

HealthBridge Vietnam

Hoi An Public Spaces Master Plan: A Public Space Success Story



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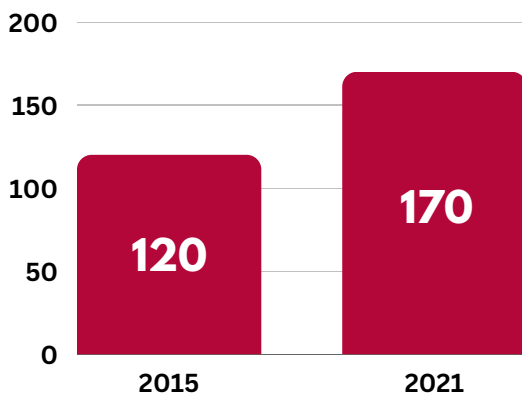
As cities around the world become more urbanized, public spaces become particularly important. UN-Habitat defines public spaces as all places publicly owned or of public use, accessible and enjoyable by all for free and without a profit motive. These include streets, local public markets, parks, public squares, and beaches. Public spaces contribute to good health and well-being, gender equality, and decent work, and are important for climate action. Hoi An, Vietnam is growing rapidly and, with the increase in population, it was important for the city to protect, improve, and establish more public spaces to ensure that all residents have access to and benefit from these places.

Results

In 2015 the city of Hoi An created a Public Spaces Master Plan to increase the number of public spaces and improve the quality of the existing spaces. The public spaces in this plan include neighbourhood parks and community houses, sport and recreation centres, and city parks. The plan was to be implemented over 5 years from 2015 to 2020. In 2015, the city had 120 open public spaces with a total area of 300,000 sqm, which resulted in an area per capita of 2.8 sqm/person. As of 2021, the city now has 170 open public spaces with a total area of approximately 500,000 sqm, resulting in an area per capita of 5 sqm/person. This amounts to a 42% increase in public spaces over five years. Overall, open public space in Hoi An increased by 90,000 sqm, users increased to over 4000 users per day, a variety of new activities were introduced at the sites, and the sites themselves saw improved quality and accessibility.

The impact of this work is that now residents of the city can easily walk to a public space from their homes and this has increased the number of public space users, including seniors and children. In addition, overall awareness of the value of public spaces has greatly increased, which is reflected in the fact that the city continues to work towards establishing more public spaces.

42% INCREASE IN PUBLIC SPACES IN HOI AN



Methods

To achieve this success, HealthBridge Vietnam and its partners initiated several activities:

Research Report

HealthBridge partnered with a local organization called Action for the City on research that increased our understanding of public spaces in Hoi An. The research focused on open spaces, parks, and community buildings. Seven public spaces throughout Hoi An were selected and each of the sites was thoroughly observed. In addition, we conducted a quantitative survey of park visitors and residents and completed a policy review.

Public spaces were found to have important neighbourhood functions. Users often visited public spaces to exercise, to breathe fresh air, meet with friends, and experience peace and quiet. However, the quality of the sites needed improvement. The design and appearance of some of the public spaces, as well as cleanliness and maintenance, were considered to be either just 'fair' or 'poor'. Greenery was considered lacking in some sites. Additionally, over 50% of respondents felt that there were no facilities for children or the elderly. The public spaces also rated poorly for sports facilities. Finally, it was found that the city of Hoi An did not have in place any dedicated guidelines or policies specifically targeted toward public space development within the city.



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Master Plan

As a result of the research, HealthBridge and Action for the City recommended the city develop a Public Space Master Plan that would develop a vision for public spaces within the city. Hoi An agreed this was important work and immediately formed a city team of different government departments to work on the Plan. The support of municipal departments such as the Culture-Sport-Tourism, Urban Management, Resources and Environment, and Finance Departments was crucial to ensure that sufficient resources were available to develop the planned public spaces.



Community Engagement

Community engagement was a key piece of developing the Plan and involved both direct consultations on the plan itself and community pilot projects. With support from HealthBridge, Action for the City and Think Playgrounds, a social enterprise, developed five playgrounds and small parks using a community engagement model in order to better understand the needs and wants of local residents and to learn effective community engagement actions. These pilot models of low-cost playgrounds with community engagement were used as evidence to advocate for policy changes and to raise awareness among the public, media and policymakers in the city. In addition, these pilot projects increased our understanding of the many elements that must be considered to develop playgrounds specific to Hoi An. Key elements that

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became part of the Plan including consulting residents about their needs, guaranteeing access to public spaces by all residents, collaborating with municipal leaders and local authorities, involving the community in constructing the sites and establishing maintenance plans for the playgrounds.

In total over 600 residents and community groups participated in developing the plan. Community engagement increased public support for the project and helped develop a strong Plan with the overall vision to ensure that high-quality open public spaces were easily accessible to all residents. The Master Plan outlined that a city park should be within 3000 metres (m) of residents, commune parks should be within 500 m of residents, and neighbourhood parks should be within 300 m of residents. This would ensure that every resident has access to several public space sites near them.



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Implementing the Master Plan

Once the city finalized the Master Plan, they got to work creating new public spaces throughout the city and improving existing spaces. The City improved the public spaces by adding trees for shade, seating, playground equipment, walkways, flowers, multi-functioning yards, and football pitches. They improved safety and access by adding better lighting, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, traffic signs, and traffic signals. In addition, because the future public spaces were on a map, the City saved those spaces. This is important because in the past that land would be developed for housing or commercial uses.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation for the Master Plan, which was scheduled for 2020, was delayed and instead was conducted in 2021 – 2022[insert year here]. The results of the evaluation showed that between 2015 and 2020, they increased the total number of public space sites in the city to 170 sites, improved the quality and access to public spaces and increased the number of activities that occurred in the spaces. Now, the number of residents using their public spaces increased to over 4000 visits every day.

IMPROVEMENTS:



TREES



SEATING



PLAYGROUNDS



WALKWAYS



FLOWERS

SAFETY & ACCESS:

- LIGHTING**
- SIDEWALKS**
- CROSSINGS**
- TRAFFIC SIGNS**
- TRAFFIC SIGNALS**

Conclusion

The Hoi An Public Spaces Master Plan was an important policy that created more public spaces in the city and improved the quality of public spaces throughout the city. Moving forward the city will continue to update and implement the Plan to ensure that public spaces meet the needs of local residents as the city grows in the years to come. HealthBridge Vietnam continues to support Hoi An to extend its work on public space development. In 2023-2023 they will develop a manual for public space management to ensure that the public spaces remain quality spaces.

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Hoi An Public Spaces Master Plan

PUBLIC SPACES:

Areas that are open and accessible to the public.

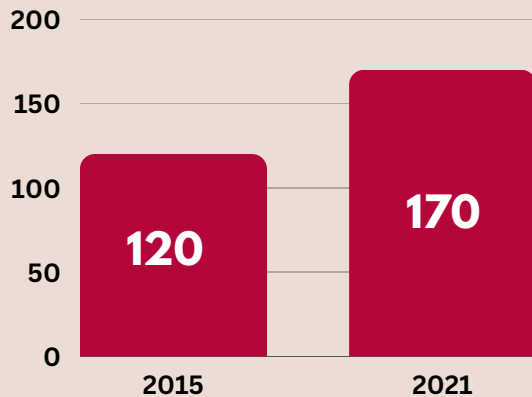
- Includes parks & public squares

BENEFITS:

- Good health & well-being
- Equality
- Decent work
- Climate Action

In 2015, the *Hoi An Public Spaces Master Plan* was implemented, resulting in:

42% INCREASE IN PUBLIC SPACES IN HOI AN



5 PLAYGROUNDS & SMALL PARKS DEVELOPED THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, RESULTING IN:

- Better understanding of needs & wants of local residents.
- Learning effective community engagement actions.

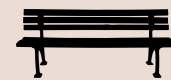
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