledge hub: curating best practices,

coordinating knowledge exchange, and connecting actors across the new and formalized Global Public Space Network.

With UN-Habitat serving as the marshal of this global movement, this transition underscores a collective mission to scale efforts, strengthen local ownership, and advance universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible public spaces worldwide.

To find out more about the current work of the **Global Public Space Network (GPSN)**, follow our LinkedIn page



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/global-public-space-network/about/>



Ain-taya, City, Algeria Image © Pixabay/SLPx
<https://pixabay.com/photos/ain-taya-city-algeria-africa-2425108/>

Public Space and Housing

How does access to public space intersect with UN-Habitat’s mandate on housing?

Everyone has a fundamental right to access safe, secure, habitable and adequate housing. Securing this right has long been a core mandate of UN-Habitat. This has not only included ensuring the provision of adequate housing, but also to ensuring housing is supported by access to basic services and that action is taken to upgrade and transform informal settlements and slums.

With an estimated 2.8 billion people globally affected by housing inadequacy, the challenge is not only one of affordability or availability. Adequate housing encompasses the broader principles of habitability, accessibility, location, tenure security, affordability, safety, sustainability, and cultural adequacy. These dimensions are increasingly under threat as urbanization intensifies, economic pressures rise, and the global climate crisis accelerates.

Achieving adequate housing is often constrained by policy, planning, and implementation gaps. 'Housing-positive' urban planning must therefore anticipate population growth, make sufficient urban land available, and ensure that housing is well-connected to the rest of the city.

A critical enabler in this context is access to public space. When planned equitably and early, public spaces—such as streets, parks, plazas, and community facilities— can provide the physical and social foundation for organized urban expansion. They can help to safeguard risk-prone areas, provide a site for community mixing and offer an array of benefits to mental and physical health. Moreover, well-designed public spaces increase land value and legitimacy, which can encourage formal recognition- opening pathways to tenure security and service provision.

Affordable housing often faces challenges such as a weak sense of community identity, lack of vibrancy, resident dissatisfaction with the living environment,

and an absence of cultural or humanistic character. Its implementation is frequently met with resistance from existing communities, driven by concerns that new housing—particularly affordable housing— might negatively impact property value. In this context, integrating well-designed, well-maintained, and accessible public spaces alongside new housing developments can help address these concerns. Quality public spaces not only enhance the appeal and liveability of new housing areas but can also reassure communities – supporting social cohesion and enabling the implementation of policies which contribute to reducing inequality.

The 5 key pathways through which public space enables access to housing, land and basic services can be summarized as follows:

1. Foundation for Planned Urban Growth

Public spaces—such as streets, parks, plazas, and community centres—are essential components of any well-functioning city. When planned early and equitably, they structure urban expansion, reduce informal sprawl, and support the development of legal, serviced plots for housing. This allows cities to allocate land more fairly and plan for essential infrastructure like roads, water, and sanitation.

2. Improving Land Value and Legitimacy

Public space investment enhances the value, safety, and attractiveness of surrounding areas. In low-income or informal settlements, this can encourage formal recognition of the area, opening pathways to land tenure security. Secure land tenure is crucial for residents to invest in their homes and access services.

3. Access to Basic Services

Public spaces often act as service delivery hubs—host to water points, sanitation facilities, transportation access, and community services. Well-distributed and connected public spaces ensure that essential services are reachable, especially for underserved populations in dense urban areas.

4. Social Inclusion and Equity

Accessible public spaces reduce exclusion by providing free, open areas where people from all backgrounds can interact, organize, and advocate for their rights—including the right to adequate housing and land. They also offer platforms for community participation in planning and decision-making.

5. Resilience and Liveability

Incorporating green and safe public spaces into urban design improves climate resilience, reduces disaster risk (e.g., through better drainage or flood mitigation), and enhances quality of life—making surrounding housing more sustainable and liveable in the long term.

Public space is not just a backdrop to urban life—it’s a driver of equitable development. It serves as a key policy tool, helping to unlock access to secure and affordable housing, fair land use, and access to vital services, especially for the most vulnerable. This is why UN-Habitat’s new strategic approach will reinforce and deepen the integration of public space and housing agendas to create inclusive, accessible, and sustainable urban environments that work for everyone.

Aerial view, River, Housing image © Pixabay/AidaPoppy
<https://pixabay.com/photos/aerial-view-river-housing-landscape-5449916/>

2024: A year in Projects

Climate and Environmental Resilience

Public space plays a crucial role in the climate and environmental resilience in urban areas. Well-designed green and open spaces help mitigate urban heat, improve air quality, and manage stormwater through natural drainage. They act as buffers against growing climate-related risks such as flooding and extreme heat, providing communities with shaded, cooler areas for refuge. By integrating nature-based solutions into public space planning, cities can strengthen their adaptive capacity, reduce carbon footprints and make urban environments healthier and more resilient for all.



Kids Building Public Space © Block by Block



Kids in Public Space © Block by Block

Supporting Post Disaster Recovery Efforts through Climate Resilient Public Spaces in Cyclone Affected Areas

Location: Dondo, Mozambique
Partner(s): Foundation, Dondo Municipality
Donor: Block by Block Foundation
Budget: USD 78,976

The project "Supporting Post-Disaster Recovery Efforts through Climate-Resilient Public Spaces in Cyclone-Affected Areas" aims to enhance public spaces in Mafarinha, Dondo, Mozambique, as hubs for social integration, disaster preparedness, and resilience. Given Mozambique's vulnerability to cyclones and climate change the collaboration has employed a participatory approach to design and construct inclusive and climate-adaptive public spaces. The intervention addresses challenges such as poor accessibility, lack of amenities, security concerns, and limited community engagement, particularly for vulnerable groups. By integrating insights from urban studies and utilizing community-driven tools like Block By Block workshops, they has created multifunctional spaces that foster social cohesion while strengthening disaster preparedness and response capacities.

The project has not only benefitted the more than 400 residents within a 10-minute walking radius but also offered a space for social interaction and access to municipal services for the wider community.

Kuwait Plants Campaign

Location: Kuwait
Partner(s): Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Information, Public Authority of Youth, Public Authority of Applied Sciences, Kuwait Oil Company
Donor: Kuwait Oil Company
Budget: USD 66,000 + in kind contribution

Kuwait, is a city-state that has faced growing environmental stresses from desertification, frequent dust storms, and extreme heat. In late 2019, UN-Habitat GCC Kuwait Program launched an ambitious tree-planting campaign in Kuwait to help address these challenges. Branded as “Kuwait Plants” (Arabic: تياتي وكال), this multi-year initiative aimed to green public spaces and create protective belts of vegetation around urban areas. Its initial target—100,000 trees “for a start”—was designed to mitigate the effect of climate change; helping shield cities from sand and dust storms, lower surface temperatures, and improve air quality and public health. This initiative was closely aligned with Kuwait’s Vision 2035 and the Sustainable Development Goals, embedding climate resilience and environmental stewardship into the country’s long-term development plans. Over six years, the campaign grew from a single open public space planting drive into a nationwide movement, generating broad public engagement, strong institutional partnerships, and tangible environmental results.

[+ Read more](#)

<https://unhabitat.org/news/06-nov-2019/greening-kuwait-a-campaign-to-address-impacts-of-sand-dust-storms-and-extreme-heat>
<https://timeskuwait.com/news/un-official-kuwait-planting-campaign-aims-to-green-public-spaces-and-improve-environmental-conditions-for-sustainable-development/>
<https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=321916&language=en&category=57&source=chatgpt.com>
<https://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=321916&language=en&category=57&source=chatgpt.com>



UN-Habitat launch moment
© Kuwait Plants Campaign



sustainable
greening!



Volunteers planting saplings at Al-Abdaliya Reserve in December 2019 © Kuwait Plants Campaign

https://kuwait.un.org/en/126971-kuwait-plants?utm_source=chatgpt.com



Ambassadors and volunteers planting during a diplomatic event © Kuwait Plants Campaign

https://www.mfa.tj/en/kuwait/view/9760/tree-planting-campaign-kuwait-plants-iii?utm_source=chatgpt.com



A Vibrant New Public Space © Block by Block



Residents Shaping Their Public Space © Block by Block

Community in the valley: New uses for the creek banks in Belo Horizonte, Brazil

Location: Belo Horizonte, Brazil
Partner(s): The Community Council
Donor: Block by Block
Budget: USD 78,094

In Belo Horizonte, Brazil, the irregular occupation of Onça Creek’s banks by precarious settlements posed significant safety and public health challenges, including flood risks, waste disposal, and environmental degradation.

Addressing these issues, a collaborative project by UN-Habitat and The Community Council United by Ribeiro de Abreu (COMUPRA) transformed 6 km of high-risk areas into inclusive, vibrant and accessible public spaces, creating two linear parks with recreational facilities, walking trails, green zones, agroforestry, and community gardens.

Developed in partnership with local residents, the project ensured sustainable, accessible, and safe use of the creek's banks, preventing further illegal occupations while promoting community well-being. Extensive community engagement, including workshops, public hearings, and Block By Block Workshops using Minecraft co-design sessions with students, informed the designs, this enhancing collective ownership of the project.

The impact of these revitalized spaces is profound, benefiting over 24,000 residents across the Novo Aarão Reis and Ribeiro de Abreu neighborhoods. These renewed areas, called "Espaço Vitrin" by locals, have become spaces for social interaction and inclusion.

[+ Read more](#)



over 24,000
residents

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/2d53e9e9bc7b4759974bf37e1f338be5>

Park City Initiative

Location: Global
Partner(s): Urban Planning Society of China (UPSC), Chengdu Tianfu New Area Administration Committee
Donor: Research Centre of Park City Index
Budget: USD 450,000

In response to the growing global focus on green and low-carbon development, UN-Habitat launched a new project centered on Park City development, drawing on years of research and practical experience in Chinese cities. Given the diverse contexts and organizational patterns of urban development worldwide, it remains challenging to establish a universal set of criteria for measuring progress. However, the work undertaken by the city of Chengdu has demonstrated the potential for a replicable framework. This model enables cities to assess their development across five key dimensions, identify peers with similar contexts and aspirations, and conduct in-depth analysis to inform targeted improvement and knowledge exchange.

Throughout 2024, UN-Habitat actively advanced this collaboration from both technical and strategic perspectives. A significant milestone was the 4th Park City Forum held in Chengdu on August 26.

At the World Urban Forum 12 in Cairo, UN-Habitat officially launched the Park City Initiative in collaboration with key partners from China and beyond, promoting nature-based solutions and climate-smart urban development. A high-level networking event showcased global best practices and sparked strategic dialogues with partners like FAU, UNEP, and IUCN. The initiative now moves forward with plans to develop diagnostic tools, host capacity-building events, and build a global Park City network for sustained collaboration.



The 4th Park City Forum in Chengdu
© Park City Initiative



Global Partners Discussion
© Park City Initiative



China



Children Engaging in Creative Outdoor Activities
© Viva o Verde SP



Students Participating in Public Space Co-Design
© Viva o Verde SP

Green public spaces for all: enhancing inclusivity and sustainability in the city of São Paulo - Viva o Verde SP

Location: São Paulo, Brazil
Partner(s): Municipality of São Paulo through the Municipal Secretariat of Green and the Environment (SVMA)
Donor: Municipality of São Paulo through the Fundo Especial de Meio Ambiente e Desenvolvimento Sustentável (FEMA)
Budget: USD 1,056,107

The project aimed to enhance the inclusivity and sustainability of green public spaces in São Paulo, recognizing their crucial role in promoting social cohesion, public health, and climate resilience. Despite having 117 municipal parks and 54% green coverage, the city faces stark inequalities in the distribution and accessibility of these spaces, reflecting broader social and economic disparities. Many underserved urban areas lack adequate access to parks and green infrastructure, limiting opportunities for recreation, well-being, and community interaction.

This partnership between SVMA and UN-Habitat supported São Paulo through policy advice, capacity building, and participatory design. A city-wide assessment identified key gaps in green space distribution, while selected sites were examined in detail with input from local communities—especially women and girls—to ensure inclusive planning. The project applied a gender-sensitive lens, promoting equitable access and shaping public spaces that reflect the diverse needs of all city residents.

[+ Read more](#)



Co-Creating in Public Green Spaces
© Viva o Verde SP



Brazil

10 urban parks

640,510 people

<https://bit.ly/vivaoverdesp>

Lemara Park

Location: Arusha, Tanzania

Partner(s): HealthBridge, Urban Planning for Community Change

Donor: Block by Block

Budget: One of 8 projects funded with USD 25,000

HealthBridge collaborated with Urban Planning for Community Change, to upgrade Lemara Public Park in Tanzania, in order to better serve the low-income residents of Lemara ward. The initiative aimed to enhance community interaction and attract more visitors by employing a "lighter, quicker, cheaper" approach. This approach enabled the addition of key facilities, including a community toilet, play and game equipment, benches, and grass.

The project involved close collaboration with both city officials and the local community. A meeting with the Town Planning Department helped align the project with urban development priorities, while a community meeting that convened 13 residents, including committee members and the street chairperson, facilitated the selection of key design interventions. This was guided by the costs, available materials, and the ability to complete the work within a short timeframe, to ensure timely and impactful results.

Implementation was completed in August 2024, despite delays caused by an extended approval process. Preliminary observations show an evident increase in park usage, with daily visits rising from 18–25 people before the intervention to 20–34 after the intervention. Early feedback suggests the park is attracting more young people who enjoy playing games in the space. Future projections indicate that visitor numbers could triple, especially on weekends, once the park is officially reopened. <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d27da3e45654371aa65adadd5549d4e> [Read more](#)



Youth Gathering and Socializing in the Upgraded Park © Block by Block



New Community Toilet © Block by Block

Tanzania

lighter, quicker, cheaper

Social Inclusion

Gender



Improved Public Access and Safety © UN-habitat

Securing Land Rights for Gender-Safe Informal Settlements

Location: Kabul and Herat, Afghanistan

Partner(s): UN Women

Donor: European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)

Budget: Euro €1,300,000

This project adopted a community-based approach to strengthen housing, land, and property (HLP) rights and create gender-sensitive public spaces in informal settlements in Kabul and Herat, Afghanistan. It successfully reduced the threat of forced evictions for almost 40,000 residents while significantly enhancing women's safety in public space with improved access to street lighting and sanitation. By improving public spaces and securing tenure rights, the project helped residents invest more confidently in their communities and homes, benefiting both men and women but particularly addressing the vulnerability of women to gender-based violence in unsafe environments.

The lack of formal HLP documentation in informal settlements leaves communities, especially women, at high risk of eviction and limits access to safe services, housing, and infrastructure. The project's success was rooted in its participatory design and sensitivity to local needs, enabling inclusive improvements such as better lighting and sanitation. These upgrades not only strengthened disaster resilience but also created safer, more secure environments for women and girls. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2025/03/gender_advocacy_paper_un-habitat_afghanistan_iwd_2025_-_final.pdf [Read more](#)

Afghanistan

40,000 residents

https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2025/03/gender_advocacy_paper_un-habitat_afghanistan_iwd_2025_-_final.pdf



Safe and Inclusive Public Spaces © HAYA Joint Programme
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jO4YmeK5gKASKAvUrPfcY4O_Rlpsv/view

HAYA Joint Programme: Eliminating Violence against Women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Location: Cities across the Palestine State including Bethlehem, Beit Jala, Beit Sahour, Al Doha, Jenin, Nablus, Jericho, Ramallah, Khan Yunis.
Partner(s): UN Women, UNFPA, UNODC
Donor: The Government of Canada
Budget: USD 4,402,510

Under the HAYA Joint Programme, UN-Habitat, in partnership with the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), led a multi-level effort to promote safe, inclusive, and accessible public spaces across Palestine. This comprehensive approach included developing verifiable data through city-wide public space assessments, rehabilitating and activating public spaces across the West Bank and Gaza, and engaging communities through participatory planning and social activities to foster inclusion and gender equality. These efforts also focused on strengthening the capacity of local government staff and institutionalizing inclusive design principles in urban planning practices, alongside the development of comprehensive guidelines, strategies.

As part of the HAYA Programme, UN-Habitat and the Ministry of Local Government published the Public Space Policy for Local Governments Units, the first ever document of its kind produced at the national level. This landmark document serves as a guiding framework to support national and local governments in planning, designing, and managing inclusive, safe, and accessible public spaces—particularly for women and girls. Developed following a comprehensive approach through a participatory and evidence-based process, the policy strengthens institutional capacity at the local level, promotes gender-responsive.

[Read more](#)



video:
<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7359162160238727168>
introduction:
<https://unhabitat.org/news/07-dec-2022/empowering-women-in-palestine-through-safe-and-inclusive-public-spaces>

Kasubi Market Children’s Day Care

Location: Kampala, Uganda
Partner(s): HealthBridge
Donor: Block by Block
Budget: One of 8 projects funded with USD 25,000

The Kasubi Market Children’s Daycare Project, implemented in collaboration with Advocates for Public Spaces, established a daycare facility at Kasubi Market to address the needs of vendors, particularly single mothers, and their children. The project aligns with the Market Act of 2023, which mandates daycare facilities in all markets.

By creating a safe and secure space for approximately 30 children, the project aimed to enhance market operations, improve hygiene, and provide peace of mind for vendors. Preliminary assessments demonstrated strong support from the market community. Many vendors, especially single mothers, expressed relief that they no longer had to 'smuggle' their children into the market or incur additional expenses for home or school-based childcare. They highlighted the daycare’s potential to improve their productivity, save costs, and create a safer environment for their children.

The project involved extensive consultations with market stakeholders. Meetings with market managers and officials from the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) Department of Gender, Community Affairs, and Production led to the signing of a memorandum of understanding to operationalize the facility. Input from 18 vendors, and the support from 6 skilled community members, who provided labor for tasks such as welding, painting, and carpentry, strongly contributed to the daycare’s final design and implementation.

The completed facility includes a painted and secure play area, equipped with play equipment, a litter bin, storage boxes, mats, and mattresses. The proximity of the daycare enables parents to monitor their children while working, significantly contributing to the success of the space. The daycare is set to directly benefit about 50 individuals, including market vendors, their children (aged 0-5), and school-going children during holidays. Expectant women within the market community are also expected to benefit. Stakeholder recommendations, such as involving mothers in the hiring of caretakers, have been forwarded to KCCA for further action.

[Read more](#)



Kasubi Market Daycare
© Block by Block



Safe and Colorful Space Created for Young Children
© Block by Block



Girls Designing Their Rooftop © Block by Block



Vision of a Inclusive Rooftop Space © Block by Block

Co-designing the Shofco Kibera School for Girls Rooftop

Location: Kibera, Kenya

Partner(s): Shining Hope for Communities, The Chapin School

Donor: Block by Block, Shofco

Kibera, one of Africa's largest informal settlements located in Nairobi, Kenya, faces significant challenges, including limited access to clean water, sanitation, and public spaces. Cramped living conditions leave little room for amenities like safe learning and recreational areas, especially for young girls, who report feeling significantly less safe near their homes or schools compared to boys.

To address these issues, SHOFCO (Shining Hope for Communities) has focused on empowering girls through initiatives such as the SHOFCO School for Girls in Kibera and Mathare. In collaboration with UN-Habitat and The Chapin School, SHOFCO launched a project in 2024 to reimagine the rooftop of the Kibera School for Girls, transforming it into a vibrant, functional, and inclusive space.

The project began with a virtual Training of Trainers in February 2024, facilitated by UN-Habitat and involving 8 tutors from Chapin School, Kibera School for Girls, and Mathare School for Girls. This was followed by a Block By Block workshop in March 2024, engaging 20 students aged 10-16 years from the three schools.

Guided by facilitators and tutors, the participants identified challenges such as extreme heat, hard surfaces causing injuries, and overcrowding, and collaboratively designed solutions. Their proposals included shade structures, age-specific playgrounds, seating areas, storage facilities, and raised fences to improve safety and functionality. The outcomes of these workshops are envisioned to guide future rooftop development, enhancing access to safe, inclusive public spaces in Kibera and contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 11.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c9c5486d666c46b99f567966c3302920>  **Read more**

According to a study undertaken in Kibera, only 25 percent of girls report that there is a place near their home or school that they feel safe, compared to 58 percent of boys.



Kenya

Her City Spotlight

Her City supports urban development through a gender perspective, mainstreaming inclusion to improve urban access for all. The methodology guides urban actors to implement projects through a step-by-step process providing an open and digitally accessible platform for all. This facilitates an ongoing dialogue between professionals and citizens, creating a city that works for all.

Her City Corvetto

Location: Corvetto, Milano, Italy

Partner(s): Dare.ngo, UN-Habitat, Milano municipality

In Her City Corvetto, the multicultural neighbourhood is battling increasing discrimination and criminality. Dare.NGO is using the Her City toolbox together with local girls, local grassroots organisations and the municipality providing community-based solutions to improve accessibility and safety for all in and around the Gabriele Rosa Square. 100 multi-stakeholders are contributing to 1 site, potentially impacting 5,000 daily lives.

Italy



City Workshop in Corvetto © Her City

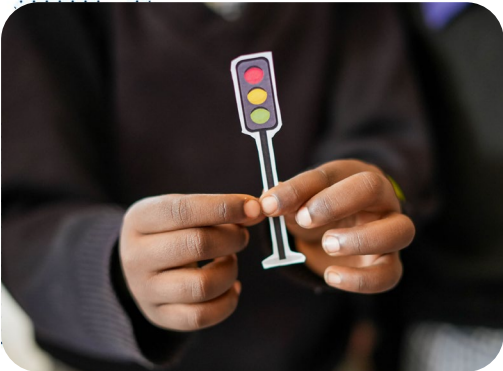


Co-Designing Public Spaces in Nepal © Her City

Youth



Students in Workshop
© Safe Routes to School Initiative



Kid Holding a Road Sign
© Safe Routes to School Initiative

Safe Routes to School Initiative

Location: Nairobi, Kenya
Partner(s): Nairobi City County Government (NCCG)
Donor: UN Road Safety Fund (UNRSF)
Budget: USD 500,000

The Safes Routes to School Initiatives was developed as part of the Reclaiming Streets for Walking and Cycling project. The goal was to support NCCG in assessing the safety of school areas in Nairobi, understand the systematic challenges present at city level and engaging the relevant stakeholders to find actionable solutions. Working with the NCCG, UN-Habitat identified priority schools and piloted the initiative at Moi Avenue and Muthurwa Primary Schools. Field assessments were conducted around the schools, and participatory workshops were held with children, parents, and teachers to better understand road safety challenges- gathering input for potential improvements.

The initiative focused on raising awareness and building knowledge amongst students. Workshops were delivered with 30 children, and suggested interventions are set to benefit 700 children at Moi Avenue and 600 children at Muthurwa. The project has highlighted the importance of standardized road safety assessment for all schools across the city. [+ Read more](https://across.cities.org/resources/safe-school-zones-in-nairobi/)

<https://across.cities.org/resources/safe-school-zones-in-nairobi/>



Kids Mapping Out © Safe Routes to School Initiative



Safety for Children

Young Gamechangers Initiative

Location: Bargny, Senegal
Partner(s): Municipality of Bargny, PFES, World Health Organization, EVA Studio
Donor: Foundation Botnar
Budget: USD 585,000

This project, supported by Foundation Botnar and implemented by UN-Habitat focused on enhancing the health and well-being of youth by fostering their active participation in urban governance, building digital skills, and involving them in the co-design and co-construction of public spaces. Recognizing that youth, despite making up 75% of the population in Senegal, are often excluded from decision-making processes, the initiative aimed to empower young people through training, dialogue, and hands-on involvement in urban development. Approximately 200 young people engaged in various workshops, events, and public space activities throughout the project.

The project demonstrated that involving youth meaningfully in urban projects cultivates a stronger sense of belonging and motivates them to engage in civic processes. By working closely with municipal authorities, the initiative highlighted the importance of institutional support in securing permissions and fostering collaboration. Key was the gradual shift of responsibilities to the youth throughout the project, helping them to take ownership and drive the initiative forward. This approach has not only improved public spaces but also strengthened youth empowerment, employability, and social cohesion within the community.

[+ Read more](https://www.unhabitat.org/en/young-gamechangers/)

<https://www.unhabitat.org/en/young-gamechangers/>



engage in civic processes



Designing Public Spaces Using Minecraft
© Young Gamechangers



Youth Using Digital Tools
© Young Gamechangers

Mmofra Book Stroll

Location: Ghana

Partner(s): Mmofra Foundation

Donor: Block by Block

Budget: One of 8 projects funded with USD 25,000

In Ghana, the Mmofra Foundation aims to transform public spaces into inclusive spaces for family-friendly interactions, through Book Strolls. The project introduced a mobile installation of a popular children's book *Suma Went Walking* in Twi. Through book displays, the project encouraged children and families to explore, read, and interact, enhancing storytelling, while making books accessible to communities where affordability remains a challenge.

These displays, currently showcased at Mmofra Park, are set to travel across various locations in Accra, reaching thousands of children and families in diverse neighbourhoods.

The Book Stroll's first major showcase occurred on September 12th during Ghana's celebration of World Literacy Day. Held at Kwashieman Basic One School in a middle-to-low-income community, the event welcomed special guests, including representatives from UNESCO, the Ghana Education Service, local government officials, and traditional rulers.

Under the theme "Promoting Multilingual Education: Literacy for Mutual Understanding and Peace," the installation attracted an audience of approximately 2,500 pupils, promoting increased community involvement.

[Read more](#)



Child Engages with Panels © Afram

2,500 pupils



Ghana



Children Reading in Public Spaces © Afram

Improving access

Co-designing Streets for Safe Mobility in Dakar

Location: Dakar, Senegal

Partner(s): Gret, UrbaSEN, Studio Bainem, UrbaMonde and Transitec

Donor: Block by Block, Pepiniere urbaine de dakar

Budget: USD 80,000

Dakar, Senegal is facing challenges with its public transport and mobility systems due to rapid urbanization. While walking is the primary mode of transport for 70% of residents, less than 5% of public space initiatives address pedestrian needs. The lack of proper sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure compromises safety, especially as motorized transport dominates the city. Efforts to improve walkability and pedestrian-friendly urban design are essential for creating safe, inclusive spaces for Dakar's residents.

In response, public authorities have introduced initiatives like the Regional Express Train and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) systems, complemented by the Dakar Urban Nursery project. The project, funded by AFD and UN-Habitat, focuses on citizen participation in developing public transport infrastructure that meets local needs.

The project, implemented by a consortium of local organizations including Gret, UrbaSEN, Studio Bainem, UrbaMonde and Transitec, selected two key streets in Dakar for upgrade. One of these, located in the Unit 4 neighbourhood near a BRT station, was chosen for its importance in improving intermodality and pedestrian accessibility. Co-design activities, including Block By Block workshops, allowed community members, including women, youth, and people with mobility challenges, to share their ideas for improving the street's infrastructure.

The project's interventions focused on enhancing pedestrian mobility, improving waste management, and beautifying the area with greenery. The Unit 4 alleyway, now featuring solar lighting, permeable paving, and flower pots, has become a key pedestrian route. The involvement of local community organizations, such as PRODEV4, in maintaining the improvements ensures sustainability.

Similar activities were carried out near Lycée des Parcelles Assainies, further enhancing pedestrian access to the BRT stations. Consultation activities resulted in a development plan that focused on enhancing pedestrian mobility, ensuring safety, and harmonizing the space for diverse users, including pedestrians, cars, and public transport. The development also aligned with BRT plans, allowing for the reuse of materials to improve pathways, plant vegetation around the school courtyard and introduce murals to improve the aesthetics of the space. This not only created a safer environment for students but also encouraged them to stay within the school grounds during breaks.

[Read more](#)



Community in a Minecraft Workshop
© Block by Block



Residents Planting Greenery
© Block by Block

Senegal

"With these sidewalks, I prefer using this alley to catch my bus— it keeps my shoes clean."

Says Ms. Fadiama, Local resident

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7432bfd6a7e4696b937c98a38c533a>

Chương Dương Shared Space

Location: Chuong Duong, Vietnam
Partner(s): HealthBridge
Donor: Block by Block
Budget: One of 8 projects funded with USD 25,000

The project, led by HealthBridge Vietnam, engaged residents through 2 co-design sessions and 5 technical meetings, with 20 community members contributing to the design process. Children played an active role in decorating the site, while local volunteers helped build the infrastructure.

2,325 people in the neighbourhood have benefitted from this intervention. Public use of the space has increased by 15%, with an increase of pedestrians and cyclists by 20% and 10%, respectively. Traffic speeds dropped to under 20km/h, ensuring safer streets for pedestrians and cyclists. Air quality also saw an improvement, with the air quality score rising from poor to moderate and good, especially in the mornings. These changes have not only improved public safety but also fostered a sense of community, encouraging more physical activity and social interaction. The benefits are expected to have a long-term impact with a 1-year projection of 10% shade provided by bamboo roofs and 10% by greenery.

The project's success has inspired and empowered local authorities, and plans are underway to expand the initiative across the entire street. Despite damage from Typhoon Yagi, the improvements have withstood the test of time, leaving a lasting positive impact on the community. The government is now exploring ways to replicate this successful model in other areas, demonstrating the power of creative, community-driven urban transformation.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c736e32c202542b8aac85a9102c57122> [Read more](#)



A Young Resident Decorating the Street © Block by Block



Kids Enjoy Transformed Shared Space © Block by Block

"I lost my right leg in the last war, the facilities for us are less in Jaffna ... But this structure gives us consolation and knowledge. The books here encourage me to live."

Says Nimalini (Chavakacheri)

Vietnam



Gathering in the New Reading Space © Block by Block

Inclusive Reading Space

Location: Jaffna, Sri Lanka
Partner(s): HealthBridge, ESAF Global
Donor: Block by Block
Budget: One of 8 projects funded with USD 25,000

HealthBridge collaborated with ESAF Global, to develop an inclusive reading space in Subramaniam Park in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. This aimed to enhance community engagement, inclusivity, and accessibility, especially for people living with disabilities.

The co-design and implementation process were undertaken through extensive community engagement and collaboration with local leaders, institutions, and volunteers.

The project interventions included the installation of 28 chairs (16 made of bamboo), eight bamboo tables, a bookshelf, eco-friendly roofing, hanging plants, plant pots, games, and a selection of 125 books and magazines.

Following the project, there has been increased use of the space by children, adults, persons with disabilities, and local vendors, thus serving as a community asset. On weekdays, approximately 10 children visit the space daily, with this number rising to 21 on weekends. The space also attracts about 16 visitors per weekday, increasing to 25 on weekends. The space has also become accessible to persons with disabilities, with consistent attendance of at least two visitors on both weekdays and weekends.

Moreover, local vendors have benefited from the increased foot traffic, with three vendors present on weekdays and four on weekends. This has resulted in increased vibrancy of the space, contributing to local economic development.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d27da3e45654371aa65adadd5549d4e> [Read more](#)

Sri Lanka



Eco-Friendly Bamboo Structure © Block by Block

Economy and Livelihoods

Public space is a vital catalyst for local economies and livelihoods. Markets, streets, plazas, and parks serve as economic lifelines, offering vendors, and small businesses accessible, visible, and secure locations to earn a living. Well-designed public spaces can boost footfall, increase commercial activity, and foster entrepreneurship—especially in underserved areas. Additionally, when well planned, consideration given to the construction and maintenance of green or open public spaces can provide secure skilled and unskilled employment opportunities for local communities.

Markets

Revitalization of Public Marketplaces in Egypt

Location: Cairo, Port Said, Rosetta, Egypt

Partner(s): The Egyptian Ministry of Local Development, Cairo Governorate, Port Said Governorate and Beheira Governorate

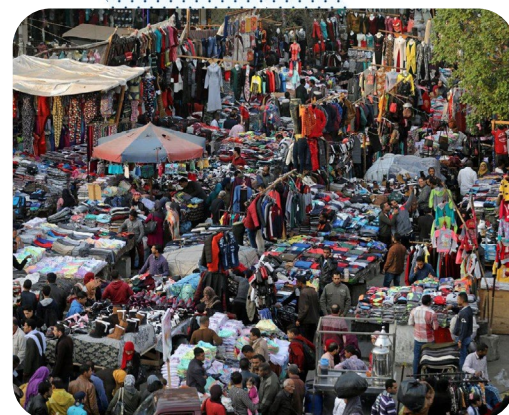
Donor: UN-Habitat and the Egyptian Government

Budget: USD 30,000

The Revitalization of Marketplaces in Egypt project, led by UN-Habitat in collaboration with the Ministry of Local Development, addresses the challenges of unplanned and imbalanced urbanization in key commercial areas.

Focusing on Cairo, Port Said, and Beheira governorates, the initiative aims to transform congested, high-traffic marketplaces into safer, more accessible, and resilient public spaces. The pilot intervention at Ataba Square Marketplace in Cairo marked the project's first phase, where a comprehensive, participatory design was developed to tackle issues such as overcrowding, poor infrastructure, limited mobility, and fire hazards. These conditions had been exacerbated by informal street vending, which, while vital to local livelihoods, has contributed to congestion and compromised safety.

The project has engaged local authorities, vendors, and communities to co-create inclusive designs that align with regulatory frameworks and promote socioeconomic development. By integrating public space improvements into broader urban development goals, the initiative has not only enhanced the functionality and safety of marketplaces but has also preserved their cultural and economic roles. The Ataba Marketplace intervention has directly benefits almost 1,000 vendors and up to 500,000 shoppers. The projects in Port Said and Rosetta, are still underway.



Crowded Marketplace in Cairo
© UN-Habitat



Weekly Open Marketplace and Placemaking

Location: Biratnagar and Kopche, Nepal

Partner(s): Digo Bikas Institute

Donor: Block by Block

Budget: One of 8 projects funded with USD 25,000

The project was implemented by the Digo Bikas Institute, promoting the upgrading of public spaces in Biratnagar and Kopche, Nepal, through small, community-driven interventions.

The project included extensive community engagement. 7 meetings with Green City Volunteers, 3 with local community members, and 1 with ward officials were conducted to identify suitable intervention sites for the project. Neighbourhood mapping exercises and consultations were also conducted with various groups. Moreover, a training program, organized with the Orange City Women's Group, empowered 90 participants to learn traditional bamboo tray-making, showcasing the intersection of art and utility in the design of public spaces.

In Biratnagar, the interventions focused on upgrading a public pond area. The design elements included a children's play zone, shaded seating with benches, swings, and a bamboo net rest, transforming the space into a vibrant space for recreation and social interaction. Through the intervention, there was a significant increase in daily usage and dwell time by children, caregivers, and elderly residents. The project also enhanced community ownership, with residents committing to protecting and maintaining the space.

In Kopche, an open space near the weekly Haat Bazaar was revitalized, including traditional games like human-scale Bagh Chaal, snakes and ladders, and hopscotch. This significantly increased foot traffic, with groups of 20-30 people daily and up to 50 visitors on school holidays. The public space has become a lively center for community activities, informal gatherings, and social interactions across users of various age groups.

The formation of a children's club in Kopche ensured consistent maintenance of the space, while ward members committed to expanding similar low-cost, high-impact interventions.

[Read more](#)

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7d27da3e45654371aa65adadd5549d4e>



Kids playing in revitalized public space
© Block by Block



Community Activities © Block by Block



Neighbourhood Farmers Market

Location: Guwahati, India

Partner(s): HealthBridge, ESAF

Donor: Block by Block

Budget: One of 8 projects funded with USD 25,000

In Guwahati, HealthBridge, in collaboration with ESAF, developed a farmers market within the existing Beltola Bi-Weekly Market, to enhance opportunities for local farmers and improve community access to fresh produce.

The project involved extensive collaboration, including 18 consultation meetings with policymakers from the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC), 16 meetings with Beltola Market operators, and 23 meetings with farmers, women vendors, and market leaders. Site visits by GMC officials helped finalize the infrastructure needs, and the renovated market was launched in partnership with the GMC and its Market Branch. Partnering with ESAF, the project provided essential infrastructure, including 10 canopies, to support 15 female and 5 male farmers in setting up vegetable stalls. These canopies offered weather protection and created a designated recognizable farmers market area, directly connecting farmers with consumers.

The interventions significantly increased sales, with each farmer attracting 50 to 60 additional customers daily, increasing their total customer base from 80–90 to 140–150 per day. Farmers reported improved earnings, ranging from INR 1,500 to INR 3,000. The branding of the farmers market area increased consumer awareness, further enhancing the success of the project.

At the launch, GMC officials committed to expanding the project by designating spaces for weekly farmers markets across different neighbourhoods in Guwahati, promoting local food access and economic opportunities for farmers citywide. [+ Read more](#)

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7d27da3e4565437aa65adadd5549d4e>

*improved earnings
from INR 1,500 to INR 3,000*

India



Sellings © Block by Block



Revitalized Market © Block by Block



Vendors at Karadjé Market © Block by Block

Improving Display of Goods for Fruits and Vegetable Vendors

Location: Niamey, Niger

Partner(s): Public Spaces for All

Donor: Block by Block

Budget: One of 8 projects funded with USD 25,000

The Karadjé Market project, initiated by Public Spaces for All, aimed to enhance the livelihoods of informal fruit and vegetable vendors while promoting healthier food consumption in Niamey. Karadjé Market, the main marketplace of Niamey's municipality #5, serves over 3,000 people daily and is a hub for over 300,000 residents.

The project, therefore, sought to address the unhygienic conditions under which vendors displayed their produce. Prior to the project, this was done on the bare ground outside the market. This began with consultations involving municipal officials who supported the project, and vendors who shared their perspectives in a focus group.

A total of 32 male vendors, including 20 specializing in fruits and vegetables, participated in the discussions. Photographs of display tables from a similar project in Kampala were shown to inspire the vendors, who were impressed by the quality and utility of the proposed solution. Carpenters were then engaged to manufacture 20 display tables according to the project's specifications. Once completed, these tables were distributed to 16 women and 4 men from the vendor list established during the focus group discussions.

The new tables not only improved hygiene and functionality, but also allowed for personalization, thus improving the vibrancy and aesthetics of the market. [+ Read more](#)

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/7d27da3e4565437aa65adadd5549d4e>

300,000 residents

Niger



Sellings at Karadjé Market
© Block by Block

Increasing Access to Employment Opportunities for Vulnerable Urban Population in Basra City

Location: Basra, Iraq

Partner(s): Basra Governorate, International Labour Organization (ILO)

Donor: European Union

Budget: Euro €10,000,000

UN-Habitat and the European Union, in partnership with Basra authorities, are working together to improve living conditions and create a safe environment for people living in informal settlements and vulnerable urban areas in Basra. The project focuses on improving access to essential services and provision of training and job opportunities for unemployed youth and vulnerable groups. The initiative also strengthens the skills of public officials to better address urban challenges and encourages a shift towards environmentally friendly waste management practices. By promoting sustainable development, the project supports the long-term improvement and upgrading of informal settlements across Iraq.

The project has impacted 21,000 beneficiaries, focusing on the most vulnerable groups in the three selected informal settlement neighbourhoods. Almost 21,000 people have gained access to improved drinking water sources and sanitation (WASH) infrastructure. The project has supported the construction and rehabilitation of 7.55 km of roads. 600 people have received vocational training targeted at unemployed men and women. An additional, 50 people have completed training and coaching for informal waste collectors and SMEs in waste collection.

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/unhabitatiraq_the-4th-steering-committee-meeting-of-the-activity-7270072156166782976-alzn?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop&rcm=ACoAAAHpsdgBFcaKoCv3FoicoZKq3GmXaybv2aE

[Read more](#)

7.55 km

21,000 beneficiaries



Iraq



EU and UN-Habitat Partnership

Building a More Inclusive, Resilient, and Sustainable Urban Future for Basra's Most Vulnerable Populations

EU and UN-Habitat Partnership © UN-Habitat



Al Kubiya Informal Settlement

Upgraded sewage and water systems ensure flood-free streets, potable water, and improved connectivity for residents.

Al Kubiya Informal Settlement © UN-Habitat



Views of public spaces Al-Salt © UN-Habitat

Green Al-Salt: Public Spaces and Living Heritage for Socio-Economic Development

Location: Al Salt, Jordan

Partner(s): UNESCO

Donor: The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation

Budget: Euro €2,500,000

In 2021, Al-Salt city in Jordan was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its legacy of tolerance and urban hospitality, shaped by its rich, multi-cultural history and distinctive urban fabric. Despite this recognition, the city's public spaces—which have long been central to social cohesion and cultural preservation—are deteriorating due to poor infrastructure, vandalism, and environmental pressures. With increasing urban development challenges, including the pandemic, climate change, and economic strain from refugee influx, these spaces have become more essential yet increasingly neglected.

In response, the project aims to rehabilitate and protect Al-Salt's public spaces while promoting its heritage, enhancing social cohesion, and improving local livelihoods. Through a multi-dimensional approach, it will strengthen urban governance by co-developing a city-wide public space strategy and filling data gaps. It will also focus on creating inclusive, green, and accessible public spaces—rehabilitating three pilot sites with focus on women, people with disabilities, and refugees. This project is currently at the start of delivery and aims to implement transformative efforts including creating a marketplace to support local economies and boosting capacity of local authorities and communities regarding the maintenance and protection of public spaces.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/WEwhobYLfymQ7ux5/?mibextid=WC7FNe>

[Read more](#)



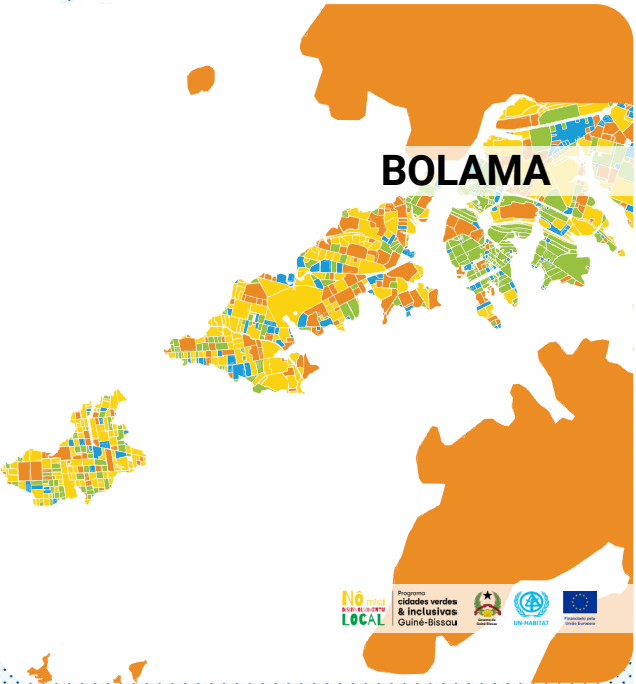
Jordan

social cohesion
cultural preservation

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/WEwhobYLfymQ7ux5/?mibextid=WC7FNe>



Mapping for Bissau © UN-Habitat



Mapping for Bolama © UN-Habitat

Improving urban governance and access to basic services for green and inclusive local development in Guinea-Bissau

Location: Bissau, Guinea-Bissau
Partner(s): Ministry of Public Works, Housing and Urbanism (MOPHU); Ministry of Territorial Administration and Local Power (MATPL); Ministry of Economy (ME); Ministry of Environment and Biodiversity (MEB); Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR); Ministry of Health (MH); Minister of Women, Family and Social Solidarity (MMFSS); Secretariat of State for Plan and Regional Integration (SEPIR); Municipality of Bissau (CMB) authorities; Delegation of the European Union in Guinea-Bissau
Donor: European Union
Budget: USD 10,582,840

Guinea-Bissau has witnessed a rapid growth of its urban population in recent years with the proportion almost doubling between 1997 and 2020. While the capital Bissau remains the main political and economic hub of the country, regional centres such as Gabú and Bafatá, among others, have also gained importance as their population has increased.

All urban centres in the country suffer from critical governance issues, with lack of consistent and structured institutional involvement to support urban planning and management, exacerbated by structural political instability. As a result, levels of access to basic services and infrastructure are critically low (e.g., only 25% of the population has access to improved sanitation). In addition, climate change poses an increasing threat to the country, which has 19% of its land surface under 10 metres above sea level.

Guinea-Bissau

Crisis Response

Inclusive and equitable access to public space offers a vital site for community building, particularly in post-crisis response. In emergencies, public spaces often become essential gathering points for shelter, information dissemination or even aid distribution. They offer open, safe and accessible spaces for communities to gather and mix, helping to build cross-community cohesion and stability. Offering an important form of adaptive infrastructure, public spaces build preparedness and recovery supporting immediate crisis response and long-term rebuilding.

Enhancing the Safety and Resilience of Palestinian Refugees through public spaces in Jordan

Location: Souf, Jordan
Partner(s): UN-Habitat Regional Office
Donor: Block by Block
Budget: USD 25,000

Jordan, with its long-standing tradition of hosting refugee communities, is home to over 2.2 million registered Palestinian refugees, many of whom reside in camps like Souf in the southern region. Living conditions in these camps are often challenging, with limited green public spaces and inadequate access to basic services like water and sanitation. These issues were further underscored during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the urgent need for accessible and safe public spaces.

In response, UN-Habitat’s Global Public Space Programme, in collaboration with UN-Habitat Jordan and the Department of Palestinian Affairs, initiated the rehabilitation of Souf Camp Park in 2022. This initiative involved engaging children and youth through a co-design process using Minecraft, with 29 Palestinian refugee participants contributing ideas to improve the park. Key priorities included enhancing playground safety, adding greenery, and creating inclusive features for children with special needs, which were integrated into technical designs for implementation.

The project transitioned to its implementation phase in 2024. Community involvement was central to this process, with children planting seeds and contractors addressing critical safety and usability concerns. Maintenance work replaced hazardous playground equipment, installed accessibility features, and improved the park’s design for users of various age groups and abilities. The park was officially opened in April 2024.

[Read more](#)

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/e4b4834a73ac451c8fa828301b2b0df>



Kids using the new swing
© Block by Block



Co-designing Workshop
© Block by Block



Women improving infrastructure © Her City



Community consultation © Her City

Her City Ukraine

Location: Mykolaiv, Drohobych, Bobrovytsia and Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine
Partner(s): Shared City, Swedish Architects, Ro3kvit Urban Coalition for Ukraine and Estonian Association of Architects

Baltpart is a capacity building project, providing skills and knowledge on participatory methods for Ukrainian urban professionals. Participating teams have been trained in tools and methods for inclusive participatory planning and design, such as Her City Toolbox, and the Her City Guide has been translated to Ukrainian to make the method easier to apply in Ukrainian cities. Four projects are using Her City tools in local initiatives, focusing on identity, restoration, and regeneration. These include the House of Officers in Mykolaiv, led by the Mykolaiv Development Agency and City Council, the Drohobych Saltworks, Katernych Palace in Bobrovytsia, and Potocki Palace in Ivano-Frankivsk.



Training for displaced women © Her City



Ukraine

Gender-sensitive solutions IDPs

Location: Mahate neighbourhood, Pemba, Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique
Partner(s): UN-Habitat, International Organization for Migration, High Commission of Canada in Mozambique

In Her City Pemba, UN-Habitat’s country office in Mozambique is fostering inclusion and cohesion among internally displaced people (IDPs) and host communities in the Mahate neighbourhood in Pemba. The upcoming Mahate Action Plan will transform this neighbourhood, with a special focus on women and girls fostering locally owned infrastructure, by empowering local communities, IDPs and host communities. 100 stakeholders contributed to 1 site, set to impact 5,000 people.

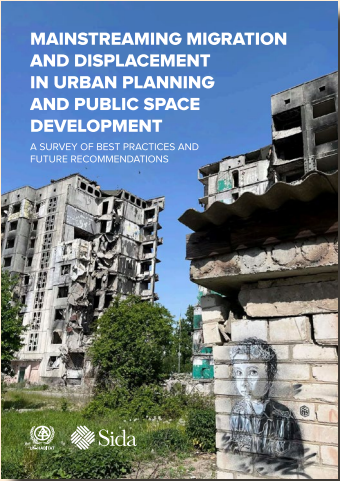


Mozambique

Advancing Knowledge Development

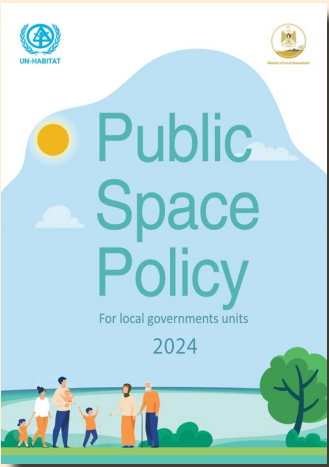
Key tools and publications

SPOTLIGHT: published in 2024



In response to the growing challenges of migration and displacement in urban areas, this publication presents principles for improving urban planning and public space development. Intended to illustrate best practices and guide practitioners, policymakers, and local authorities, these principles are supported by recommendations and examples from across UN-Habitat's recent operational experience.

[Read more](https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/e4b4834a73ac451c8f1828301b2b0d5f)



The Public Space Policy for local government units is the first document of its kind at the national level in Palestine to guide the creation of safe and inclusive public spaces for all community groups, with consideration for gender sensitive planning principles. This policy focuses on four main pillars of public spaces and is the result of a participatory approach in partnership with various influential governmental and community institutions.

[Read more](https://unhabitat.org/public-space-policy-for-local-government-units-2024)

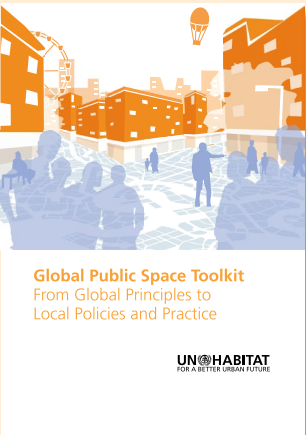


MY NEIGHBOURHOOD provides an extensive 'check list' of urban design principles that are applicable in diverse cultural and geographical contexts at the neighbourhood scale. This checklist ensures an integrated approach to neighbourhood design by integrating principles across five key city objectives, across sectors (transport, housing, public space, utilities etc), and across design dimensions (neighbourhood, street, open public space, and building unit).

[Read more](https://unhabitat.org/my-neighbourhood)

SPOTLIGHT: Foundational tools and publications

Over the years, UN-Habitat has developed a series of normative and operational tools to support local and national governments and other partners in scaling up efforts to achieve SDG goal 11.7 and make public spaces more safe, inclusive, accessible and green. This selection of core tools is still just as relevant today...



[Read more](https://unhabitat.org/global-public-space-toolkit-from-global-principles-to-local-policies-and-practice)



[Read more](https://unhabitat.org/city-wide-public-space-assessment-toolkit-a-guide-to-community-led-digital-inventory-and-assessment)



[Read more](https://unhabitat.org/the-block-by-block-playbook-using-minecraft-as-a-participatory-design-tool-in-urban-design-and-governance)



[Read more](https://unhabitat.org/her-city-a-guide-for-cities-to-sustainable-and-inclusive-urban-planning-and-design-together-with)



[Read more](https://unhabitat.org/public-space-site-specific-assessment-guidelines-to-achieve-quality-public-spaces-at-neighbourhood)

tools and publications

We are now digitalizing our tools and methods into e-learning self-paced modules that will be available online for open-access capacity building worldwide. You can access our learning modules:

[Introduction To Public Space](https://learn.unhabitat.org/enrol/index.php?id=119)

[City-Wide Public Space Assessment](https://learn.unhabitat.org/enrol/index.php?id=124)




click it!


e-learning

Meet the 2024 team


Thanks to the Global Public Space Programme’s team in 2024, and our UN-Habitat's colleagues for their passion and commitment toward UN-Habitat’s public space mandate.




Amr Elsayed




Anna Giliberti




Asmae El-Rhazi




Christelle Lahoud




Dina Goussous



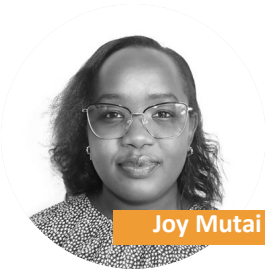
Elin Andersdotter Fabre




Jing Ren




Jose Chong




Joy Mutai



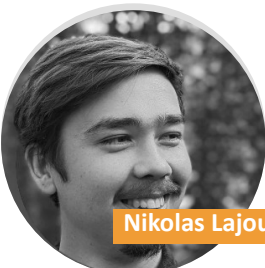
Joyce David




Katriya Bulutoglu




Nagla Gamaledeen




Nikolas Lajouw




Rizwan Kasmani




Sakshi Mehta




Sujia Wang



Sharon Ogoti



Solomon Imujaro



Yawen Liang

Appreciating our 2024 donors and partners

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Shining Hope for Communities





















For more information please contact:
unhabitat-publicspace@un.org