

SECURING AND ENHANCING PUBLIC SPACE THROUGH PARTICIPATORY SLUM UPGRADING

“Public spaces are all places publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive¹.”

All around the world, public and communal spaces provide an enabling environment for livelihood generation and local economic development, space for the provision of infrastructures, basic services, for transport and mobility and for cultural and recreation initiatives, promoting social inclusion and ensuring safety and public health.

The severe lack of essential and basic infrastructure and services, narrow streets devoid of sidewalks and designated waste management - combined with challenges associated with overlapping land and security of tenure arrangements - mean that the capacity of public spaces to host a mix of activities and catalyze activity and ensure well-being- is sometimes lost. A lack of or limited public and communal spaces reinforces poverty dynamics and often increases the perception of unsafety- which ultimately undermines the prosperity prospects of all urban dwellers. The impacts of inadequate public spaces in terms of accessibility, safety, security and health are disproportionate for certain groups including women, children and people with disabilities.

Research shows that urban centers that promote and protect common spaces to facilitate safe economic and social activities, promoting environmental well-being, improving public health and fostering social inclusion are the most

prosperous, sustainable and liveable for all urban residents².

The PSUP approach

The Participatory Slum Upgrading Programme (PSUP) has been taking the following actions to secure public and common spaces in slums and informal settlements:

Recognition and mapping

- Ensuring that public space is understood, valued and prioritized and that funds are committed for public space interventions as part of essential urban infrastructure.
- Using the slum upgrading multi-stakeholder County Teams and the profiling and mapping phases to obtain diverse perspectives on public and communal space.
- Mapping and inventory of the existing public space including the experiences and perspectives of vulnerable groups such as women, girls and people with disabilities understood and captured through participatory planning.

Integration

- Ensuring the specific consideration of public spaces in strategic planning documents, policies and regulations through the strengthening of institutional and financial arrangements.
- The PSUP promotes integration of the improvement of public spaces and facilities into comprehensive citywide slum upgrading strategies and plans.
- Strengthening the link between roads, sidewalks and utilities infrastructure as well as the connections points for formal and informal public transport systems.

Participation

- Ensuring that all stakeholders - including key local groups and local authorities- are part of planning, implementation and management process including slum dwellers and especially women.
- Promoting participation and ownership in all phases to create a mind-set that public and community space matters.

Implementation and design

- Promoting community management opportunities or push for current ones to be more inclusive and empowering local communities through initiatives such as community managed funds.
- Enhancing public space as a catalyzer of livelihood generating activities, especially for women
- Preserving the flexibility and multipurpose use of these spaces, inclusivity and safety ensuring that community spaces are open to all the public.

PSUP recommendations

- Use the development of the participatory city-wide slum upgrading strategies to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of public and common spaces;
- Secure public and community spaces for utilities, livelihood generation and general well-being activities promoting the mixture of uses;
- Promote participation to increase ownership and take the most vulnerable into account when designing public spaces.

¹ p.26. UN-Habitat (2016) "Global Public Space Toolkit - From Global Principles to Local Policies and Practice".

² UN-Habitat (2013), The State of the World Cities Report 2012/13. UN-Habitat (2015), El Estado de las Ciudades Colombianas, UN-Habitat (2016) World Cities Report

GHANA.

Community Homework and Resource Center



Community empowerment Centre after completion, Ghana. @PSUP

The community of Ga Mashie in Accra, lacks public spaces where to conduct community activities and where to actively participate on the development of upgrading interventions in the neighborhood. The Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) provided an office and a space to build a community center. In a participatory design process, the community prioritized creation of a space available in the evenings for the children to do school homework and facilities for the training of youth on technical skills thus these functions were integrated in the new community center. The community center has enhanced the collaboration and partnership between AMA and the Ga Mashie community thus strengthening institutionalization of the participatory process in slum upgrading. Through the enhancement of public spaces, the community has broader recreation options and the participatory process ensures the ownership of the public spaces by a broader community group.

SOLOMON ISLANDS.

Participative design for public space



PSUP Participatory planning workshop in Kenya. @ PSUP

Through the PSUP the partner ministry in Solomon Islands as well as staff from all departments of the Honiara City Council, have continuously improved their knowledge on pro-poor urban development regarding basic urban services, housing and land issues. Through the commitment of the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey to the PSUP principles, including no forced evictions, in Honiara the discussion was also stimulated to find upgrading and resettlement options for informal settlers to avoid evictions. In Solomon Islands PSUP raised awareness on the importance of Public Spaces, especially for informal settlement communities and facilitated contact with the UN-Habitat Public Space Program, which started collaborating on the topic. This commenced with training for ministry officials, city council staff and the community on possible design scenarios using the online gaming tool Minecraft.

HAITI.

Rehabilitation of a community space



Rehabilitation of the place de la Paix, Haiti. @PSUP

The rehabilitation of Place de La Paix in Haiti has created a central social hub in the area where there is space for people to meet and children to play. This space provides a break from the dense residential parts around the park, and the Square is being managed by the Community with support from the Municipality. The redesigning of the square was done through the PSUP in a participatory process creating a strong sense of ownership from the residents.

IMPACT

Community led projects in public spaces

Participatory design workshops of slum neighbourhoods

13 Resident Committees created to ensure community participation

Regularization of more than 800.000 land tenure titles which protects public spaces from land-grabbing

INCLUSIVE SLUM UPGRADING

FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

UN HABITAT