URBAN FUTURES

Co-designing the city

critical analysis and international experiences

'Pushing Boundaries'
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Urban Future is an academic workshop dedicated to innovative urban planification in the global Norths and the global Souths. It is followed by master students from three graduate programs of the University of Geneva: masters in “Innovation, Human Development & Sustainability”, “Territorial Development”, and “African Studies”.

In the workshop, students are invited to think critically about several challenges at stakes in implementing the SDGs while planning, managing, and organizing ‘city-life’, crossing Global South and North experiences. Several guest lecturers give the students key insights about contemporary urban issues or planning practices such as tactical urbanism, citizen participation, urban co-design, sustainable mobilities, green cities and green buildings, or social inclusion, while the teaching team deepens new urban models such as “close-to-home” urbanism or thriving streets urbanism.

How to empower inhabitants to build the city from in a bottom-up approach? How to integrate urban planning in SDGs? How to ensure environmental and climate change practices and policies to promote sustainable cities?

**Advisor Team**

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URBAN FABRIC INITIATIVES

In this workshop, master students are put in real professional conditions, through two innovative initiatives, (i) “Students Reinventing Cities”, a competition organized by C40 network; and  

(ii) a collaborative project held by French Development Agency (AFD) dedicated to tactical urbanism: the “Urban Fabric Initiatives” program, a laboratory for citizen participation in urban projects.

This handbook is the result of a benchmark study that the students have conducted in partnership with the “Urban Fabric Initiative” project.  
This report is part of AFD’s ‘urban fabric initiatives program’ (Projet Pépinières Urbaines).  
This project is implemented by urbaMonde, urbaSEN, Cabanon Vertical, IRD and GRET, to develop public space initiatives, co-design and urban fabrics in cities (Ouagadougou, Tunisie, Dakar, Abidjan).

What is the Urban Fabric Initiative ?

In 2018, AFD launched the Urban Fabric Initiative, a new approach to help meet the challenge of having city residents take on ownership of urban projects. These services are designed to accompany to AFD-financed urban projects.  
The Urban Fabric Initiative uses a participatory approach to help city residents and users as well as civil society invent and test urban micro-projects with social, cultural, and environmental impact.

The stakeholders work in partnership with local authorities on these micro-projects, which may be temporary or eventually upscaled. Proposals for micro-projects within the framework of the Urban Fabric Initiative may be for such goals as urban improvement (for example, testing pedestrian traffic at intersections), better use of unoccupied space during land-use studies or construction, or development of new uses for renovated spaces (such as a playground in a recently restored park, etc.).
In the last of semester 2020, students at the Urban Planning School of Paris (EUP) followed a workshop that explored the context and terminology of tactical urbanism. The Urban Fabric Initiatives Network wish to continue collaboration with universities and master students. The request to the UNIGE is placed by the facilitation and capitalization team in charge of the management of the facilitation program and is led by urbaMonde and IRD.

These transitional urban planning approaches consist, on the ground, of revitalizing unoccupied sites and transforming the space and relationships between the stakeholder and what could be design after. Students are therefore expected to take a critical way at these forms of urban action through a questioning of their origins, purposes, methods and impacts: How can the concept of transitory urbanism and its institutionalization be understood? What are the contributions of these approaches or devices of transitory urbanism and theirs limits? What do these approaches and projects suggest, for the work of the urban planner and the urban project? How can the dimension of time be understood in urban planning?

The objective of this study is to contribute to the dissemination and share documentation of the Urban Fabric Initiative Network, in particular by creating supports for the appropriation of the concept and for the dissemination of skills, knowledge and key experiences in the world (international benchmark). This study focus on two aspects:

- a critical analysis of the concept and practices of transitional urbanism
- an international benchmark of transitional/tactical urbanism initiatives.

The students deepen the theoretical and semantic aspects and will question the many terms, concepts and practices that exist around the notions of transitory/tactical urbanism. Based on their understanding of the subject, they explore, using geographical or thematic entries, concrete experiences of projects or initiatives of transitory and participatory urban planning, implemented in cities. Students follows a common methodological template. The results of the students' work feed and enrich The Network of Urban Fabric Initiatives. The benchmark part supports the open-data platform of The Network of Urban Fabric Initiatives.
'Doing' Tactical Urbanism

Source: Light Installation at the Singapore Urban Design Festival 2019
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DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

Pacific Asia is a vast region, where we examined five areas. There is not one exhaustive definition of tactical urbanism. More often than not, the concept blends with other social urbanism practices, including participatory urbanism, direct architecture, etc. Its local translation is also not always literal and differs from its European context.

**Benchmarking Strategy**

In comparing tactical urbanism across Pacific Asia, the team sub-categorized the projects and the analysis into three groups:

1. **Singapore**: A small urban space with a strong emphasis on smart city planning in highly multicultural society.
2. **Russia & Vietnam**: Post-socialized regimes, with a strong-state hand and where the projects tangle on the line of illegality
3. **Japan & South Korea**: Two advanced economies, with established democratic processes and densely inhabited cities.

**Japan & South Korea**

Tactical urbanism’s translation in Japan and South Korea falls within an umbrella concept encompassing guerilla urbanism, pop-up urbanism, ad-hoc urbanism, and DIY urbanism. This broad definition highlights a form of participatory urbanism emphasizing the importance of local communities, namely with these characteristics:

- Smaller changes with short-term projects for long-lasting urban life improvements;
- Collaboration with the public and private sector;
- Low-budget requirements;
- Regeneration/revitalization of underused places to build public spaces.

**Singapore**

Singapore’s tactical urbanism project target neighborhood improvement.

Citizen participation and neighborhood improvement are both key in building more inclusive and sustainable city. Residents’ involvement is recognized as a key instrument in improving the living environment in locality (Gilchrist & Taylor, 2016).

Singapore development extends into a colonial urbanization under British imperial rule, as well as to rapid economic growth and urban development under nationalist authoritarian regime from the 1960s (Watson, 2011).

**Russia & Vietnam**

Tactical urbanism in Russia and Vietnam is expressed through youth’s creativity, with the objective of both pointing fingers at key social issues and improving cities’ neglected facades. Creative movements participate in the processes, where artists are increasingly expressing themselves in both independent, online and physical public art spaces (Hong, 2009). By pushing - but not overstepping boundaries - young people are using “tactical urbanism” to express their artistic creativity and shape the social scene without clashing with the government or other authorities.
URBAN CONTEXT

Singapore
In Singapore’s planning, urban changes and adaptation have fallen within its generalised label of “innovative urban solutions”. These “solutions” promote a quality living environment through the government’s livability and inclusivity framework (Wong, 2017). One tactic for providing this infrastructure has been through ephemeral, flexible and multi-space solutions that instigate long-term community-building (Singapore Urban Development Authority, n.d.). Singapore, adopted frameworks targeting neighborhood improvements through urban regeneration interventions.

Japan & South Korea
Japan’s multilateral and decentralised urbanism started in the 1990s. Stronger citizen participation followed suit as decentralisation became the norm. Japan’s term Machizukuri reflects (in a non–literal translation) “building the city” in a community-based process. From the 1960s onwards, South Korea also managed urban development through a top-down approach targeting mega-scale projects. After multiple financial crises in the 1990s and 2000s, socio-economic changes including economic stagnation and low birth rate—emerged. These thorny issues meant that Korea’s urban strategy shifted to a people-focused model with smaller-scale projects. Korea’s application of tactical urbanism was therefore thought as an efficient way to expand sites and/or targets through various city experiments (Son et al., 2017).

Although Japan and South Korea are not especially scarce in terms of territorial size (unlike Singapore), their cities are densely populated, with compact habitation units. These characteristics increase the importance of public spaces and their potential for social connectivity.

Russia & Vietnam
As of today, the principle of preserving and using historical and cultural heritage in solving strategic problems of spatial development of Russia is the basis for restoring the rights of urban planning as a special sphere of culture and art (Mezentsev, 2019). This allows using the creative potential of project activities in the formation of tactical urbanism projects, which are usually small–scaled.

Similarly in Vietnam most tactical urbanism projects are carried out on small-scale, bottom–up approaches, as it does not seem to be a great priority for the central government. Usually projects are organized by young people and subaltern groups. These projects include creative spaces for art exhibitions, workshops, cultural events and so forth.
INSTITUTIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

Singapore
In Singapore, these efforts to design ‘loveable places’ (Singapore Urban Development Authority, n.d.) includes:
- Local residents
- Technical & local services and management
- Institutional actors
In this process, government agencies act as gateways to successfully engage an ecosystem of stakeholders and patrons to garner feedback, support and collaboration. This is namely achieved through private-public partnerships.

Japan & South Korea
Planning, initiation, and implementation are by wide shared between the public sector, private sector, and civil society in Japan and South Korea. Most urban development ideas spin from residents; municipalities, while private companies usually offer administrative, financial, and technology support. Municipalities mainly lead urban projects with participation from residents, universities, and local experts. International intervention in urban planning is relatively rare in South Korea,(Son et al., 2017) and is not mentioned either in any of the studied sources. Following stakeholders are the main participants: Citizens association, central or local government, university and research institutes, and local professionals.

Russia & Vietnam
In Vietnam, the implementation of tactical urbanism is done by civil society, “by the people, for the people”, in a bottom-up fashion without the government’s knowledge and/or approval (Geertman, 2016). If authorities learn about these projects, they often let them carry out their operations uninterrupted. However, if the authorities disapprove of any part of the project or believe they “overstep the line”, these projects are shut-down (Geertman, 2016). Unlike Vietnam, tactical urbanism projects in Russia are not exclusively bottom-up approaches. Although most projects are led or initiated by the public or civil groups, the government sometimes supports and even participates. The main stakeholders of tactical urbanism projects in Vietnam and Russia are artists/organizers, public sector, local residents, local authorities and the state/government.
TOOLS

Singapore
In Singapore, growing citizen participation is largely facilitated by the state. The previous neighbourhood improvement project showed a transition from a state-led to a participatory approach. Success was however limited by difficulties in involving getting residents in the planning process, and by lack of knowledge and exposure to participatory planning (Cho, 2018); (Housing Development Board). (n.d.).

Japan & South Korea
Tools employed in Japan’s projects’ ideation are by wide citizen-led and include public surveys, public workshops of research institutions or universities, and meetings between civil society and government stakeholders. In order to discuss the needs of the population and to properly organize the projects, media platforms are widely used to inform about updates, collect citizens’ ideas, and schedule projects. Japan’s Sotonoba (https://sotonoba.place/) platform namely fulfils these functions, while also acting as a mediator between stakeholders and a research lab promoting tactical urbanism. Implementation is rather conducted by municipal or ministerial actors directly, Unlike Japan, South Korea launches calls for projects through municipal-level competitions for specific areas, and most events are open to inhabitants and students. Otherwise, civil society, municipality, and private companies autonomously take action to develop certain areas. Taskforce teams and/or dedicated organizations manage and monitor the projects, analyzing statistics and public surveys to evaluate vitalization and satisfaction rates. Also, these responsible institutions work as a communication tool between the local government and residents (Son et al., 2017).

Russia & Vietnam
In Vietnam, young artists and the “wired-generation” (the first to integrate new media and communications technology into their daily lives) rely on the internet and social media tools to attract visitors and participants to their events. These types of non-state approved events have only been made accessible to the public (as opposed to being strictly private) this past decade. Simultaneously, these young artists also take part, attend international art galleries and receive education abroad. Similarly, the internet and boom of social networks led to the increase of civil engagement and tactical urbanism in Russia. Abandoned territories, school projects, local media and individual invitations for participation are among the most common tools used for tactical urbanism projects in Russia.
# PROJECTS

## Table 1: Similarities vs. differences in the projects benchmarked

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Site characteristics</th>
<th>Project aims</th>
<th>Citizen participation</th>
<th>Legal base</th>
<th>Targeted audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Singapore</strong></td>
<td>Good basic infrastructure; Lack of basic social amenities</td>
<td>Urban regeneration; Strengthen social relationships</td>
<td>Yes: bidding process; consultation workshops</td>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>Residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Japan</strong></td>
<td>Commercial district; Insufficient urban infrastructure</td>
<td>Urban regeneration; Improve urban and communal areas</td>
<td>Partly open: workshops, ideas lab, surveys</td>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>Workers, residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South Korea</strong></td>
<td>Commercial district; Insufficient urban infrastructure</td>
<td>Urban regeneration; Improve urban and communal areas</td>
<td>Yes: open-competitions, petitions</td>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>Residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vietnam</strong></td>
<td>Residential area; Lack of basic social amenities</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Entertainment; Strengthen social relationships</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Illegal</td>
<td>Residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Russian Federation</strong></td>
<td>Insufficient urban infrastructure, under-utilised urban areas</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Entertainment; find new uses for abandoned spaces</td>
<td>Partly open: consultations, workshops, surveys</td>
<td>Mostly legal</td>
<td>Residents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROJECTS

Localization

BOULEVARD "WHITE FLOWERS", Kazan, Russia

Arts and Culture-led Urban Regeneration Project for commercial district, Chengju city, South Korea

Honey Comb Square, Shizuoka City, Japan

Urban Design Festival 2019, Singapore

Heritage Space, Hanoi, Vietnam
PROJECT#1

HONEYCOMB SQUARE
SHIZUOKA CITY, JAPAN

Japan started in the 1990s to implement a decentralized and participative urbanism approach. This approach is adopted at the municipal level through consultations with citizens in designing the urban structure for their living space.

Tactical urbanism is an even more recent concept. The project benchmarked here is the first one of its kind in the prefecture. In Shizuoka city, the street parking spaces had parking meters and functioned as their names indicated it. In March 2020, these parking meters were abolished as they had turned unnecessary due to new commercial facilities in suburbs and hourly parking lots. With the abolition of this system, the road administration created a parklet, to use differently and in a more social-connected way these now empty spaces. There are already established coffee shops, but these are often full and require you to buy something to use their dedicated outdoor spaces, which is not the case with Honey Comb.

The Honey Comb’s objective is to create a connected area, dedicated to relaxation and free social use, especially during Covid-19 times. The goals of the modified area were the following:

- Reduce car-focused street usage
- Increase social connectivity & mixity
- Create a public space for relaxation
- Create a health-wise safe social space

**Date**: September 25, 2020 to March 31, 2021

**Implementation period**: A few months

**Time life of the project**: On-going

**GPS coordinates**: 34.97411, 138.38372

**Status of land**: Public

**Type of place**: High density area, car park, street

**Stakeholders**

- Road administration of Shizuoka Prefecture
- General Incorporated Association Sotonova
- (Citizens)

Source: Sotonoha Place (2020) https://sotonoha.place/shizuoka-parklet ,
Target audience
- Residents passing by
- Neighborhood inhabitants

Type of actions
- Installation: few months
- Reversible intervention
- Participative process
- Temporary changes

Citizen Participation
Citizens were active in raising awareness about the project through media platforms and journalism work. However, their participation in the consultancy phase remains unprecise.

Type of intervention
- Wood adjustable sitting structures were incorporated into the street design. These aimed to increase mixity and connectivity between people through relaxation, working, eating in a common space, while being outdoors
- Direct and indirect socialisation while following Covid-19 measures

Innovation
- Designed the 1st parklet installation in the prefecture
- Offered a social connectivity space during the Covid-19 period

Results
There are for the moment no negative externalities, and social connections have increased. The project is part of a social experiment and is the first one in its prefecture, so it is for the moment a success. People use the space how it was designed to be used, and it has not be altered or modified once installed. It may be directly reproduced.

Contact
Emplacement: Nouveau bâtiment du gouvernement de Shizuoka, 4e étage
Tél.: 054-221-1239
Sotonoba.place (the tactical urbanism media plateform and lab) https://sotonoba.place

Calypso Foti

Resources
Websites of the city, and website of the media platform Sotonoba. Available at:
https://sotonoba.place/shizuoka-parklet,
The White Flowers Boulevard is a park instead of a parking lot: the new public space, which has become an alternative neighborhood center, is located on the site of former paid parking lots, where trucks were parked on mounds of construction debris.

The constant conflict between cars and pedestrians posed a danger, as there was no unified and continuous pedestrian route from the houses to public transport stops and the school. Moreover, the parking fields became a kind of exclusionary space - and began to be built up by stores and business centers. The new boulevard is an alternative to parking lots and haphazard development for the benefit of residents.

**Stakeholders**

- **Civil society:** Descendants of the writer Abdurakhman Absalyamov, after whom the street is named; Residents of adjacent houses;
- **Local private stakeholders:** Entrepreneurs whose business is located in the neighborhood; Artists and Designers;
- **Local public stakeholders:** Directorate of parks and squares of Kazan; Department of Architecture and Urban Planning of the Executive Committee of Kazan; Committee for external improvement of Kazan; Administration of the Novo-Savinovsky district of Kazan;

**Date:** 2018–2019  
**Implementation period:** 1–2 years  
**Time life of the project:** 1–2 years  
**Achieved**  
**Cost:** $250,000  
**GPS coordinates:** 55.826139, 49.110363  
**Status of land:** public  
**Type of place:** underused parking space
Target audience
- Local residents

Type of actions
- Event: Small-scale community festivals
- Non-reversible intervention
- Semi-participative process
- Long-term changes

Citizen Participation
- Questioning; polls; interviewing; mapping; project seminars; public discussions; design workshops with pupils and students; school projects (drawings, essays, wishes, poems, models); assessing the exploitation of the territory; participation in creative and artistic workshops.

Type of intervention
- **Landscape**: Fertile land has been brought in, with 1000 large trees and perennial shrubs planted, mainly with white blossoms (a reference to the name "White Flowers").

- **Recreation space**: The territory was equipped for family recreation and also for playgrounds, sunbathing, board games, picnic areas, a sports ground, as well as a tennis courts.

Innovation
The authors consciously moved away from the standard idea of the boulevard as a linear space with a pedestrian promenade and platforms along. Since it is a boulevard for local residents rather than a city park, there are many different scenarios of use. This functional program was created in collaboration with local residents at design workshops. At all stages of the project, local residents engaged with communities, teachers, students from School No. 179 and government experts.

Results
As a result of the joint design, the abandoned territory, which had been occupied for the needs of private business, became public again, and the new boulevard became the center of neighborhood life and the subject of pride for residents. Various types of spaces appeared here - children's play areas, areas for recreation, events, sports areas, a landscape was formed and more than 1000 large trees and perennial shrubs were planted. The project was implemented as part of the Public Spaces Development Program.

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Adelina Muradylova

Resources
PROJECT#3

URBAN DESIGN FESTIVAL
SINGAPORE

Singapore manages several planning challenges:

- **Building with limited land availability**
  For efficiency, Singapore needs to plan for its low land availability, namely through temporariness. This challenge has legitimised re-claiming land for public usage, especially under-utilised land and infrastructure.

- **Fostering a sense of community**
  Infrastructural development has been the bedrock of Singapore’s growth; however, the provision of physical space alone cannot foster a cultured city. Art can here promote a sense of national unity (Wong, 2017).

- **Managing Covid-19 restrictions**
  With Covid-19, outdoor environments are preferred for social interactions (Arup Ltd. 2020). Promoting outdoor neighbourhood connectivity is therefore essential.

Stakeholders

- **Local residents**
- **Technical & local services and management**
  - LopeLab: An urban planning consultancy firm specialised and branding itself as a ‘tactical urbanist’.
  - TCA Think Tank: Architecture practice based in Singapore focusing on public space design through art.
- **Institutional actors**
  - Design Singapore Council (federal office)
  - National Urban Planning Authority: allowing land lease & co-designed the urban space.

Date: 14th to 17th March 2019
Implementation period: 4 days
Time life of the project: Ongoing
GPS coordinates : 1.3100, 103.8603
Status of land: Public
Type of place: High-density area, car park
Target audience
- Residents & young working professionals

Type of actions
- Event: 4 days
- Non reversible intervention
- Participative process
- Temporary changes

Citizen Participation
- A public call for innovative but ‘sensitive’ proposals was launched in 2018 by the Urban Development authority to test potential usages for this State property as a public space.
- During the event: idea boxes were placed to collect public opinion.

Type of intervention
- Appropriation: Sought to activate an underutilised mundane car park, turning it into a mixed environment for local communities. The infrastructure was renovated and transformed it into a place-making space offering learning experiences.
- Education: Welcomed awareness-raising workshops targeting ‘innovative urban solutions’.

Innovation
- Collective educational experiences
  Lopelab Consultancy curated a series of light shows and exhibitions on circular design. These ‘Circular Design Workshops’, conducted by industry-leading companies allowed architects, designers, and the local community to experience recycled materials and brainstorm about waste recycling solutions in Asian megalopolises.

Results
The outcomes of this project can be seen as two-fold. For one, it successfully co-created and engaged communities through these communal spaces. However, its reach remains limited to a community of residents already plugged into the arts and culture network in Singapore.

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Resources
Arup Ltd. (2020). Tactical Urbanism, making it happen (p. 40).
https://www.arup.com/perspectives/publications/research/section/tactical-urbanism


PROJECT#4

ARTS & CULTURE-LED URBAN REGENERATION PROJECT FOR COMMERICAL DISTRICT
CHENGJU CITY, SOUTH KOREA

In response to the urban decay with decreasing population and market size, this project aims to motivate inhabitants to revitalise this commercial district and revive the local economy on a community basis. The city first implemented car-free streets and added additional sections yearly. It then set up a Youth Culture Zone with a youth square on the site of the Central Theater. The district is still developing the street and regularly holds arts and cultural events, such as flea markets, youth festivals, and art fairs, thereby increasing the floating population and diminishing vacancies in the buildings.

Date: 2006–Present
Implementation period: > 15 years
Time life of the project: 1 or 2 years
Ongoing
Cost
- $14 billion from Chengju City
- $70,000 from inhabitants
- From Central government (N/A)
GPS coordinates: 36.639102, 127.488777
Status of land: Public + Private
Type of place: Streets & Buildings

Stakeholders

- Civil society: inhabitants (Jungang-dong community, Market activation committee, and Resident committee)
  - Initially, local residents spontaneously set up the committee for development of Jungang-dong in 2005. Cooperating with research institutions and local professionals, they have devised and operated at least one project per year
- Local public stakeholders: Municipality, research institutions, and universities
  - The city built and organization, Chengju Urban Regeneration Supporters, to lead all the projects and set up funds. It also works as a communication tool between local resident and municipality
  - Municipality support the project financially and administratively

- Local private stakeholders: local professionals in construction, design, urban planning, law, real estate, culture, and art
  - They participate in the project by sharing their expert knowledge

Source: Chengju Urban Regeneration Supporters. (2016)
Target audience
- Youth & Artists

Type of actions
- Events & Infrastructures:
  - Weekly flea market
  - Craft exhibition
  - Music performance
  - Small community-based festivals
- Reversible intervention
- Participative process
  - The residents buy the vacancies in buildings and rent them at a lower fee to attract artists

Citizen Participation
- The project is initiated by citizen first, and the local authority took the lead for sustainable operation
- They organized Jungang Urban Regeneration Committee to design and operate street revitalization programs themselves

Type of intervention
- Car-free streets by planting pine trees and building fountain and waterway
- Arts and cultural street by opening events on the street
- A cultural center that offers training programs related to crafts or business start-up for residents and visitor.

Innovation
Jungang-dong was a hub of transportation, education, and economy in Chengju city. As the main bus terminal moved to the other district, the district lost its position and people. This project was a successful turning point to revitalize commerce again by specializing in art and culture.

Results
According to the report of the urban vitality promotion project in Jungang-dong, the floating population of Jungang-dong increased by 127.6%, and the number of empty stores decreased by 56.7% in 2016 compared to 2011. Vacant houses also declined by 100%, and user satisfaction increased by 4%.

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Chaewoon Hwang

Resources
Son, M. (2018). ‘Urban regeneration’ to ‘Social regeneration’: Culture and social regeneration through the Culture City of East Asia event initiative in Chengju South Korea. The University of Sheffield, 161-163.
The Heritage Space Cultural Center is a successful example of tactical urbanism in Vietnam. Operating since 2014, the space has been utilised and enjoyed as a hub or platform for young artist, both local and foreign, to practice and showcase their art.

The project is a symbol of the changing social and cultural scene in Vietnam, young people increasingly value independence, individuality and expression, e.g. through art. Unhindered by governmental interference or manipulation

Independently run by curator and artists, the Heritage Space was established with the vision of operating as a cultural and multidisciplinary hub.

The space is used to host various art exhibits and cultural events, as well as workshops, conferences, lectures etc. Its long-term goal is to contribute to the development of innovation, arts and culture in Vietnam.

**Date**: January 2014 until present  
**Time life of the project**: 7 years  
**Ongoing**  
**GPS coordinates**: 21.0302, 105.7766  
**Status of land**: Private  
**Type of place**: Located inside a skyscraper

### Stakeholders

- Artists
- Citizens
- Young entrepreneurs
- Researchers
- Individuals/groups/organizations from various creative fields

### Target audience

- Youth & artists
Type of actions

- Event: Music & Conferences
- Non-reversible intervention
- Participative process: bottoms-up
- Temporary changes

Citizen Participation

- The project is operated by artists, curators and civilians
- Independent from state or the authorities

Type of intervention

- The project is not exactly an intervention, except that it operates independently from the government or the Art Association of the Ministry of Culture.
- This project is an example of these “gradually pushing”-projects, where young people in Vietnam slowly push the boundaries without direct intervention or overstepping boundaries.

Innovation

The Heritage Space is innovative in the way that it provides a platform for young artists or creative minds to express and present their art, as well as an educational facility for conferences and workshops - Independent from the state.

Results

The Heritage Space has been successfully operating for 7 years now and has in that time been able to support and promote the artistic and cultural development and innovation in Vietnam. The Heritage Space could be described as a "success story" for tactical urbanism projects in Vietnam, due to its agility, size and endurance. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Heritage Space has been forced to host most of its events and exhibits online. Nonetheless, the space intends to continue its work as normal as soon as circumstance allow.

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Resources

CONCLUSION & CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Singapore
The outcomes of this project can be seen as two-fold. For one, it successfully co-created and engaged communities through these communal spaces. However, its reach remains limited to a community of residents already plugged into the arts and culture network in Singapore.

Japan
This project is highly successful in giving a possibility for people to relax while being in a social context, and in a safe environment. However, citizens did not directly took part in the implementation of this project. This could be seen as less engaging and exemplary comparing to other more participative projects, if the goal is to promote tactical urbanism and motivate the civil society to take an active part in it.

Vietnam
As goes for all these “gradually pushing”, non-state approved, independent tactical urbanism projects in Vietnam, the Heritage Space is constantly at risk of offending or upsetting the local authorities. Which could lead to gradual or immediate suspension of all operations, or they might have to evacuate and relocate to a different location.

South Korea
The positive outcomes prove that the project in Chengju city has successfully engaged the community and included additional streets and partners for the better quality of events. The idea of art and cultural specialization also has been an example of applying to other districts, such as Andeokbeol and Namju-dong. However, the project scale is still limited to the district instead of expanding to neighboring areas, although it has been extended and implemented for more than ten years.

Russia
The implementation of the project undoubtedly organized unused space and created a large area for family recreation, and not only. However, an important point was missed. The project reconstructed a former parking space that was increasingly going from public to private use. In the uncertain future, the problem of privatization of public space of this type could be renewed.
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Beijing, Chongqing, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Shanghai, Tainan, Xi'an

Tactical Urbanism in China

Photo Source: https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/ySsE5OZc5EcVjS0Q3-Wg (in Chinese)
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DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

In the late and rare Chinese literature, “tactical urbanism (战术城市/都市主义)” refers to the small-scale, short-term solution that optimizes urban spatial landscape and brings about significant long-term changes in spatial physical attributes and social attributes via multi-participatory interventions (Zhang & Chen, 2016; Wei et al., 2020). In short, tactical urbanism is characterized by three aspects: scale, actor and temporality. Specifics of each dimension are presented below, with the more common-used avatars corresponding to each feature in China.

Scale

Intervention targets are framed on small scales such as blocks, streets and neighborhoods, where social capital and creativity are most likely to be stimulated for reinventing inefficiently-used stock spaces. Since the main body is the citizen group with limited capacities and resources, small-scale intervention should be preferred in order to ensure the feasibility. (Zhang & Chen, 2016)

A similar concept, “urban acupuncture (城市/都市针灸)”, advocates interventions on key issues and areas on the basis of protecting urban fabric and texture, triggering a chain reaction through subtle “point therapy”, which is different from the modernist “scalpel” approach of mass transformation (Wen et al., 2017; Wu, 2015). The theory of “urban organic renewal (城市有机更新)” proposed by Chinese distinguished scholar, Liang-yong Wu (吴良镛), in 1990s.

This theory also emphasizes respect for the order and law within the city, that is, “planning adopting appropriate scale and speed, and properly handling the relationship between the current and the future. So that the development of each urban area achieves relative integrity” (Zhang, 2012). In China, as the path of urban development is shifting from “incremental expansion” to “stock optimization” (Wei, 2018), the “micro-renewal (微更新)” approach upon the concepts of “acupuncture” and “organic”, is deeply applied to the refinement transformation of public space: small target object, small community level, small inputs, and small entry points (Shan et al., 2017), highlighting the continuation of the characteristics and style of the historic city, and the balance between the development and protection of the old city (Li, 2016; Ning et al., 2016).

Stakeholders

The intervention process includes residents as main actor, ensuring that different social groups use and renew the public space equally for real needs. This approach transforms the single “top-down” mode into different forms including “parallel” and “bottom-up”, to stimulate public’s initiatives and active actions, and personal participation in the whole process, cultivating residents’ awareness and identity of the community. (Wei et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2019).
DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

Recently, China has applied the concept of “co-construction, co-governance and sharing (共建共治共享)” to participatory planning. It is based on the principle of meeting residents’ needs, advocating the empowerment of all actors, the equity between rights and responsibilities among stakeholders, the response to the interests of the community, and the equal distribution of benefits, to make the neighborhood a community of common life, interests and values (Chen & Xiao, 2018). Another Chinese concept, “co-creation (共同缔造)”, also highlights the integration of structural forces in urban planning, including government, market and society, and the coordination and cooperation among diverse stakeholders, as different from purely “bottom-up” process (Xu et al., 2019).

Temporarity

Practices begin with flexible short-term experimental interventions (alterable and reversible), which can be translated into both tangible and intangible long-term changes after verifying the effectiveness, thus providing reference for governmental planning, and subsequent updates are carried out in a more efficient and accurate manner. (Zhang, 2019).

As another response to urban dynamics and liquidity, “pop-up” is intentionally temporary occupation of the site (built environment) with unexpected and innovative settings or events to make space, which creates a strong sense of freshness, generating immediate impacts or promoting long-term changes.

Urban pop-up can be divided into three types: individual pop-up with niches into voids, street pop-up which appropriates rigid roads for playing, chain pop-up which incubates systematic space movement (Ding & Zhu, 2019). Pop-up makes people less stereotyped cognition of the standardization and certainty of modern space, restoring a diverse imagination of urban space (Huang & Liu, 2018). The goal of pop-up is not to identify the exact renovation for long-term planning, but to awaken the attention, emotion, and consciousness, thus catalyzing in-depth renewal and transformation (Ding & Zhu, 2019).

Another term ending with “urbanism”, “temporary urbanism”, places more emphasis on the space with inefficient time utilization. It holds that urban space is not an eternally fixed state, and the function of space can change with time. The temporary use of urban space is based on the reuse of space after the utilization period of a certain function. It does not create new space, but rather facilitates the resolution of time scarcity (Zhang & Li, 2020).
To conclude, tactical urbanism is not used commonly in China, but its avatars lead the new development of Chinese cities in the three aspects. These terms are more or less meaningful in all dimensions, but it seems each is more compatible with tactical urbanism in a certain aspect (see Table 1).

Table 1. Concepts in China

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities</th>
<th>Avatars</th>
<th>Periods</th>
<th>Differences</th>
<th>Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>small-scale</td>
<td>urban organic renewal</td>
<td>from 1950s</td>
<td>respect for original urban texture</td>
<td>Wen et al., 2017; Wu, 2015; Zhang, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(城市有机更新)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>urban acupuncture</td>
<td>after 2010</td>
<td>the balance between the development and protection of the old city</td>
<td>Cai et al., 2017; Li, 2016; Ning et al., 2016; Shan et al., 2017; Wei, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(城市[都市]针灸)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>micro-renewal</td>
<td>after 2015</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(微更新)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>citizen participation</td>
<td>bottom-up (自下而上)</td>
<td></td>
<td>residents’ spontaneous actions, informal</td>
<td>Wei et al., 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>participatory planning</td>
<td></td>
<td>the participation of grass-roots groups with less voice</td>
<td>Xu et al., 2019; Zhang et al., 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(参与式规划)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>co-creation (共创建造)</td>
<td>from 2013</td>
<td></td>
<td>Xu et al., 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>co-construction, co-</td>
<td></td>
<td>the integration of structural forces, power relations, benefit sharing</td>
<td>Chen &amp; Xiao, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>governance and sharing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(共建共治共享)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>short-term intervention</td>
<td>pop-up (快闪)</td>
<td>recently</td>
<td>creativity, imagination, space consciousness</td>
<td>Ding &amp; Zha, 2019; Huang &amp; Lin, 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>temporary urbanism</td>
<td>rare</td>
<td>the resolution of time scarcity</td>
<td>Zhang &amp; Li, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(临时城市/都市主义)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
URBAN CONTEXT

The urbanization in China has gone hand in hand with its economic development. From 1949 to 2020, the proportion of urban population in China increased almost fourfold, and the number of cities also experienced a rapid increase.

Evolution of urban planning practices in China

From the 1950s to 1980s, the government was in charge of urban planning and the “danwei” (work unit) system that dominated urban spatial form and social organization (Bray, 2005). Following the idea of functional zoning, early urban planners proposed to put people’s workplace and residence together, which is an important feature of “danwei” system. Back in that time, danwei was not only the source of employment and wages, but also the provider of public services and welfare; housing was provided and subsidized by danwei.

The reform and open-up policy brought China into a transition. With the introduction of market economy, the government began to delegate some urban planning authorities. During the 1990s, the danwei system exited, housing was privatized, and real estate developers gradually became dominant in the design, financing and construction of new urban areas, giving rise to practices of “market urbanism” embodied by gated communities, large-scale retail businesses and fashion life centers.

Since the late 2000s, the focus of urban planning in China has been shifting from the previous extensive mode of urban expansion characterized by simple enlargement of constructed area and development of new districts to the new intensive mode led by the idea of better management of built-up areas, which emphasizes reactivating existing constructed areas and improving the efficiency of land utilization. This shift is motivated by political commitment.

In 2007, the Shenzhen government published Urbanization Plan for Shenzhen, the first document in China proposing a transition in urban planning. In 2014, the National Plan for New Type of Urbanization was issued, highlighting the importance of transforming the urban planning idea in the new era.
INSTITUTIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

The typical institutional stakeholders involved in China’s tactical urbanism practices can be classified into three types, public stakeholders, private stakeholders, and civil society (Wei et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2020). The public stakeholders encompass four levels’ government from center to sub-district office. The private stakeholders mainly consist of real estate developer and architects. The civil society include inhabitants, NGO, academia, and semi-governmental institutions such as neighborhood community and planning institute. (Figure 1)

Regarding their roles and functions, government is in charge of governance, policy making, and overall regulation, providing necessary financial support through government purchase, and mobilizing other stakeholders by appointing them as community planners in charge of the technical urbanism project (Liu & Xu, 2018). Private sector, NGO, the academic, and citizen group are involved in financial support, consultation, design and implementation to different extent (Zhang & Chen, 2016; Zhao et al., 2020) (Figure 2).
TOOLS

Three categories of tools

Practical tools are necessary in terms of the realization of tactic urbanism in every country. With proper tools, civil participation will be promoted, and the inhabitants’ consciousness and identity of the community will also be improved. In our case of China, there are various tools for the residents to get involved into the regeneration of a community.

According to the timeline, we divide the tools to assist residents’ participation into three categories, opinion collection, implementation, and feedback. In the first stage, when inhabitants’ opinions are widely collected, there will be interviews and surveys toward the community residents. There will also be a community meeting where all the stakeholders will sit down and discuss together. Furthermore, some communities will hold a workshop for the residents and designers. And every participants of the workshop can share and discuss their ideas on the regeneration of the community. They could also draw and write down their proposals on a white board in the process of map designing. In addition, opinions will be collected through social media such as Wechat. And there will also be posters hanging in the community to promote the participation. During project implementation, residents can directly participate in person. For instance, in the case of "HUI Life Future Community Plan" in Hangzhou, children could beautify the community streets on their own.

Finally, when the regeneration is completed, the community will collect residents’ feedback through the idea box. Besides, with the help of distributive technology, data generated by the residents will be collected and analyzed so as to ensure the effect of the transformation.
PROJECTS

Among diversified projects of "urban tactical changes" in China, we have picked up five cases in China, trying to involve different types of initiators and building path under various objectives (See the Table below). These projects are scattered in Eastern, South-Western, Northern, Western and Southern parts of China, which contributes to building up a general picture of how "tactical urbanism" has been promoted across China. Under the context of China's public ownership of lands, most of the projects were either initiated by the government or supported and approved by local authorities in the final step, no matter the size nor the audience. Therefore we mainly focus on the main initiators and founders in these cases to illustrate their characteristics.

Table 2. Categories of all cases studied

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Improving overall functions</th>
<th>Utilizing the space</th>
<th>Reshaping the view</th>
<th>Social Inclusion</th>
<th>Environmental Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inhabitants/Individuals</td>
<td>Reconstruction of Dadukou Yanxing Community (Chongqing)</td>
<td>“Knowledge &amp; Innovation Community Garden” (Shanghai)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>“HUI Life Future Community Plan” (Hangzhou)</td>
<td>“Hand Art Museum at Food Market” (Guangzhou)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>“Creativity for the City” (Xi’an)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Authority</td>
<td>“Micro Yuan’er” Project (Beijing)</td>
<td>Recycling club “The Well No. 2” (Beijing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# PROJECTS

## Table 3. Details of the projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Time Duration</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Micro Yuan’er” Project</td>
<td>Beijing</td>
<td>Auto-financing</td>
<td>District &amp; Community</td>
<td>Long-term (2 years implementation) &amp; Long-term change</td>
<td>Investment Company; District Management Office; Inhabitants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recycling club “The Well No. 2”</td>
<td>Beijing</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>District</td>
<td>Short-term implementation &amp; Short-term change (dependent)</td>
<td>District Management Office; Inhabitants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Knowledge &amp; Innovation Community Garden”</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>Auto-financing &amp; Public welfare project</td>
<td>District &amp; Communities</td>
<td>Long-term (3 years implementation) &amp; Long-term change</td>
<td>Inhabitants, Ownership Committees; the Street Agency; designing companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘HUI Life Future Community Plan’</td>
<td>Hangzhou</td>
<td>Public welfare project</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Short-term (3-4 months implementation) &amp; Long-term change</td>
<td>NGO; local Civil Affairs Bureau and Finance Bureau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reconstruction of Dadukou Yanxing Community</td>
<td>Chongqing</td>
<td>Auto-financing</td>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Long-term (10 months implementation) &amp; Long-term change</td>
<td>Management Company; designers; Inhabitants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Creativity for the City”</td>
<td>Xi’an</td>
<td>Auto-financing</td>
<td>Street</td>
<td>Long-term (3 years implementation) &amp; Long-term change</td>
<td>a web media; local management office; vendors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Hand Art Museum at Food Market”</td>
<td>Guangzhou</td>
<td>Auto-financing &amp; Crowdfunding</td>
<td>Food Market</td>
<td>Short-term (2 months implementation) &amp; Short-term change</td>
<td>NGO; Universities; vendors; District Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Localization

![Localization Map](image-url)
Cha’er Hutong Yard Number 8, is a traditional Chinese courtyard dwelling in Beijing Historical Conservation Area. Once a temple, the site was transformed into a place of residence in the 1950s and has been shared by up to 12 residents. The project aims to refresh the shabby yard and bring the underused courtyard into service while retaining its cultural characteristics, and to improve the living conditions of the neighborhood.

Date: 2012–2014  
Implementation period: 2 years  
Time life of the project: Achieved  
Cost: Funded by Beijing Dashilan Investment Company  
GPS coordinates: N 39°54′, E 116°23′  
Status of land: Private and Public  
Type of place: traditional courtyard residence

Stakeholders

- Beijing Dashilan Investment Company, the architect and the inhabitants are the originators.  
- It seems that Beijing Dashilan Investment Company is the financial partner.  
- Standardarchitecture implemented it. After the construction, the users, including the children and the inhabitants, are constantly implementing it.  
- Inhabitants and the government are the co-owner of the project.
Target audience
- Children in the neighborhood, inhabitants in the yard

Type of actions

Events or Infrastructures:
- Many small-scale facilities are added to the courtyard, including Children’s library, miniature art space, little open-air theatre, art classrooms and communal kitchen.

Reversible interventions:
- The new constructions can be demolished.

Citizen Participation

The project was initiated by the local authority of Xicheng District, but it aims to serve the citizens living there and the needs of the citizens are fully consulted prior to project design. While building the facilities, the implementors offered to renovate the inhabitants’ residence. More importantly, in order to prevent users and outsiders from peeping into the inhabitants’ house, the architect put a wooden screen in front of their residence. Since there are still inhabitants living in the yard, the place cannot be a completely public one, otherwise it would intrude on their private life. Allowing for the needs of the inhabitants, the operators have made a schedule clarifying opening hours of the facilities. An elder inhabitant in the community takes charge of the operation and maintenance of the facilities.

Type of intervention

- **Urban design / street intervention**: Urban design and renovation of the residents’ dwelling; Redevelopment of the underused public area.
- **New activities**: Children’s library, miniature art space, little open-air theatre, art classrooms
- **Waste and Environment**: Improved courtyard environment

Results

Achieved objectives: The retrofitted courtyard provides a venue for children to build connections with each other and also with the history and traditional lifestyle. The appearance and the functionality of the place as a residence is significantly improved, raising the living standards of the residents.

Limits:
- The facilities require routine maintenance and management, inducing extra cost.
- The facilities are not open 24-hour.
- The facilities could have been more inclusive to incorporate the needs of other groups such as the elderly.

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Jinghuan Ma

Resources

Reusing the street space: A recycling club in Beijing.

Date: July 2020 - September 2020
Implementation period: 3 months
Time life of the project: Ongoing
Cost: undisclosed
GPS coordinates: 39°53’49”N 116°28’00”E
Status of land: Public
Type of place: Public

**Stakeholders**

- **Local public stakeholders:** Beijing/Shuangjing governments, municipal solid waste management etc.
- **Local private stakeholders:** third party, aobag.com, Philanthropreneur Foundation.
- **Civil society:** community residents, users, inhabitants.

The Recycling Club stimulates the demand for waste recycling in the community. It also receives extensive attention from surrounding communities. The use of disruptive technology in the recycling project in the community has empowered community engagement and regeneration. (IoT sensors, real-time monitoring, community survey tool). The objective is to regenerate abandoned street front space to create a place for the community to recycle waste. Aobag.com uses social media to encourage the recycling and innovatively improve the recycling rate in China.
Target audience
- Local residents,
- Households

Type of actions
- Events, infrastructure
- Citizen participation, innovation

Citizen Participation
- Co-design
- Co-production
- Mobilization

Type of intervention
- Street intervention
- New recycling place
- Waste recycling education

Innovation
- Aobag.com uses Wechat mini-app for recycling and reimbursing residents

Results
The objective of educating and promoting recycling has been achieved in the community.

The limitation is that the tech-empowered regeneration causes barriers for those who are not adept at new technologies such as the use of smartphone, apps, etc. Another barrier for the project was the lack of involvement of Jiulong Residential Community Committee in the initial stage of the project makes the Recycling Club not the priority for the village-level government.

Contacts
Aobag.com
Beijing Community Research Center

Resources
https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/ZOvIQZBjgk6MiMjoP30Q
https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/Qr6ySr4sKMy2qDF2gQ0d2Q

Lincoln Quang Duong
PROJECT#3

RECONSTRUCTION OF CHONGQING DADUKOU YANXING COMMUNITY
CHONGQING

The goal of “Reconstruction of Chongqing Dadukou Yanxing Community old residential” was improving the living environment by using space rationally. In detail, recreational facilities were built on vacant space at Dadukou Yanxing Community. Besides, surrounding area was used for parking cars.

Target audience

- Residents in the community, especially the elder and children

Stakeholders

- **Initiator:** Residents initiated the reconstruction and chose certain programs.

- **Implementors:** Designers investigated the status quo and sorted out problems. Construction company implemented the program.

- **Funders:** Community Management Company financed the programs.

**Date:** Jan 2018  
**Implementation period:** 10 months  
**Time life of the project:** 3 years  
**Achieved**

**Cost:** Residents & Property Management Co  
**GPS coordinates:** N 106; E 29  
**Status of land:** Public  
**Type of place:** Community/urban area

Innovation

- **Comfort and image:** Recreational facilities were constructed at vacant space. Residents could do exercise and take a rest. Besides, the local art, paper-cut, was used to decorate the space.

- **Sociability and link:** Residents, especially the elder and children, could communicate at the reconstruction vacant space.
Type of intervention

- Urban design / community intervention - De-fencing

Citizen Participation

- Mobilized by citizens, co-implemented by the Ownership Committees and Neighborhood Committee

Type of actions

- **Events or Infrastructures:**
  Recreational facilities were built for residents, especially for the elder and children. Parking positions were set up by replanning the layout of the community.
- **Reversible interventions:**
  Recreational facilities were decorated with paper-cut (local art).
- **Citizen participation / participative process:**
  Residents initiated the construction project, chose solutions to problems and modified designing scheme.
- **Experimentation / innovation:**
  Recreational facilities with decoration of paper-cut were set at vacant space in Yanxing Community.
- **Transformation aspects / temporary change / replication:**
  Recreational facilities were decorated with paper-cut. The residential space was redesigned.

Results

- The problem of the Yanxing old community was solved. The community became more vibrant after reconstruction. Recreational facilities were built for residents, especially for the elder and children.
- Residents took part in the project and they were satisfied with it. According to the survey, 92% residents were extremely satisfied with the reconstruction project.

Contacts

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Resources


Yuhan Li
PROJECT #4

HAND ART MUSEUM
ZHUSHIANG
GUANGZHOU, GUANGDONG

Most of the vendors in local food market never stepped into the Fei Arts art museum even it is just behind a wall. In this context, Fei Arts, architectural students, and vendors jointly created a Hand Art Museum photo exhibition which recorded the daily work of food market vendors with their diligence and pride, exhibited on the wall of the food market, and finally integrated into the everyday scene.

Target audience
- Vendors from nearby food market.

Stakeholders
- **Fei Arts**: a non-profit private art museum based in Guangzhou, the initiator of this project.
- **School of Architecture, South China University of Technology**: co-producer and curator of Hand Art Museum, who photographed the hands of vendors under the supervision of the Fei Arts.
- **Vendors from nearby food market**: the target audience of the project, who participated in the initial curation process on the wall of food market, took back their own photos after the exhibition, and spontaneously displayed them in the food market.
- **Nonglin street agency**: local public stakeholder with the direct administrative authority, who empowered the Fei Arts in the later phase by awarding the Director of Fei Arts the position of chief designer of Nonglin street.
- **Other inhabitants**: public space users, who enjoyed the art space brought by the exhibition, and deepened the mutual understanding and communication with the vendors and other residents in the community.

Date: 2018
Implementation period: 2 months
Time life of the project: more than 2 years
Achieved
Cost: Unrevealed
GPS coordinates: 113.297462, 23.12524
Status of land: Public
Type of place: Urban communities and neighborhood
Type of intervention

- **Street intervention**: decoration on the wall of food market with photo exhibition.

- **Art and photographing**: a series of photos taken for celebration of the diligence and work fulfillment of the marginalized vendors.

- **De-fencing**: the boundary wall of between gallery and food market were “removed” in the re-production and re-curation process initiated by the vendors after the exhibition.

Citizen Participation

This project was initiated by one local civil organization (the Fei Arts) and co-produced by target audience in the community (the vendors from food market) through engagement in the design period and spontaneous curation after the exhibition.

Type of actions

- **Events**: The Hand Art Museum is a photo exhibition which took the vendors’ hand as a clue to record their daily work, diligence and fulfillment.

- **Reversible interventions**: The Hand Art Museum was curated on the wall of food market in the exhibition period and was transferred inside the food market as a permanent display when all the involved vendors took back their own photos after the exhibition, and spontaneously exhibited them in the food market.

- **Experimentation / innovation**: No new furniture was added except for a series of photos taken for exhibition. The food market was not transformed into a tourist attraction with fancy installation reinforcing the gentrification but tried to rebuild the dignity and self-confidence of labouring people through such socially engaged artistic creation.

Results

**Achieved objectives:**

- The enhancement of dignity and self-confidence of marginalized group.
- The improvement of working and living environment of inhabitants.
- The reconstruction of social relations and publicity of the community.
- The cultivation of innovation and artistic aesthetics of the public.

**Limits and difficulties:**

The fragility under the strong authority of Nonglin street agency, which issued the demolition order towards the food market in September 2020 and might affect the survival of the project.

Contacts

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Lin Liu

Resources

Official website of the FEI Arts: http://119.23.16.183/

Related speech:

- More important than building a house is designing the relationship between people | Ho Chih-sum (in Chinese) Available on https://v.qq.com/x/page/o0930vsau8c.html
- A doctor in Guangzhou who moved his bed to the street and invited people of different classes to eat and sleep together. (in Chinese) Available on https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/F3wVDr6i19x6F2s18FTrnA

PROJECT#5

HUI LIFE FUTURE COMMUNITY PLAN
HANGZHOU, ZHEJIANG

“HUI Life Future Community Plan”: Participatory Neighborhood “Micro Landscape” Making Service Project (“HUI生活未来社区计划”: 参与式社区“微景观”营造服务项目) is designed by Antao Group for community building in old neighborhoods in Hangzhou for the next three years (2020~2022).
The project is based on the concept of “place-making” and the method/approach of “participatory design”. Through “environmental education” activities, relationships among people, and between people and the environment are connected, and new micro landscapes are gradually completed. Designers aim to work with neighborhood residents to renovate and transform old sites into places where residents really need and love, and can generate attachment and emotions, to find a sense of belonging, value, and responsibility in the warm community life.

Target Audience
- Neighborhood residents, mainly children and the aged

Type of Intervention
- Urban design / street intervention (chair, parasol, art, painting, planting, property placement)
- New activities (environmental education, book corner)

Stakeholders

Initiator: Antao Group – Hangzhou Antao Mijia Community Development Center (安道设计集团–杭州安道米家社区发展中心), NPO

Designers and Implementors:
- Antao Group – Hangzhou Antao Mijia Community Development Center, NPO
- Antao Group – Hangzhou Headquarter “Planet 16th”, Private Sector
- School of Design and Architecture, Zhejiang University of Technology, Academia
- Neighborhood residents

Funders: Civil Affairs Bureau, and Finance Bureau of Hangzhou – municipal welfare lottery charity fund

Supporters:
- Beishan Social Organization Service Center (北山社会组织服务中心), Public sector
- Beishan Sub-district Office (北山街道办事处), Public sector
- Neighborhood committees

- Date: 2020.07~
- Implementation period: 8 months till 2021.03
- 3~4 months' program in one neighborhood
- On going
- Cost: Funded by Hangzhou Community Service Industry Development Special Fund, as a public welfare project
- GPS coordinates: 30° N, 120° E
- Status of land: Public
- Type of place: Open spaces in neighborhoods, urban area

Pavilion - marble benches with wood padding blocks and parasol; Hopscotch game painted as trains on the railway by children (Source: Landscape Road (景观之路) https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/MrhzUyj47U5G5jfnR3EE7)
Citizen Participation

- **Mobilization & concertation with neighborhood staff’s help:** Indoor and outdoor visits; Communication in WeChat group; Posters
- **Co-design and co-production:** Investigation / need assessment through questionnaire, observation and interview; Community meetings; Proposal seminars: residents presenting designs and plans of themselves; Renovation workshops for hands-on updates; Feedbacks from residents after events.

Plant corner (moveable plant boxes) for residents to take care of together (Source: Antao 安道.
https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/T5PqUWyLYyduNgo-5S2I0g)

Type of Action

- **Events or Infrastructures:** Barrier removing and debris placement for the sake of children and the aged; Resting infrastructure: marble benches with wood padding blocks, and parasol; Game space with paintings by children; Graffiti on walls and well covers, and politeness placards made by children; Plant corner (movable plant boxes) created by residents
- **Partial reversible interventions:** Art decorations can be renewed, and plant boxes can be moved with plants changed
- **Citizen participation / participative process:** Residents propose requests, suggestions and plans, draw their expected designs, and make real updates by themselves
- **Experimentation / innovation:** The project is expected to be implemented in all old neighborhoods in Hangzhou under progressive 3-stage strategies.
- **Transformation aspects / temporary change / replication:** The “empty” and untidy public space becomes the place which residents fully enjoy and utilize.

Innovations

- **Access and connection:** Resting, leisure and entertainment space
- **Activities and practices:** 1) Participatory practices are based on the process-oriented concept of place-making, which is people-centered with an emphasis on providing convenience and create meanings for daily life through co-creation so that space is no longer just a physical entity but a carrier of emotional communication; 2) Environmental education activities/workshops targeting micro landscapes: paintings/graffiti, creative placards, infrastructure design & planning, planting, etc.
- **Comfort and image:** Beautifying; Culture identities and memories related to the railway (a neighborhood of railway staff)
- **Sociability and link:** The project process and space bring residents of different cohorts and backgrounds together.

Results

Great successes and models in both tangible and intangible aspects.

- **Tangible:** material space for leisure activities and interactive communication; optimizing use of land resources; improved neighborhood environment for better lives
- **Intangible:** community solidarity; democratic community governance; self-efficacy of residents; environmental-friendly consciousness

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Resources

Official website of Antao: https://www.antaogroup.com/en-us

Official WeChat account of Antao 安道设计

Project information is mainly from following articles:


PROJECT#6

KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION COMMUNITY GARDEN SHANGHAI

Although the two communities of Chuangzhifang and the first community of Guoding Road are separated by a wall, the living environment and personnel structure are obviously different. The state of being separated by walls has brought great inconvenience to the lives of residents on both sides. This project is aimed to break the wall for the convenience of the two communities and contribute to building harmonious neighborhood.

Date: 2019
Implementation period: 2019 until now
Time life of the project: more than 2 years
Achieved
Cost:
GPS coordinates: N 121.51 E31.30
Status of land: Private
Type of place: Urban communities and neighborhood
Funded by Yangpu Science and Technology Group and Shui On Group

Stakeholders

The Ownership Committee of the two communities as the representatives of their residents are at the origin of the project. The Street Agency took the initiative in collecting ideas and coordinating. The planning professionals of Tongji University once intervened and proposed suggestions. The Ownership Committee of Guoding Road No. 1 Community took the initiative to apply for funding from the “Beautiful Home” project to break the wall. Yangpu Science and Technology Group and Shui On Group launched the project and built up “Knowledge and Innovation Community Garden” as an entry point.
Target audience
- The residents within the two communities and their neighborhood

Citizen Participation
- Mobilized by citizens, co-implemented by the Ownership and Neighborhood Committee

Type of intervention
- Community intervention - De-fencing

Type of actions
- **Infrastructures**: the wall was finally broken with a revolving door in place.
- **No reversible interventions**
- **Citizen participation**: The primary-level District agencies brought multiple entities together and invited residents to jointly build a chamber called "Bainaohui" for discussions.
- **Innovation**: The two communities took the initiative to "break the wall" beyond ownership and the companies built up the first community garden in an open block in Shanghai
- **Long-term transformation**: The wall was finally broken down with a revolving door in place, and more importantly the garden has been built up for communication activities.

Type of innovations
- **Access and connection**: With a revolving door in place, the “Knowledge and Innovation Community Garden” (KICG) connects the two communities better
- **Activities and practices**: In Sept 2016, the designer Zheng Chao and the cartoonist Hong Xiao led the children to create community public welfare art on the wall. The professional planning team from Tongji University and other colleges and universities implemented the "urban micro-renewal" inside and outside the walls.
- **Comfort and image**: The wall was finally broken down with a revolving door in place, and “Knowledge and Innovation Community Garden” functions as the first community garden in Shanghai in an open block.
- **Sociability and link**: The garden has been built up for communication activities and large-scale "community interaction days" have been organized to build network.

Results
As a result, the wall in the middle was finally broken with a revolving door in place, which brought the convenience of the two communities. This innovation has also brought positive externalities - the two years of coordination has contributed to building a harmonious neighborhood, and also KICG Garden was built up in between as the first community garden in Shanghai in an open block.

Contacts
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Resources
https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/bpLxvfN-iPgbIe5vQnxRsQ
https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1643912443802412182&wfr=spider&for=pc

Haiming Wu
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKING LOT BECOMES AN ACTIVITY SPACE
TAINAN, TAIWAN

How an old town neighborhood transformed their parking lot into a mixed use space?

There is a parking plaza adjacent to the east section of Xinyi Street and Lane 148. It is private property. After a building got demolished, it became an empty space, so the landlord decided to provide this space (for rent) as a parking lot to the 39 store managers around the area to attract customers. Since this open space is located at the intersection of the street, it has become a node for people to come and go. Additionally, the landlord and the neighborhood community decided to not just use it as a parking space, but also to hold events and activities for interested people on the square. Customers of Xinyi Street cafes and tea shops in the western area often pass by the parking lot to visit the eastern part of Xinyi Street, as it inhabits several famous art museums and small photo studios that are popular among tourists. (Lin, 2017)

Stakeholders

The stakeholders involved in the project include all residents of the neighborhood or students from the Tainan University of Science and Technology just a few blocks away.

- Land and tea shop (慕ㄇㄨ 紅豆店) owner
- Small businesses around the neighborhood
- Neighborhood youth organization
- Neighborhood residents
- TUST graduates

Type of actions

- Events: weekly
- Reversible intervention
- Participative progress
- Temporary changes
Target audience

- The main targeted audience are the residents of the neighborhood, particularly the youth to provide them an activity space. Additionally, as the area remains popular among tourists, they are attracted to spend some time and money in the shops and cafes around the parking lot.

Citizen Participation

The project itself was entirely citizen-based, no authority was involved in any stage of the project. It could be considered a neighborhood project with 100% citizen participation.

Type of intervention

- **Tourism:** Tourists were asked to park their cars outside the neighborhood.

- **Residents:** Each resident parking their car was kindly asked not to pull the handbrake, in case they need to move the car to create space for an activity.

- **Shop Owners:** It was requested that they do some advertisement for activities taking place in the parking lot.

Innovation

This project was the first scientifically recorded project of its kind. Around the Tainan old town other neighborhoods followed their example, not just to improve the community feeling, but also to profit from tourists attracted by such projects.

Results

The project successfully revitalized the community life in the neighborhoods with frequent activities held in the parking lot, e.g. lectures hosted by the neighborhood youth organization about Qigong. On weekends, there were occasional pop-up music performances by young street artists. A monthly local vegetable market was organized or neighborhood youth organization meetings were all held in this parking lot/square at Xinyi Street.

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Resources

PROJECT #8

CREATIVITY FOR THE CITY
XI'AN, SHAANXI

In Xi'an, small stalls, small restaurants and corner shops selling homemade food or providing various services like haircut or miscellaneous repair are very common. However, most of the owners of the stalls are people who don’t know much about design or aesthetics. So the appearance of their stalls tend to be very cluttered and outdated. This project recruited famous designers and volunteered design teams to redesign and renovate the stalls for free. So far, 20 renovation cases has been implemented.

Stakeholders

1. Initiator and funder:
   - Zhengzhou, a we media on Wechat, local private sector.
   - Management office of Xixian International Culture and Education Park, local public sector.

2. Other funders:
   - commercial design teams, like IKEA, local private sector.

3. Designers and implementors:
   - individual designers or design teams (20 in total), like Wangguan Li, Fengshenhuyu design.
   - students in the department of industrial design, School of art and design, Xi'an University of Technology

4. Supporters
   - owners of the renovated stalls and shops, civil society

Type of actions

- Events: “Creativity for the city” redesigned and renovated small stalls and shops, for example restaurants and bookstores etc. in Xi’an.
- Reversible interventions
- Citizen participation / participative process
- Experimentation / innovation
- Transformation aspects / temporary change / replication

Target audience

- Owners of the renovated stalls and shops, residents nearby

Date: Dec 2017
Implementation period: 3 years so far
Time life of the project: 3 months for a season
Achieved / ongoing
Cost: undisclosed
GPS coordinates: N 33.42–34.45; E40–109.49
Status of land: Public and Private
Type of place: mainly street stalls, corner shops in urban center, and some streets and open spaces in neighborhoods as well.
Citizen Participation

This project was initiated by a we media named Zhengan, which posts news about Xi’an through the Wechat subscription. After came up with the idea of renovating the small stalls in the city, Zhengan cooperated with management office of Xixian International Culture and Education Park, which is a public institution responsible for the construction of the park and also committed to culture promotion and innovation. The design and renovation are undertaken by volunteered design teams from university and enterprises. Vendors communicated with the designers to make their requests and give consent to the renovation of the stalls.

Innovation

- **access and connection**: The old booths became more attractive to new customers. And it’s more convenient for the nearby residents to enjoy the food or services sold by the stalls.
- **activities and practices**: Besides the renovation of the stalls, this project also designed ergonomic brooms and dustpans for sanitation workers (one of the 20 cases).
- **comfort and image**: The old stalls and shops in the memory of the residents are full of new vitality and become more bright, clean and beautiful. The streetscape of the city becomes more pleasing and fashionable. And the cultural promotion and propaganda are better realized in this city through the details of the design.
- **sociability and link**: The long neglected group of people like hawkers and sanitation worker got help for free. Different stakeholders get closer ties through this project.

Results

**Achieved objectives**: more bright and aesthetic appearance of small stalls and shops, street view with more sense of design, convenience to the public, inhabitants’ sense of belonging to this city.

**Limits**: Limited participants may bring competitive pressure to other nearby hawkers.

Contacts

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Resources

Official account of Zhengan:  
https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/9tKwh3RZGly9XhFKdAKu7Q  
https://mp.weixin.qq.com/mp/appmsgalbum?  
action=getalbum&__biz=MzAxMzc4OTkzNA==&scene=1&album_id=1410433186742722257&count=3&uin=&key=&devicetype=Windows+10&version=620603c&lang=zh_CN&ascene=1&wino=1  

Xinhe Yan
CONCLUSION & CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

In conclusion, China has made great progress both in theory and in practice in the field of tactical urbanism. The Chinese government has put forward relevant policy measures. Besides, there are more and more different types of renewal projects. However, there are still some limits.

There are mainly two main types of problems, implementation and stakeholders.

Implementation

As for implementation, most projects are concentrated in developed cities. In China, most projects are concentrated in developed cities because the concept of tactical urbanism is more widespread there. Besides, these cities have more resources for reconstruction.

In addition, there is conflict between theory and reality. “Tactical urbanism” emphasizes temporary changes. However, long-term changes of most renewal projects are expected in China. The reality in China is that some projects cannot have long-term effects because of lack of resources.

Source: Community garden, Shanghai
CONCLUSION & CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Stakeholders

As for stakeholders, **there are three limits.**

**Public participation is limited** (Zhao & Zhou, 2020), which is caused by three reasons. Firstly, non-governmental organizations in China have little social influence. Although social organizations have developed rapidly in recent years, there are few NGOs in the area of community renewal. Secondly, China lacks laws and regulations for city or community renewal. At the national level, China does not have relevant laws. At the regional level, the documents only reflect public participation in principle without mentioning specific operations. Thirdly, residents lack awareness of public participation. In the process of urban renewal in China, the government is in a leading position, which reduces the enthusiasm of citizens to participate (Tang & Chen, 2017).

The problem of space profit is that **the public social space for residents may be replaced by commercial space.** It is brought about because of the lack of the value of urban renewal and the irrationality of the promotion mechanism. In the process of community transformation, the capital with the purpose of pursuing profit gets involved, which may sacrifice the public interests (Gu, 2018).

**The governance dilemma is due to inflexibility of management functions** (Wang, 2018). The current management system is still an internal operation dominated by the elite consciousness, lacking the intervention of social forces. For example, social organizations and technology departments are not deeply involved in urban renewal programs.
REFERENCES


REFERENCES


TEAM

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Aïcha Weibel
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DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

Tactical Urbanism is a concept that has recently been theorized by authors such as Lydon and Madanipour. The main idea of tactical urbanism is “short-term action for long-term change” (Lydon, 2015), but also short-term events, temporary construction and use of space” (Madanipour, 2017). It is mainly defined by Lydon as “an approach to neighborhood building and activation using short-term, low-cost, and scalable interventions and policies. It makes use of an iterative development process, the efficient use of resources, and the creative potential unleashed by social interaction […]. In many ways, Tactical Urbanism is a learned response to the slow and siloed conventional city building process” (Lydon, 2015). Moreover, another aspect of tactical urbanism is raising awareness and sensibilization of the population through citizen participation. Indeed, this aspect can also be analyzed through the lense of “the right to the city” by Lefebvre (Lefebvre cited by Alisdairi, 2014, p.6) which for him is a mean for citizens to appropriate or manage urban space and transform it according to their needs and desires.

Based on the discussion on definitions and concepts above and the lectures we attended, we filtered the following criteria to help us define the notion of tactical urbanism on the African continent:

- Usefulness for the local population
- Citizen participation
- Small-scale and spontaneous action
- Short-term realization
- Simple implementation with reduced costs

© My Own Business, 2017
African specificities

Based on the criteria, we identified a number of projects in Africa out of which we chose five projects that we included in this benchmark work. It is interesting to note that none of the five identifies itself as “tactical urbanism” even if they all fulfill the criteria of the definitions discussed above, and hence could be defined as such. Recurrently used vocabulary from the projects themselves are, among others, participation, sensibilisation, civic duty, informing and improvement. These words are more descriptive and are not directly referring to the concept of “tactical urbanism”.

By categorizing the five chosen benchmark projects as tactical urbanism projects in this report, we actively contribute to the dissemination of this concept in Africa. While the use of the “tactical urbanism” concept can promote mutual learning and comparing, we must stay attentive to the fact that we might be imposing a western concept to African situations. While this could create opportunities for future initiatives, it could also hinder local appropriations and further evolution of the concept. Furthermore, the relative absence of the concept “tactical urbanism” on the African continent should not be interpreted as a sign of "backwardness" in the sense that the concept "has just not arrived yet" to Africa. In contrast, we should rather look at the interplay between tactical urbanism and informality. In fact, many informal activities in Africa are small-scale, low-cost and community-centered.
DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

Yet, as a contribution on the African Urbanism blog suggests (African Urbanism, 2017), informality, as a constructed reality following the imposition of formality, especially during colonial times, needs to be addressed first, before "imposing" another foreign concept. In that sense, projects in Africa are more determined to improve and built upon already existing dynamics within informality rather than creating new ones that might be situated somewhere between formality and informality. Nevertheless, with tactical urbanism being a trend around the world, also within certain development aid organizations, and by doing reports like the present one, vigilance is required in respect to the risk of purely assimilating the "tactical urbanism" concept without actually adopting it to Africans culturally, economically and politically diverse contexts.

We further observed that tactical urbanism projects in Africa generally have different priorities than e.g. in Europe. Whereas in Europe many projects are about reclaiming and transforming (public) space, the projects in Africa aim to compensate for a lack of basic services and necessities such as cleanliness and salubrity (cf. e.g. “Citizenship Week” in Chad, “Le Balai Citoyen” in Burkina Faso, or “My Own Business” in Ivory Coast), visibility of certain marginalized areas (e.g. "Map Kibera" project in Nairobi or "Map&Jerry" in Cotonou) or traffic-related problems (cf. e.g. Bike Sharing in Kampala).

Indeed, while tactical urbanism in the world is often seen as the creation of something new or the contestation of the existing, in Africa it is mostly about improving, be it existing spaces or informal sectors. In contrast to projects in other parts of the world, we find that tactical urbanism projects in Africa are rarely reversible in the sense that even if the interventions are temporary, resources are not invested in the short-term only as we have seen with temporary constructions and installations that are dismantled after the event is over (cf. e.g. "Yes We Camp" in Marseille, France or "Burning Man" in Nevada, USA).

In general, tactical urbanism projects in Africa are often rather immaterial and big constructions are less common. Even if the projects are mostly temporary in the first place, they all aim to have an impact on the long-term as they usually address chronic problems of the urban environment they are situated in.
Today, according to the United Nations, Africa’s population is estimated at more than one billion people (United Nations cited by Worldo meters). This number is expected to double until 2050 (OCDE/CSAO, 2020). Indeed, between 1980 and 2020, Africa’s population doubled and rose from approximately 500 millions to more than 1 billion people, whereas, during the same time, Europe’s population stayed in a stable condition (estimated at more than 740 millions people) (UN World Population prospects 2019).

On the African continent, most of this demographic growth is absorbed by cities. For example, between 1950 and 2015, Africa’s urban population increased from 27 million to 565 million, which OECD presents as a growth of 2000% (OCDE/CSAO, 2020). Hence, the urban transition in Africa is massive and fast. Therefore, urban areas in Africa are very interesting contexts to study because they are at crossroads of new dynamics and challenges requiring innovative solutions, especially regarding urban policies, sanitation, sustainable development and access to services and infrastructures.

Thus, we noticed that these challenges are at stake in the urban contexts in which our different projects took part. Actually, these challenges directly or indirectly motivated the launching of the projects. Four of the five chosen projects are situated in big agglomerations that have seen massive growth during the last decades with high concentration of people and activities in built-up areas, such as Abidjan, Dakar, Nairobi and N’Djamena. Hence, African cities are at crossroads of growth, development and innovation what makes them particularly interesting cities to study.
INSTITUTIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

Analysis of stakeholders involvement

By looking more closely at the type of stakeholders involved in a project, we can find valuable information regarding the nature and features of the projects. For example, a project that involves the reappropriation of a public building by local residents over a period of several months requires the prior agreement of the city administration, as we have seen in the example of Les Grands Voisins in Paris. This is a larg(er)-scale project, as opposed to a small-scale, less expensive neighbourhood initiative, such as the Liberté VI project in Dakar. Just as the ambitions of projects may differ, so will the stakeholders.

In this part, we will analyse the stakeholders involved in our case studies and what it tells us about the nature of the projects. First, civil society is present in all five projects. By civil society, reference is made to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, the sellers on the streets, shop owners or local associations.

It is interesting to note that the projects in Abidjan and Dakar were implemented by the civil society alone without any other stakeholder involvement. In both cases, the initiative was intended to have a small-scale impact. The aim was to unite neighbours to address a common and specific issue. Regarding the projects in Chad and Morocco, they both have public and private stakeholders involved. Public and private stakeholder involvement might be necessary to implement larg(er)-scale projects that aspire replications in other locations.

Finally, the Map Kibera project was the only one which had also international stakeholders involved. In fact, since this project was financed by international institutions and required more technical and digital skills, the help of the OpenStreetMap community was necessary.

The goal is to provide (spatial) information on the slum area in order to make better and informed decisions. The collaboration between inhabitants of Kibera and the NGO actively promoted knowledge transfer that is beneficial to both parties.
INSTITUTIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

Analysis of stakeholders involvement

Working on these benchmarks and looking in detail at the involvement of stakeholders made us realize that urbanism raises political issues. In certain projects we have studied, the line between citizen participation and government control is very fine and sometimes blurred. Also, popular initiatives can be instrumentalized by public authorities.

For example, the notion of civic duty can be put forward to transfer responsibilities from public authorities to citizens. In this scenario, tactical urbanism projects can be used by public authorities to stifle and absorb the demands of youth. These remarks are all the more true in the African context where cities are facing enormous challenges due to population growth and are struggling to meet the demands of the population, especially the young.
TOOLS

The involved stakeholders use different tools to mobilize and implement tactical urbanism projects. We will first discuss the mobilization tools and then, in the section below, the implementation tools.

Mobilization tools

In all the examples studied, the local population plays an important role in starting out the tactical urbanism initiatives, and they do so using different tools. Indeed, if we take the example of "My Own Business" in Abidjan and "Rehabilitation Liberté VI" in Dakar, they both start from a diagnosis made by the inhabitants themselves and then went on to collect funds through community contributions for the implementation of the project. As for the other examples, they involve different actors such as NGOs and the government so the intervention of these other actors requires a more important collaboration. Indeed, taking the example of Zagora or Nairobi, many meetings between the different actors took place well before the projects were implemented, and funding proposals were submitted to international organizations (in the case of Map Kibera). The Sahara-Roots Foundation met with entrepreneurs and members of the municipality before organising workshops with inhabitants of the city. The "Map Kibera" project mobilized local young residents by motivating them for the cause, to make Kibera visible, while at the same time providing training workshops to teach digital technology skills to enable the local inhabitants to become autonomous.

Finally, what is important to note is the way in which the information was communicated. In most cases it was the local associations themselves or the NGOs that contacted the population directly to set up the workshops. In the case of N'Djamena, the information was relayed through their social media, mainly Facebook, by involving public figures to set an example and thus motivate other citizens to participate.
Implementation tools

Implementation tools are generally more practical and their use is very specific to the projects. All the examples studied use equipments that are accessible to all and are low-cost, thus corresponding to the idea of tactical urbanism. Indeed, the "My Own Business" and the "Citizenship Week" projects use tools such as brooms, shovels and painting material. Also, planting trees is a very important tool within the "My Own Business" project and the Sahara Roots Foundation. The "Map Kibera" project uses more technical tools such as GPS devices, computers, printed maps for participatory workshops, the OpenStreetMap platform, and other open-source programs. For the "Rehabilitation Liberté VI" project, construction materials such as sand, cement and concrete slabs were required.

In conclusion, it can be stated that there is no fixed and institutionalised way of organising projects with specific tools on the African continent. In contrast, the projects emerge within different forms of spontaneity, or even informality and are hence very specific to the local intervention area.
PROJECTS

Localization

Sahara Roots Foundation, Zagora, Morocco

Liberté VI parking rehabilitation, Dakar, Senegal

My Own Business, Abidjan, Ivory Coast

Citizenship Week, N’Djamena, Chad

Map Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya
In the following table, we synthesized the different observations that we made concerning the five chosen projects. We find that the projects in general took place in capitals and urban areas. Their lengths varied from short to long-term. The stakeholders who took part were in the majority civil society (plus, in some cases, international, local or private stakeholders). Concerning the participants, they were mostly **young inhabitants** of the areas where the projects took place. Finally, the different interventions are **mapping** with inhabitants, **waste collection** in different areas, **spaces rehabilitation** and **environmental interventions**.

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<td>Young inhabitants</td>
<td>Funds International organizations &amp; foundations</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Participatory mapping; visibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>My Own Business, Abidjan, Côte D’ivoire</strong></td>
<td>Short-term (3 months implementation) &amp; long-term change</td>
<td>Civil society</td>
<td>Young inhabitants</td>
<td>Contribution from participants</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Waste collection; street/ space rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liberté VI Parking rehabilitation, Dakar, Senegal</strong></td>
<td>Short-term (3-4 weeks implementation) &amp; long-term change</td>
<td>Civil society</td>
<td>Young inhabitants</td>
<td>Funds form the city hall &amp; population contribution</td>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>Waste collection; space rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sahara Roots foundation, Zagora, Morocco</strong></td>
<td>Short-term (few days implementation) &amp; long-term change</td>
<td>Civil society; local public stakeholders; local private stakeholders</td>
<td>Young inhabitants, local NGO</td>
<td>Funds from government &amp; NGO</td>
<td>Not capital</td>
<td>Environmental intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizenship week, N’Djamena, Tchad</strong></td>
<td>Short-term (7 days implementation) &amp; long-term change</td>
<td>Civil society; local public stakeholders; local private stakeholders</td>
<td>Young inhabitants &amp; policemen</td>
<td>Funds from private sector &amp; equipments from city hall</td>
<td>Capital &amp; replication in other cities</td>
<td>Waste collection; environmental intervention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our first project took place in N'Djamena, the capital of Chad. It is the country's largest city with its 1.2 millions inhabitants (Africapolis). N'Djamena has followed the evolution of sub-Saharan capitals. In fact, there has been a significant urban growth over the last 4 decades in parallel with the demographic explosion. But due to a lack of means and technical capacities, the public authorities have not been able to control this urban growth (Hemchi, 2015).

The Citizenship Week was initiated in 2018 by Nair Abakar, a young Chadian returning from his higher education studies in France. The objective of this tactical urbanism project was to mobilise the inhabitants of N'Djamena's neighbourhoods around the problem of unhealthy public spaces (insalubrity). During a one week event, citizens went in the streets of the city in order to clean them, manage waste and have a positive impact on the environment by planting trees.

- **Date** : 2018
- **Implementation period** : 7 days
- **Time life of the project** : 1 week once a year
- **Achieved / on going** : achieved but is replicated each year
- **Cost** : N/A
- **GPS coordinates** : 12.1348° N, 15.0557° E
- **Status of land** : public
- **Type of place** : streets

**Stakeholders**

- **Civil society** : local population, inhabitants, local associations
  The project was initiated by Nair Abakar.
- **Local public stakeholders** : the communes provided the equipments (rakes, brooms, shovels), neighbourhood leaders were involved in the concertation process
- **Local private stakeholders** : donations from companies and banks
Target audience
- Citizens of N’Djamena, especially young inhabitants

Type of actions
- Event: it was a 7-day event
- Participative process
- Temporary immaterial change

Citizen Participation
- Co-design and concertation: the project initiator emphasized that the idea was really to co-design the project with the citizens in order to find solutions to their daily problems. Regarding this, they went in every parts of the city to discuss with the neighbourhood leaders and the communes. There was a concertation between these three actors.
- Appropriation: public figures were involved in the project especially in communication videos on social networks as a tool to set an example so that the local population feels concerned and participate in turn.

Type of intervention
- Street intervention: cleaning of the streets and waste management.
- Waste and environment: each citizen were asked to collect waste and to plant trees in their home.

Innovation
- Activities and practices: in N’Djamena, it was the first even of this type where citizens of all social classes took part.

Results
The project had a big success thanks to the large participation of citizens. Together they managed to clean up several areas of the city and collect waste. After this first edition, Nair Abakar created the association "Citoyens Sans Frontières" which was in charge of the next editions of the Citizenship Week. The focus of the second edition in 2019 was on road safety (see picture above) and, since gatherings were banned in 2020, the third edition’s focus was on raising awareness about the Covid-19 pandemic.

Contacts
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Aicha Weibel

Resources
Page Facebook, "Citoyens Sans Frontières":
https://www.facebook.com/citoyenssansfrontieres
PROJECT#2

MY OWN BUSINESS
ABIDJAN, IVORY COAST

This project was led in 2017, in Abidjan the economic capital of Ivory Coast. As a capital, Abidjan has a lot of services, infrastructures, administrations etc. which contribute to the city’s economic position in West Africa. On the other hand, many areas in the city suffer from sanitation issues. Hence, this point in particular concern this project.

This project was realized by a few residents of a neighborhood called Treichville, who created the NGO called “My Own Business”. The main reason why they began this project is because their neighborhood was facing waste problematics, dilapidated built fronts, and floods. Hence, they wanted to improve their conditions of life since no services of waste collection, or sanitation were made in their neighborhood. Therefore, the project took place on an avenue (avenue 11, Treichville). Inhabitants cleaned up the avenue and the sewers, painted and restored the built fronts, and also gardened little parcels.

Date : 2017
Implementation period: From 2017 until now
Time life of the project: More than 2 years
Achieved / on going: On going
Cost: more than 3000 euros
GPS coordinates: 5° 18’ 12” nord, 4° 00’ 33” ouest
Status of land: Public space
Type of place: Urban area, neighborhood close to city center

Stakeholders

• NGO
  o "My Own Business" who launched this project

• Civil society
  o Inhabitants of Avenue 11 in Treichville & inhabitants from other neighborhoods
Target audience
- Treichville residents
  - young residents
- Abidjan residents
- The government (in order to sound the alert)

Type of actions
- First of all, the participants were all volunteers.
- Secondly, they transformed their neighborhood and avenue 11 by paintings and cleaning the streets.
- Finally we can notice that these interventions were mostly reversible if they weren’t repeated often.

Citizen Participation
- Citizens initiated this project and appropriated avenue 11.

Type of intervention
- Streets cleaning
- Built fronts renovations (paintings, art, etc.)
- Sanitation

Innovation
- Empowerment
- Participation in manual activities
- Sensibilization
- Learning civic duties by socialisation

Results
Avenue 11 in Treichville was cleaned up, made attractive, by the inhabitants. This project allowed the creation of social cohesion between residents. On another hand, the NGO "My Own Business" and the participants, received the government’s recognition. Finally, after this project, the NGO launched several projects of this kind in different contexts such as schools’s renovation, sensibilization, etc.

Contacts
My Own Business:
- +225 08 05 87 08
- https://www.facebook.com/impact.direct.sur.la.population/photos

Régis Phares Kacou

Resources
My Own Business’s Facebook:
- https://www.facebook.com/impact.direct.sur.la.population/photos

France 24 interview:
Kibera, the biggest slum and one of the most densely populated areas of Nairobi, was long a blank spot on official maps. In 2009, members of the OpenStreetMap (OSM) community started a participatory mapping project together with local young residents. Equipped with GPS devices, they walked around Kibera adding all important points of interest, thus producing only after three weeks a first map of the area. Then, thematic maps with an overview about education and health centres as well as water and sanitation stations were produced. Due to the success of the mapping, the project grew into a community information project including blogs, videos, SMS news and oriented mapping (election polls, security map, etc.).

The objective of Map Kibera was to make Kibera visible in order to inform and orient local residents and to create an overview of Kibera to have a solid basis to claim public service infrastructure. By using low-tech and open-source tools, barriers of access to digital technology are reduced significantly.

Date: 2009
Implementation period: several years
Time life of the project: ongoing
Cost: n.a.; Funds from International Organizations (OSM, Jumpstart Foundation, UNICEF, i.a.)
GPS coordinates: -1.3079416, 36.7808896
Status of land: informal
Type of place: high-density slum

Stakeholders

- **Initial initiative and financing by international stakeholders:**
  - OpenStreetMap Community (particularly Mikel Maron and Erica Hagen) are at the origin of the project
  - Initially mobilized funds from Jumpstart Foundation and OSM, later funds from UNICEF for further development of the project

- **Civil society:**
  - Local, mostly young residents of Kibera implemented the project

- Project is owned by the "Map Kibera Trust", an organization created by the mapping team
Target audience
- All Kibera residents
- Local government

Type of actions
- Citizen participation: as mappers of their neighborhood
- Experimentation & innovation: participatory mapping with open-source programs

Citizen Participation
The Map Kibera project was initiated by two members of the OSM community who mobilized young local residents to co-produce maps of Kibera. Local residents were trained and became mapping experts. From the very beginning, the process was marked by collaboration, co-production and training.

Type of intervention
- Participatory mapping
- Co-production of thematic maps
- Making Kibera visible and inform local residents and government
- In a second phase: community information project with blogs, videos, and SMS news

Innovation
- Process: participatory mapping using low-tech and open-source tools
- Access and connection: training of local residents to become mapping experts and making data available for all

Results
Local residents are able to use GPS devices and to add and modify data on OpenStreetMap and other open-source platforms and programs. By doing so, they produce important information and become active in transforming Kibera. Access to digital technologies is democratized.
Due to the success of the mapping, the project grew into a community information project that still exists nowadays. Participatory mapping activities are replicated in other slums in Nairobi.

Contacts
contact@mapkibera.org
http://www.voiceofkibera.org/contact

Resources
https://mapkibera.org
http://www.voiceofkibera.org

Franka Kling
The effects of climate change in the region of M'hamid El-Ghizlane, in southern Morocco, pose various problems that fuel the degradation processes of this space, whose fragility has been accentuated by the instability of climatic conditions. Therefore, in 2018, the association Sahara Roots with the help of the company Groasis was interested in Zagora more specifically, and decided to act with the help of young inhabitants of the village.

The project consisted of combating desertification through reforestation using an ecological water-efficient technology that was inexpensive and quick to install. With the help of numerous funding sources such as the Provincial Council of Zagora, the Provincial Ministry of Water and Forests, the Delegation of National Education, Dar America and the communities of Tagounite and M'hamid, they were able to plant a number of trees in a few days. Today, this project continues to be nurtured and spread to several regions of the Moroccan Sahara.

**Stakeholders**

- **Civil society:** Local population and mainly young people participated in the planting of trees in Zagora as well as the Sahara-Roots foundation composed of Dutch and local people
- **Local public stakeholder:** The project was made with the municipal support of Zagora.
- **Local private stakeholder:** The equipment was provided by a private company which is responsible for the ecological tree planting system.

**Date:** 2018  
**Implementation period:** 3 days  
**Time life of the project:** long term  
**Achieved / on going:** achieved  
**Cost:** N/A  
**GPS coordinates:** 30° 19′ 50″ nord, 5° 50′ 17″ ouest  
**Status of land:** public  
**Type of place:** urban area, desert
Target audience

- Citizens of Zagora and other desert populations

Type of actions

- Trees planting

Citizen Participation

With the collaboration of a company that produces an ecological tree planting system, and the help of the local population and local students, a group of Dutch and Moroccan teachers has committed themselves to planting trees in different towns in the Sahara, notably in Zagora.

Type of intervention

- Intervention of the Sahara-Roots association in the city of Zagora with the help of local teachers and students for the planting of trees to limit the desertification of the territory

Innovation

- Planting trees with system produced by the company Groasis, which has implemented a technology that reduces water consumption

Results

This project has been a real success with the citizens of Zagora and has made it possible to defend the ecology and to safeguard a biological heritage that was in danger of disappearing due to climate change. It has helped to raise awareness among the local population, especially among young people. The Sahara-Roots Foundation continues its journey across the desert to fight against the desertification of Morocco's towns and villages.

Contacts

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info@sahara-roots.org

Myriam Kadir

Resources

http://www.sahara-roots.org
https://www.groasis.com
Due to massive urbanism in Senegal, mostly in Dakar, the capital, the numbers of cars, taxis and what they call “clando” (car sharing for long or short rides) has dramatically increased, creating a lot of traffic through the city. The Taxis and Clando have created their own routes, sometimes going through neighborhoods or parkings they are not allowed to cross, in order to be faster and make more rides.

This is a public area. The young neighborhood’s inhabitants who organized themselves as an association "Bët Sénégal", decided to make their area cleaner by making a "Set Setal" action that consist on cleaning the streets, planting trees and removing rubble. The area has been closed by rocks, they built a statue and a fountain, planted trees in order to make it prosper, protect their area, reduce the noise and make it safe for the children playing around. A young political party member saw the initiative and decided to help by providing slabs used by the young inhabitants to rebuild the area.

**Date : 2020**
**Implementation period:** 4 weeks
**Time life of the project :** long term
**Achieved / on going :** achieved
**Cost :** N/A
**GPS coordinates :** 14.7281276,-17.463088,382
**Status of land :** Public space
**Type of place :** Urban area, neighborhood in the capital of Senegal

**Stakeholders**
- This project was initiated by young inhabitants of the neighborhood member of the association "Bët Sénégal" who wanted to clean and protect their space.
- Political party member living in the neighborhood decided to help, in his private initiative.
Target audience
- Liberté VI neighborhood
- Dakar population

Citizen Participation
This project was initiated by the young inhabitants who were organized as a community organisation "Bët Sénégal" who wanted to do a “Set Setal” movement, quite famous in Senegal which consist on cleaning the neighborhood, removing rubble, planting trees and make the area more sustainable. The inhabitants of the neighborhood participated, young and elder and make it at their own image.

Type of intervention
- Street intervention
- Neighborhood rehabilitation

Results
As a result, in less than a month, Liberté VI inhabitants managed to close the areas with stones and solid rocks, to plant trees, blocking access to all cars, making it a safe place for the children to play and have a more sustainable place, created by and for the population, reinforcing the social link between the citizens.

Contacts
- Bët Senegal
- +221 76 189 31 10

Resources
http://www.betsenegal.org
https://www.facebook.com/betsenegal
Survey with participants

Aminata Ilame Sow Mboup
CONCLUSION & CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Limits

To conclude, it is important to specify that we were confronted with a few limits, notably the fact that we only include five projects in this benchmark work, which is a rather small number to allow for sufficiently exhaustive observations and generalizations. Indeed, not all African regions are represented in this work, which limits the consideration of the diversity of social, economic, political and territorial contexts of the continent. Moreover, quantitative research has also been impacted, particularly due to the lack of data production and dissemination in Africa.

Unlike other regions in the world, the notion of tactical urbanism is not widely used in Africa and there is a limited number of academic publications available on the subject. Also, few projects bear the designation of tactical urbanism, and some of us who have had the opportunity to discuss with the projects initiators have noticed that they are not yet familiar with the term.

Other examples

- Park(ing) Day in Ghana
- Set Setal movement in Senegal
- Open Street Days in Cape Town (South Africa) and Kampala (Uganda)
- Bike Share, Kampala, Uganda

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© Victoria Okoye, 2013
CONCLUSION & CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Additional statement

Following our oral presentation on March 25th 2021, the team discussed within the legitimacy of designating the "Citizenship Week" project in N'Djamena as "tactical urbanism". It is an example of immaterial tactical urbanism because there was no ephemeral construction in the city, but rather citizen participation in response to one of their daily-life problems: the insalubrity of public space.

While the project has characteristics of tactical urbanism such as citizen participation, usefulness for the local population and the fact that it is a short-term and low-cost action, it could also be argued that it is a top-down initiative, a media project or a project taken over by the government.

Nevertheless, the team have decided to keep this project in our benchmark because it raises important issues and highlights real problems that exist in the practice of urban planning in Africa and elsewhere in the world.

This project raises reflections around the debate on tactical urbanism and can feed academic reflection. Indeed, this project forces the team to question the definition of tactical urbanism and to move away from a normative vision. Can we remove the label of 'tactical' from a project because public figures wanted to take part in the mobilisation and publicise the event? In the end, this did not hinder the implementation of the project and the results remained the same: there was a short-term citizen mobilisation with the common objective of transforming the city within seven days, addressing the issue of insalubrity.

Of course, there can be negative externalities as well. For example, public authorities can take advantage of such initiatives to shift their own responsibilities as public service providers.

Waste management and street cleaning fall under the responsibility of the public authorities and should not be borne by the local population under the guise of "civic duty".
CONCLUSION & CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Additional statement

This project raises important questions about the limits of tactical urbanism:

Is having citizen participation and a short-term project that responds to a specific problem enough to qualify it as tactical urbanism? What are the limits of tactical urbanism? At what point and who has the right to remove the label of 'tactical' from a project which nevertheless shares many of the characteristics of a Western vision of tactical urbanism?

Indeed, it is interesting to extend this debate to the African context and ask whether this terminology makes sense in Africa? It should be remembered that the notion of tactical urbanism emerged in a Western context, far removed from the realities faced by local African populations.

In response, the team believes that it is possible to talk about tactical urbanism in the African context under certain conditions. Some characteristics are necessary to qualify a project as tactical urbanism such as citizen participation, short-term action and usefulness to the local population. There may be other elements in addition to these, but these are necessary because they were found in each of our studied projects.

Finally, concerning the involvement of stakeholders or the tools used to carry out the project, the team thinks that it is necessary to be more flexible in order to adapt to the specific realities of each country. It is important to move away from a normative vision of what tactical urbanism should be, but rather about focusing on the results of the project and the objectives it has managed to achieve. In that sense, tactical urbanism should also be researched more in detail within the dynamics of informality in Africa.
REFERENCES

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Press articles:

Websites:

Pictures:
- Dakar, Liberté VI. 2020. [Personal image]
LATIN AMERICA

Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Venezuela

urbanismo táctico
urbanismo táctico
urbanismo hazlo tú mismo
urbanismo faça-você-mesmo
urbanismo collectivo
urbanismo participativo
urbanismo ciudadano
urbanismo temporal

Group fitness class in Nuestro Jardin Cultural (Bicistema, 2019)
TEAM

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DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

Latin America as a region can be defined depending on intersecting criteria, such as shared languages, history of colonization, political agendas, and geographical factors (Britannica, 2017). In this analysis, it comprises the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking nations and territories located between Mexico and Chile, notably including states often categorized as part of the Caribbean (International Plant Protection Convention, n.d.). The region has undergone the most rapid urbanization rate of any other (approximately 80% in 2017), with around 2,000 cities having driven the Latin American economy in 2018 (Muggah, 2018).

In Latin America, tactical urbanism is understood as **short-term actions to generate long-term changes**. These actions are **localized**, require **low investment**, and are characterized by a **bottom-up approach**.

What is interesting is that urban design seems to be at the heart of the concept. Painting with vivid colors is often used to make spaces look more attractive and to contest the grayish view of urban settlements.

![Small scale, Low budget, Temporary, Participatory, Vivid Colors](image)

Recently, the concept of tactical urbanism received increased regional attention. In the past decade, authors such as Lydon (2012) and Steffens (2013) incorporated the concept of tactical urbanism and its applicability in the Latin American context. Since then, the concept has been brought to life and implemented in Latin American cities.

Nowadays, tactical urbanism is quite widespread in Latin America. One of its main institutional supporters has been Laboratorio Espacio Público en Latinoamérica known as LEPLATAM, a non-governmental organization. Although some of these interventions are not as studied compared to the United States (Luna Palencia & Ocampo Zapata, 2019), research, reports and online conferences on those in Latin America are rapidly increasing in availability.

Two major international events that have transformed tactical urbanism into recent regional phenomena include:
- The New Urban Agenda was adopted in 2016 at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in Quito, Ecuador, also referred to as the “medicina”. Its guidelines address how to improve city habitats and how we can take action at the local level paving the way for tactical urbanism (LEPLATAM, 2019a).
DEFINITIONS AND CONCEPTS

- The III Forum on Urban Interventions held in Lima, Peru, in 2017 raised the discussion about participatory recovery of public space, receiving a series of innovative proposals on urban intervention (Hábitat y Desarrollo Urbano, 2018). At this global level, tactical urbanism appeared to be the best fit in each of these different interpretations (LEPLATAM, 2019b).

Vocabulary
The most spoken languages in Latin America are Spanish and Portuguese, with a wide range of vocabulary in both languages associated with the concept. “Tactical urbanism” in Spanish translates literally as urbanismo táctico, and in Portuguese, as urbanismo tático; this term seems to be mostly used by academics and experts. Most refer to the concept as “do-it yourself urbanism” (urbanismo hazlo tú mismo in Spanish) and (urbanismo façã-você-mesmo in Portuguese).

Related terms also included those emphasizing participation or the temporality elements of the project such as urbanismo collectivo, urbanismo participativo, urbanismo ciudadano, and urbanismo temporal.

Descriptively, many projects also made reference to (re)building the public space accentuating and revisioning the existing structures and space (Escobar, 2019). Other related terms in English were also used, such as “placemaking.”

Connections to the Right to the City
In Latin America, tactical urbanism seems to mainly target a lack of citizen participation, inequity, and governance. It can be understood as “an instrument to eliminate barriers that prevent people from developing their capabilities, such as the distrust in the political class” (Steffens, 2013, p.14). It represents a way to promote changes that are either ignored or barely recognized by governments.

Tactical urbanism, thus instrumentalizes the right to the city, to generate formal planning and informal interventions to bring about social, environmental and cultural benefits. It also has shown to have improved aspects of aesthetics, mobility, and safety (Luna Palencia & Ocampo Zapata, 2019, p.117).
URBAN CONTEXT

Urbanization, Growth, and Challenges

Latin America is composed of a vast and diverse set of countries where different languages and cultures come together. It is also one of the most urbanized regions in the world with almost 80% of its population living in cities. According to the United Nations Population Division and the World Bank the population for 2019 of Latin America and the Caribbean was estimated to be over 646 million people. UN Habitat predicts Latin America’s cities will include 90% of the region’s population by 2050 (Adrienne Arsh, Latin America Center, 2014).

This urban growth has significantly increased since the 1950s where before, the urban population was only 40% (Adrienne Arsh Latin, America Center, 2014). This hyper-urbanization has come with its own challenges including stagnated low income, increased inequalities, and limited infrastructure to meet the increase in urban population, resulting in the extension of the peripheral areas of cities (Inzulza-Contardo, 2011). Nevertheless, these challenges are also opportunities to generate adaptable and scalable solutions to issues of mobility, environmental impact and economic, and social development (Steffens, 2013).

The Public Space

Public spaces have been of great relevance for life in Latin America even in pre-colonial times. (Angeles and Elizalde, 2017). Despite the influence of the U.S. urban model on Latin American cities' social dynamics, the Latin American way of socializing in the street continues to shape the character of the cities and the interventions of tactical urbanism that are taking place (Naider, n.d.; Jiménez-Domínguez, 2007). It is important to consider the significance of the habitability of these spaces, as the public space is not just considered as a space of transition, but a place to perform the social, cultural, and political life of the polis. This can take the forms of socialization, citizen manifestations, entertainment, gender expressions, commerce, and other cultural expressions. This habitability relies not only on equity, security, and comfort in using the space, but also on how people, feel and identify with the space, and how they re-appropriate it (Paramo et al., 2018).
INSTITUTIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

The institutional stakeholders of tactical urbanism projects in Latin America are typically inclusive of public, private, and nonprofit entities, with substantial participation of local inhabitants at all levels of planning, design, implementation, and evaluation. Considering the local nature of such projects, actors tend to be locally-based within the same municipality or district of the project, however some also involve international actors such as the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) and Citi Foundation—funders of Nuestro Jardín Cultural (Bogotá, Colombia) and Zonas 30 (Belo Horizonte, Brazil), respectively (Baraya, 2020; Brito, 2019).

Public stakeholders are local political figures, mayoral offices, or municipality departments with specific relevant resources or jurisdiction (i.e. Curridabat municipality’s Human Environment Protection Department and Risk Management Department in supporting the implementation of the Ciudad Dulce project) (Ciudad Dulce, n.d.).

Other institutional stakeholders comprise private companies, architecture studios, urban mapping organizations, and other local nonprofit organizations which provide funding, design input, organization, and other materials or resources (Lydon, 2012).

The advertisement for "Restauración en Nuestro Jardín Cultural" (right) depicts the diversity of stakeholders (via their logos) engaged in this tactical urbanism project.

Restauración en Nuestro Jardín Cultural (advertisement) (Bicistema, 2019)
In the case of Latin America, both participatory and practical tools are used when carrying out a tactical urbanism project. Participatory tools are used to facilitate and enhance the participatory process while practical tools are used when implementing the tactical urbanism project into the physical space.

**Participatory Tools**

When facilitating the participatory process, common tools used in Latin American include community events and participatory workshops. In cases where a project is funded by banks, international organizations or led by local architectural firms and municipalities, a tactical urbanism project typically goes through three phases, utilizing various tools throughout (Paisajeo, n.d).

**Diagnostics and participatory design**

During this phase, workshops are held with an invitation to the public to share their ideas and insight. For example, in the Bogotá case study, Nuestro Jardín Cultural we see that women and children within the Suba neighborhood were invited to attend workshops that gave them space to speak freely and candidly about how to best improve their community (Baraya, S., 2020). By hosting workshops and community events it allows for individuals to feel involved and connected to other participants from their community, setting the stage for a well thought-out, effective tactical urbanism project.

**Execution and implementation**

During this phase, community events centered around the implementation of the project into the physical space are used to increase community participation and overall use of the space whether that be temporary or long-term.

We see the use of community events surrounding the implementation of tactical urbanism in the case of Zonas 30 em Belo Horizonte, Brazil where a party was organized for the community to implement elements of the project, informative talks were held about cycling in the city, and a play was put on by local students (ITDP Brasil, 2019). Because of these community events, more people were able to participate in the space and they can establish a new emotional connection to the space.

**Evaluation, data collection, and possibility for scaling up or replication**

In this final phase, those leading or sponsoring the tactical urbanism project will typically analyze and produce findings on the data collected throughout the entire planning, execution, and long-term impact of the project. These findings can later be used to replicate or even improve future tactical urbanism projects. Organizations such as Bicistema in Bogotá, Colombia have made it their mission to spread participatory tactical urbanism projects throughout the city, scaling up pilot projects and replicating design elements in various neighborhoods (Paisajeo, n.d).
Practical Tools

After completing the participatory planning phase and finalizing logistics, practical tools are used to finally implement the tactical urbanism project into the community.

A common form of tactical urbanism in Latin America is using paint as a way to revitalize a space. Painting supplies such as brushes, outdoor/street quality paint, or paint that potentially fades over time for temporary projects have been found to be heavily utilized (Ciudad Creativa, 2016). It is important to note that colorful design is a common theme of Latin American tactical urbanism, with colors used as symbols to represent or honor the community. In the case of the Teeter-Totter Wall on the United States-Mexico border, designers chose a vibrant pink color for the project, honoring the murdered women of Ciudad Juárez (Pearl, 2021).

Another commonly used tool is the repurposing of found materials that are upcycled and turned into art installations, furniture, or physical structures within a space. Most often we see the use of wooden pallets or crates to create new urban furniture such as benches, chairs, or platforms (Angelis, n.d.). Plastic cups and bottles have also been frequently recycled to create artistic light installations that enhance the aesthetic atmosphere of the space. Discarded tires and oil barrels have also been used to create flower pots for adding vegetation and landscaping elements to a project. In the case of mobility projects, the use of traffic control cones and signage are important tools in creating new areas within a streetscape for pedestrians and cyclists; they also increase the overall safety of the space (ITDP Brasil, 2019).
PROJECTS

Similarities and Differences

Many tactical urbanism cases in Latin America deal with ephemeral and immediate “solutions”, most of the time with a short duration and with the intention to guarantee a qualitative urban infrastructure for everyone. In addition to the relation to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11, sustainable cities and communities, the main similarity among tactical urbanism projects is that all of these interventions have a social aspect, such as co-creation, participatory approaches, and appropriation of the public space. Although there are similar approaches among the interventions each case has its own needs and each project can relate to one or several SDGs. In order to highlight the similarities and differences of the practice of tactical urbanism in a Latin America context, seven projects in six different countries were selected and analyzed, and then divided into three categories: Mobility and Space, Environment, and Social Interactive.

Mobility and Space includes projects that act on redrawing the design of streets in order to create new public spaces, especially for pedestrians and cyclists. For example, the project Zona 30 in Brazil was an intervention where the goal was to reduce vehicle speed and increase pedestrian safety in the area. It was successfully executed by redesigning the streets through drawings (Brito, 2019). Another example is Okuplaza in Chile. This was an intervention that aimed “to trigger a debate about new ways of prioritizing street space in favor of pedestrians, cyclists and local neighborhood businesses” (Okuplaza, n.d.) by turning this street intersection into a park where people could sit, enjoy and relax.

The case of Nuestro Jardin Cultural in Bogotá, Colombia, shows the reappropriation of an unused street corner, described as an abandoned hangout spot for crime and graffiti. The goal was to create safer mobility for women and children by repainting the space and hosting cultural activities (Paisajeo, n.d.). This project also aligns with SDG 5, to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Participatory planning Okuplaza © Ciudad Emergente
Projects

Environmental interventions aim to increase the quality of life and the environmental conditions for cities’ dwellers. The Green Virus project in Medellin, Colombia, is increasing green areas in the city by building “green parks” that are made of vegetation and urban furniture from recycled materials (Ciudad Creativa, 2016). Ciudad Dulce, a project in the suburbs of San José, Costa Rica, that is related to SDG 15, life on land, as it envisions cities that coexist with its fauna and flora. It aims to make natural conservation an urban activity by increasing the number and variety of pollinizer through the reintegration of flora and the creation of new bio corridors (Ciudad Dulce, n.d.).

Social Interactive projects are those which are not meaningful without interaction of its users. Some interventions seem to transcend conventional approaches regarding a tactical urbanism point of view and are transforming and pushing the boundaries of what tactical urbanism could mean. They could be politically charged and target SDG 16, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. For example, The Teeter-Totter Wall that was installed in the US-Mexico borderlands was an innovative way to conceptually dismantle the wall and its meaning, therefore also sending a political message (Brice, 2019).

Another example of social interaction is the Catalyst Cube in Caracas, Venezuela, that aims to be a hub for conversation and play, and a way for the neighborhood to take ownership of their environment, as well as claiming and seeking the right to the city (Building Centre, n.d.).

Tactical urbanism in fact presents itself as an effective strategy in many cases throughout Latin America. However, in order to guarantee qualitative urban infrastructure for everyone, each specific case has to be analyzed and participation of all stakeholders in the urban planning processes is paramount.

Interventions on the urban scale are part of a process that involves more than quick solutions to complex problems; it also involves the reevaluation of both public policies and the roles of actors in urban processes. Although the interventions have its similarities, it is important to analyze the current measures for each specific intervention and question what the necessary action is to make cities more just and inclusive (Portal Aprendiz, 2020).
PROJECTS

Localization

- Zona 30 - Belo Horizonte, Brazil
- Okuplaza - San Diego, Santiago, Chile
- Nuestro Jardín Cultural - Suba, Bogotá, Colombia
- Green Virus - Medellín, Colombia
- Ciudad Dulce - Curridabat, San José, Costa Rica
- Teeter-Totter Wall - Ciudad Juárez, Mexico
- Catalyst Cube - Caracas, Venezuela
PROJECTS

Overview

Mobility and Space

Nuestro Jardín Cultural

Okuplaza

Environmental

Green Virus

Ciudad Dulce

Social Interactive

Catalyst Cube

Teeter Totter Wall
Zona 30 was the first of its kind in the city of Belo Horizonte in Brazil. The main objectives of the initiative aimed to reduce vehicle speed and increase pedestrian safety in the area.

In the chosen area there are three schools, a church and a home for the elderly. The main axis of the intervention is commonly used by vehicles often at a speed incompatible with pedestrians.

The intervention was made in a pilot project of 4 days. After the success of the intervention some of the proposed changes were adapted and adopted permanently.

**Stakeholders**

- **Local public stakeholders**: Municipality of the city of Belo Horizonte represented by BHTRANS
- **Local private stakeholders**: Merchant and service providers on Simão Tamm Street.
- **International stakeholders**: ITDP (Brasil) – Citi Foundation
- **Civil society**: Volunteers, Inhabitants Association, Association of BH in Cycling and the collective of Street Cycling and local students

**Type of Actions**

- Temporary reversible intervention
- Cultural Activities and Workshops
- Citizen Participation including 90 local students to identify priorities and solutions for the area.

**Date**: 26–29 April 2019

**Implementation period**: 4 days

**Time life of the project**: Pilot project of 4 days, after the success of the intervention some of the proposed changes were adapted and adopted permanently.

**Achieved / on going**: Achieved

**Cost**: N/A

**GPS coordinates**: 19.8884559 - 43.9462714

**Status of land**: Public

**Type of place**: Urban area – public street
Target Audience

- Pedestrians, local inhabitants, school children and elderly living in the local retirement home that is located in the proximity of the area.

Citizen Participation

For the implementation volunteers mobilized to draw a new geometry on the streets that would reduce the speed of motor vehicles and discourage passing traffic in the region monitored by the academia. The area also received temporary urban furniture, landscaping elements and removable signage. During the intervention a party was organized by the Inhabitants Association, the workshop about urban mobility and cycling was given by the Association of BH in Cycling and the collective of Street Cycling and a theater play was presented by the local Students.

Type of Intervention

- Re-design of the streets, widening the sidewalks and intersection with drawings, urban furniture and vegetation
- Re-appropriation of the street space for leisure
- Cultural Activities and Workshops

Innovation

This intervention was the first of its kind in the city and it helped pave the way for other interventions in the city. It inspired more than 10 other applications for Zona 30 that were filled by citizens for different regions of the city.

Results

The new design implemented temporarily on Simão Tamm street between Nossa Sra. Da Paz and Cânego Santana streets resulted in a 31% reduction in the average speed practiced by motor vehicles. Regarding the feeling of security in relation to motorized traffic, 56.2% of the interviewees gave a maximum score, indicating that they felt very safe after the action. Before the change in the design of the road, only 2.9% of the interviewees had declared that they felt very safe. 81% of respondents indicated they prefer the street with the new design, furniture and landscaping. Only two negative comments were recorded, referring to the loss of parking spaces, the need to maintain the plants and the existence of a park a few blocks further on, which would dispense with the need to create a new leisure area.

Contacts

Eveline Trevisan
(BHTRANS) Coordinator of Sustainability and Environment

Danielle Hoppe
(ITDP Brasil) Manager of Active Transports of ITDP Brasil

Resources

- BHTRANS: https://prefeitura.pbh.gov.br/bhtrans
- Citi Foundation: https://www.citigroup.com/citi/foundation/

Israel Noriei Oyakawa Mariano
Okuplaza San Diego is one of the first in a series of urban interventions that reclaims urban space for the people. After the closure of this street intersection due to construction, Ciudad Emergente, the initiator of this project, took advantage of the opportunity and used participatory strategies to recover this underutilized urban area and turned it into an active public space through tactical urbanism actions.

Through Okuplaza they wanted to trigger a debate about new ways of prioritizing street space in favor of pedestrians, cyclists and local neighborhood businesses. By turning this street into a park for the people to sit, enjoy and relax, they envisioned this short-term action to have long-term impacts on planning processes and the use of public spaces. The hope was also that this newly transformed space would stay after the testing month.

**Date:** 3–4 October 2013  
**Implementation period:** The project was set up in 12 hours.  
**Time life of the project:** 1 month  
**Achieved / on going:** Achieved  
**Cost:** Low, as they mainly used upcycled materials  
**GPS coordinates:** -33.446139, -70.651250  
**Status of land:** Public  
**Type of place:** Street intersection, temporary parking lot

## Stakeholders

Ciudad Emergente is the initiator, owner and coordinator of this project. However, the requests of their projects come from the public, private sector, or others. They collaborated with:

- Universidad del Desarrollo School of Architecture (more than 300 students helped realise the project)  
- Santiago Municipality, co-organiser and sponsor of the project  
- PlantaBanda, an organisation that also uses a participatory design to recover underutilised urban spaces mainly through gardening  
- Tecnología Sustentable  
- Ministerial Secretariat of Transport and Telecommunications.
Target Audience

- Local residents, shop owners, pedestrians, cyclists and anyone who wanted to enjoy the space.

Type of Actions

- Reversible intervention
- Participatory process
- Experiment and prototype for other urban upgrades in the city

Citizen Participation

The initiator of the project was Ciudad Emergente, however the requests of their projects come from the public, private sector or others. The citizens of Santiago were actively involved in the co-design, mobilization and appropriation of Okuplaza and more than 300 university students helped to realize the project. Citizens also gave feedback through social media and where possible they immediately adjusted the park accordingly.

Type of Intervention

- **Urban design intervention**: using upcycled materials, urban furniture and paint
- **Re-appropriation of the urban space**: a park for the people
- **Social intervention**: spontaneous gatherings, dancing and other recreational activities
- **Economic intervention**: Okuplaza brought back clientele and boosted local businesses

Innovation

It served as a prototype for other similar urban interventions in the city. Not only did they replicate Okuplaza in other parts of the city, but also in other countries in Latin America and even in the United States. This placemaking intervention was unique in its use of the public space and helping the citizens reclaim their right to the city.

Results

The short-term goal of people enjoying the space and boosting local businesses seems to have been achieved. The long-term goal was also at least partially achieved. Alejandro Plaza, Urban Area Director for the Santiago Municipality, said that it was a good initiative, but that they needed to improve communication both internally and externally as many people had no idea what was going on. It served as a prototype for future Okuplaza projects and they replicated the project throughout Santiago and (Latin) America. Whether urban planning processes have changed is hard to say. A negative externality was that people stole stuff from the park at night.

Contacts

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Chile

Inge Baak

Resources

- http://okuplaza.org/#acerca (website of all the Okuplaza projects)
- http://okuplaza.org/?portfolio=okuplaza-san-diego (page about the San Diego Okuplaza project including a video)
- http://opencityprojects.com/okuplaza-san-diego/ (article about the San Diego Okuplaza project)
- https://www.plataformaurbana.cl/archive/2013/10/03/intervencion-okuplaza-en-calle-san-diego-hoy-y-manana-3-y-4-de-octubre/
Located in the Suba district of Colombia’s capital city Bogotá, this unused street corner of about 1039 sq. m. was described as an abandoned hangout spot for crime and graffiti. In 2019, the space became the host of a one-year tactical urbanism pilot project of the Me Muevo Segura campaign which focuses on creating safer mobility for women and children in Bogotá.

Today Nuestro Jardín Cultural, or “Our Cultural Garden,” is a colorfully-painted space for hosting cultural activities, reactivating community relations, revitalizing a forgotten, dangerous space, and generating a new radiant and safe area for women and children traveling and living in the area, and perhaps using the adjacent bike path.

This one-year project ensured the full inclusion and participation of local residents in diagnostics and design, execution and implementation, and evaluation. Beyond facilitating the reclamation and renovation of the space by inhabitants themselves, the project also aimed to test the potentiality of its scalability, replicability, and sustainability (Paisajeo, n.d.).

**Stakeholders**

- **Inspiration/Motivation** District Secretary for Women (Me Muevo Segura campaign)
- **Initiation/Design/Organization/ Implementation** Bicistema, Bogotá Botanical Garden
- **Mapping** TUMI (Transforming Urban Mobility Initiative)
- **Financial Institution** CAF (Development Bank of Latin America)
- **Civil Society** Suba inhabitants (esp. women and children), graffiti artists, local artists

**Date:** 2019  
**Implementation period:** 1 year  
**Time life of the project:** Ongoing  
**Cost:** N/A  
**GPS coordinates:** 4.720819, -74.095413  
**Status of land:** Public  
**Type of place:** Unused urban street corner, flat open space
Citizen Participation

The project was initiated by local organization Bicistema who co-designed and facilitated implementation with the participation of 85 local inhabitants (who were consulted and who cleaned, painted, planted, etc.). The local community, especially women and children, developed ownership over the space and the project through their active participation at every step of the project.

Type of Intervention

- Urban design
- street/wall painting, planting
- New activity
- one-time outdoor cinema night
- Mobility
- improved bike path passing by

Innovation

- Targets most vulnerable inhabitants (women and children)
- Consults whole community, including those who may want to revert the space (graffiti artists) for their agreement and understanding
- Coordinated with mobility initiative (colorful, better quality, safer bike paths)
- Objective of renovating and reclaiming a space to be used and safe during the day as well as at night

Results

Inhabitants were receptive to participation and the renovation of the space. Some challenges include the need for maintenance of the space (murals and plants) and for organizing events in the space (like the outdoor cinema night event).

Contact

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Katherine Huang

Resources

- Social media posts about the project: https://www.picuki.com/tag/UrbanismoBici
- Bicistema interview: https://www.archdaily.co/933210/renovacion-y-regeneracion-de-espacio-publico-mediane-urbanismo-tactico-con-enfoc-de-genero-en-bogota
Medellin has been facing high levels of pollution and constant replacement of green areas by gray infrastructure.

The Green Virus seeks to increase green areas in the city of Medellin by building a series of “green parks” made up of vegetation, furniture with recycled materials and art. This project aims to improve the environmental conditions of the city and the quality of life of its inhabitants, guarantying spaces for recreation and to strengthen community ties.

**Stakeholders**

Ciudad Creativa, which is an architecture and urban planning studio, is is at the origin of the Green Virus project. People of all ages and professions joined the project.

Each of the green parks involves different collaborations, including local private and public stakeholders, international stakeholders and civil society.

Among them: Fondo Ciudades Para Todos | Metro de Medellin | La Ciudad Verde | Colectivo Tricilab | Colegio Militar José María Córdoba | Colectivo Deúnti | Mobiliario Diseño Industrial UPB | Low Carbon City | Energías solidarias Iztacalco | Alas cultiva tu espacio | Casa Viva | Casa de Cultura Las Jarillas | COPEVI | Vecinos de Tlacotal | Secretaría de la Juventud de la Alcaldía de Medellin | La Savia | LM Project | Jóvenes voluntarios de Medellin | Subsecretaría de Espacio Público | Empresa de Desarrollo Urbano | Mas Urbano | Secretaría de Movilidad | Colectivo Síclas.

**Date:** since 2016  
**Implementation period:** N/A  
**Time life of the project:** years  
**Achieved / on going:** Ongoing, the first green park was implemented in 2016, it was followed by similar prototypes. Its idea is to spread the Green Virus throughout the city.  
**Cost:** There is no information regarding the cost and financing of Green Virus, although it is mentioned that it has low budgets.  
**GPS coordinates:** 6.25184,-75.56359  
**Status of land:** Public  
**Type of place:** Urban center and suburbs
Target Audience
- The project's green parks are for everyone, but some projects have a more specific target audience, such as the children’s playground in Niquitao.

Type of Actions
- Temporary reversible interventions
- Participative process
- Experimental and innovative strategy
- Transforming the way citizens perceive their city

Citizen Participation
This project was initiated by citizen’s collective creativity. When a street/space lacks green areas, Ciudad Creativa reaches out to find a community willing to work collaboratively to improve their neighborhood (“co-creation project”). Then, green parks are co-produced with the help of many neighbors and volunteers.

Type of Intervention
- **Urban design / street intervention:** Urban furniture (recycled materials), Art and Painting
- **New activities:** social gatherings, children’s playground, painting workshops (flowerpots, walls, streets)
- **Environment:** Vegetation

Innovation
This project is a “green lung” for the city. Parks are based upon environmental research in such a way that it increases its environmental effectiveness.

As of 2016, it had already planted more than 15 trees and 230 species of plants.

Results
The initial idea of increasing green areas throughout the city was achieved. People hope it will continue to transform other parts of the city for a greener and more humane city. Green Virus is described as a highly successful project due to its appropriation by citizens. Both private and public entities regard it as an economical and intelligent way to revitalize Medellín’s spaces.

Contacts
**ciudadcreativa.info@gmail.com**
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Resources
- Proyecto Green Virus. https://www.ciudadcreativa.info/green-virus
- Ciudad Creativa: https://a03c9af7-4df0-4abe-b251-6186f4b7cd.filesusr.com/ugd/70e9e0f16f261c78d149498efc394899df5cc.pdf
- Ciudad Creativa Civic Practices Book: https://www.ciudadcreativa.info/single-post/2017/05/03/civic-practice-bookgreen-virus

Audrey Parvex
PROJECT #5

CIUDAD DULCE
SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA

Katherine Luongo

The Ciudad Dulce or “Sweet City” in the municipality of Curridabat is a unique case in that it has scaled up the basics of tactical urbanism by utilizing an inclusive planning process to implement master development plans. These plans are aimed at improving the lives of all residents, where the municipality has even taken the step to recognize its pollinators (bees, bats, butterflies, and hummingbirds) as residents of Curridabat, highlighting the need to coexist with nature in an urban setting.

Two of the main goals for Ciudad Dulce are to increase biodiversity in the urban space and to motivate citizen participation. The municipality’s main initiatives are their Spaces of Sweetness (Espacios de Dulzura) and their Transitions (Transiciones) project. In both initiatives multiple participatory workshops were held, for a total of 155 hours of co-designing for the Sweet Spaces project and an overall impact of 21 neighborhoods and 8 corridors that have been redesigned through a biodiverse and participatory lens.

Stakeholders

- Municipality of Curridabat
- Residents of Curridabat
- Local partners
- Government agencies of Costa Rica
- International partners such as Harvard Graduate School of Design, Deltas, and Tandem Arquitectos

Date: Since 2015
Implementation period: 2015 - present
Time life of the project: Varies per project
Achieved/ongoing: Ongoing
Cost: $45,749,324 (combined total of Spaces of Sweetness and Transition projects)
GPS coordinates: 9.91°N 84.03°W
Status of land: Public
Type of place: Urban municipality

"By improving the experience of a honeybee residing in the City of Curridabat, the quality of life of all residents of Curridabat is improved."
- Jimmy Cruz
  Mayor of Curridabat
Target Audience
• The Ciudad Dulce aims to strengthen the connection between the inhabitants of the Curridabat municipality and the pollinators that live in their city. The projects implemented improve the lives of both pollinator and human resident.

Type of Actions
• Citizen participation
• Coexisting in an urban space
• Innovative initiatives/design
• Transformative renewal from gray to green space

Citizen Participation
The projects implemented are led by the Curridabat municipality, but each requires active participation of the Ciudad Dulce residents. While creating the Spaces of Sweetness master plans, over 1,100 citizens attended 400+ hours of participatory design workshops spread throughout 21 neighborhoods in Curridabat. Citizens also participate in the implementation, by helping with landscaping, painting murals, and mapping biodiversity and street infrastructure. In addition, citizens are encouraged to create projects that increase any of the 5 main guiding dimensions of the city’s development: Biodiversity, Infrastructure, Habitat, Productivity, and Coexistence.

Type of Intervention
• Reintroduction of biodiversity (landscaping and infrastructure)
• Mobility/street interventions
• Art interventions

Innovation
• Recognizing pollinators as essential citizens
• Utilizing tactical urbanism principles to create and implement a master development plan for a municipality

Results
Since its start in 2015, Ciudad Dulce has revolutionized the way cities are designed. The ‘Sweet City’ has become an innovative pilot city in terms of combining community empowerment and conservation methods and continues to push boundaries with new projects being planned and implemented yearly. The municipality of Curridabat has attracted international attention and received numerous awards for its creation of Ciudad Dulce; an important achievement that shines a light on the innovative urban development occurring throughout Latin America.

Contact
Irene Gargia Brenes, Director of the Mayor’s Office for the City of Curridabat.
Contact form via municipality website

Resources
• Ciudad Dulce overview PDF: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bd32d6e6669016a6af7e2/t/5c77559e2c483d3ebc174f/1551202139913/Curridabat_Sweet_City_Magazine.pdf
• Municipality website: https://www.curridabat.go.cr/
• Tandem Arquitectos publication: https://issuu.com/arquitectostandem/docs/libro_cd_20180420_low

Katherine Luongo
PROJECT#6

TEETER-TOTTER WALL
CIUDAD JUÁREZ, MEXICO

The Teeter-Totter Wall was installed in 2019 in the USA-Mexico borderlands in the city limits of El Paso, Las Cruces, and Ciudad Juárez. The project consisted of using the international border wall to balance pink see-saws across for people from both sides to play together. The area where the wall is located is not public, but mostly federal and private. The wall delineates a strong social-economic contrast between this area of the Mexican part and the US side.

While the intervention did not have a direct impact on the policies it opposed, it portrayed a counter-narrative to the wall, and brought attention to other connected important issues such as family separation. It also promoted cross border solidarity, and reflected the interdependence of these communities.

"Play can be an act of resistance"
-Virginia San Fratello

Stakeholders

- **Designers:** Rael San Fratello: US based Architects Ronald Rael and Virginia San Fratello
- **Municipality:** Collectivo Choqueque: Omar Rios, coordination in Ciudad Juárez
- **Civil Society:** Ciudad Juárez, El Paso, and Las Curses Residents

**Date:** July, 2019  
**Implementation period:** 30 minutes  
**Time life of the project:** 30 minutes  
**Status:** Achieved  
**Cost:** Under $500 USD  
**GPS coordinates:** 31.784108°N, 106.567522°W  
**Status of land:** Federal & Private Property  
**Type of place:** USA-Mexico International Border
Target Audience

- Residents living close to the border, including those in peripheral areas. The project also considered external audiences at the national and international level as it was highly publicized to send a message of cross border solidarity.

Type of Actions

- Seesaw game across border barrier

Citizen Participation

On the Mexican side, most of the participants came from Anapra, a former unincorporated, precarious neighborhood next to the wall. It was mostly small children and families. On the US side, it was a smaller crowd with some families, and guests, as it’s farther away from residential areas. While participation did not involve a co-design of a physical structure, its collaborative characteristic was the ephemeral participation in the seesaw game otherwise it would not have been possible to carry out the project.

Type of Intervention

The intervention was socially interactive and political in nature bringing together children, adults, and families from both sides of the international border wall to play together.

It served as an ephemeral and experiential symbol to protest against the separation that the wall represents.

Innovation

- Conceptually dismantles the wall.
- Brings attention to local and binational issues: migration policies, family separation, and femicides in Cd. Juárez.
- Illustrates that the border is not an empty place, but a place where people live, thrive, and play. The “borderlands.”
- Metaphorically shows the interdependence of these border communities.

Results

Although the project was only in place for less than an hour, it received worldwide attention. The Design Museum in London awarded the Teeter-Totter Wall the Beazley Design of the Year, one of the design world’s most prestigious prizes. The symbolic meaning of this project is undeniable, it shows that play can be an act of resistance. For the local community, it raised attention to close to home issues, and even if momentarily it reclaimed that border space for the local citizens.

Contacts

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Ronald Rael @ rrael
Virginia San Fratello @ vasfsf
Omar Rios @ colectivo.chopeke

Ilka Vega Tessa Harries

Resources

- Article on the project: https://www.architecturaldigest.in/content/trump-us-mexico-border-wall-architects-seesaw/
- Teeter-Totter Wall description: https://designmuseum.org/exhibitions/beazley-designs-of-the-year/transport/teeter-totter-wall
PROJECT#7

CATALYST CUBE
CARACAS, VENEZUELA

Improving the quality of life of local people, regaining the feeling of ownership over their city and promoting a responsible use of public spaces to make a safer city.

The Catalyst Cube is a reconfigurable social, cultural and educational space that acts as a focal point where different communities meet. It is an accessible intervention placed directly into the existing landscape. Its flexible design is a focal point for the community, a hub for conversation and play, and a way the neighborhood can take ownership of their environment.

Caracas is a city of contrasts, urban and rural, formal and informal, divided by physical and psychological barriers. Among the issues that currently affect the city is the decrease in public spaces for leisure and entertainment, risk of security and violence, compounded by its dense population and deficiency of services. Despite the difficulties, there is hope. By engaging with the city’s fabric the people of Caracas are beginning to make their mark.

Date: Launched in Nov. 2019
Implementation period: Continuous
Time life of the project: >1 year
Achieved / on going: On-going
Cost: British Council, Reframing Spaces Caracas
GPS coordinates: 10°28’50.1"N 66°54’13.0"W
Status of land: Public
Type of place: Urban areas within the city, public spaces in local municipalities/neighborhoods

Stakeholders

• British Council, Reframing Spaces Caracas
• Professional team: British architect Will Sandy, Venezuelan architect Stefan Gzyl, team from Incursiones, LuisRa Bergolla promoter of the CCSen365 urban program and General Manager of the Collectivox Association
• Local partnerships: architecture students from Universidad Central de Venezuela and Simon Bolivar University (to develop early project ideas and their context), citizens (to frame and focus on the positives of the city, sharing their views with the hashtag #FocusCaracas)
• Socio-cultural organizations, artists, cultural promoters, community members
• City, municipalities
Target Audience

- Included citizens with emphasis on local families and children.

Type of Actions

- Green & cultural activations
- Removeable, participative
- Transformational, replicable

Citizen Participation

The project was controlled by the municipality, but had active participation of the local citizens and other stakeholders lasting throughout the entire development process of the Cube. Who was participating varied depending on which specific program was being offered. Overall, the main concept of the Catalyst Cube was participatory, with its design meant to connect people with their immediate environment, while its presence created an instant neighborhood focal point.

Type of Intervention

- Public space/existing landscape intervention
- Social, cultural and educational interventions: gatherings, sports, exhibitions, community events, neighborhood meetings
- Environmental intervention: planting, green roofs

Innovation

- Accessibility, engagement; placed directly into existing landscape to inspire social, cultural & educational exchanges
- Brings nature into the city, connecting people with the public realm
- Green roof grounds the project into the landscape & local climate
- Intrinsic flexibility allows support of a diverse range of activities

Results

In life, there are three places that humans identify with: the home, the workplace and the third place. The Catalyst Cube sets out to be a third, and crucially green, place in the urban landscape. Furthermore, The Cube has ongoing potential to be a moveable and reusable asset for local councils, developers and organizations to adopt and utilize across multiple locations.

Contacts

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Will Sandy
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Resources

- https://amp.issuu.com/landscape-institute/docs/landscape-journal-2020-3-12200/s/10718453
- https://archello.com/project/catalyst-cube
- https://www.britishcouncil.org.ve/arquitectura-dise%C3%B1o-y-modas/cubo-de-caracas
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8WliENZzDek
CONCLUSION & CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

To summarize, various aspects of tactical urbanism were identified while investigating the case of Latin America and working on the individual benchmarks throughout different countries. The aspects range from small-scale and usually low-cost implementation of urban improvements in public spaces or publicly used areas to sending political messages and promoting environmental awareness. Improving safety and comfort for pedestrians and cyclists and providing access to safe and alternative mobility also play a key role as well as bringing people and communities together. The socializing intention of tactical urbanism projects, using participative and bottom-up approaches, and focusing on most vulnerable groups are undeniable.

On the other hand, there are several challenges that come along with tactical urbanism interventions. Participation of local people is not always happening right from the beginning as municipalities or other parties often initiate tactical urbanism projects and take the lead before involving the communities. However, the process of community buy-in can show that the built environment is an interconnected ecosystem in which the smallest of interventions can have ripple effects on social, cultural, and economic conditions as shown in the chosen benchmark examples in this report. Further, unsanctioned, thereby unlawful, road improvements can impose an official legal barrier to change, and organizational challenges can arise in terms of maintenance after interventions have been installed or put in place. Another challenge is presented by the often occurring lack of impact measurements, although comprehensive, data-driven, and evaluative studies can provide critical insights into how people respond to interventions. Moreover, recognizing the actual value of the different forms of tactical urbanism can be a challenge as well. Short-term strategies can solve urban issues in terms of urban mobility, the environment, social in inclusion, and economic development (Steffens, 2013). All of these are and can become challenges with the high rate of urbanization Latin America is experiencing. Nevertheless, this presents opportunities to promote change and long-term impact, and to see what works and what does not.
CONCLUSION & CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

In conclusion, it can be said that tactical urbanism projects in Latin America represent certain values of the Latin American cultures, for example the connection with the environment or resistance in public spaces. Latin America is and will be facing challenges due to increasing urbanization and climate change, and therefore generating appropriate urban solutions is decisive. This, but also municipality-initiated projects, are transforming and pushing the boundaries of what is considered tactical urbanism. Therefore, one should remember that when authorities (top-down) want tactical urbanism interventions to take place, it is essential to ask questions like: In the process of ideation, how can we work with the people to create a level of co-production and authorship to prevent authorities, governments or hired planners from imposing a project on them? How can we make sure the project really is a conclusion that we arrived at together, and that the community feels they can own, because they were there from the beginning? How can we start the co-creation process, especially in communities of minority groups? Hence, listening to the communities and involving them from the very beginning is the answer and highly important in tactical urbanism projects. (Luna Palencia & Ocampo Zapata, 2019; Steffens, 2013)

Green Virus Tranvia. 2016 © Ciudad Creativa
Rionegro Calle Consciente. 2019 © BID Ciudades Sostenibles
How is Latin America using Tactical Urbanism as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic?

Currently, the Covid-19 pandemic has brought even more global attention to the concept of tactical urbanism, as we are questioning our habits, our behaviors, and the way we inhabit the planet. This has encouraged new tactical urban interventions and, for example, the mayors from Latin American cities to get together to discuss, exchange and showcase regional best practices. The following examples show the earlier mentioned transformation of the meaning of “tactical urbanism” in the sense of having hired planners or authorities initiating such urban projects. Again, the importance of finding participative approaches and ways of listening to local communities must be prioritized. In light of the current pandemic, it is important to ask if and how Latin America is using tactical urbanism as a response. Various examples show that it can be a powerful tool to find quick and low-cost solutions to urban problems and have a social impact. Public life has massively been impacted and therefore, cities have begun to repurpose street spaces for people, to make them safer and more accessible (Metropolis, 2020; Vergara Petrescu, 2020).

In Bogotá, streets once dominated by cars are being turned into bike lanes to encourage more cycling, reduce overcrowding on public transport, and to improve air quality. Many kilometers of traffic lanes have been replaced with new bike lanes using low-cost items, such as temporary traffic cones. The same is happening in Mexico City, where tactical urbanism has made it possible to implement 67 km of new cycle lanes using mainly recycled elements. The social response to the new interventions has been very positive. Medellín, for example, understands tactical urbanism as an opportunity to give cities a more human component. For them, tactical urbanism has become the healthiest and most actionable way to be much more proactive in taking action in the region, also in light of plentiful pre-existing challenges. In conclusion, the health crisis taught many lessons and further oriented the compass of urban transformation.
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Pictures and Figures


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