

# Redesigning an open street market in Tan Mai Ward, Hanoi

HealthBridge Vietnam promotes environment-friendly livable cities in Vietnam. We envision healthy, happy people living in cities with lots of fun and safe public spaces where people feel attached to their neighbourhoods and neighbours. We envision cities where people can walk and cycle easily with accessible public transit. We envision cities where people will have healthy and nutritious food. And we envision neighbourhoods that are designed to honour our traditional culture of daily life.



Local public markets have played an important role in Hanoi’s communities for centuries and are a key public space. Local markets serve the community in numerous ways, including acting as a main trading centre where people can earn a living, creating social spaces in neighbourhoods for locals to meet and interact with one another and linking rural and urban communities. Local public markets help create healthy environments that encourage healthy eating. In addition, local public markets are important for the livelihood of traders and small local retail business. Local public markets are hospitable for small traders, especially when compared to shopping centres that favour larger businesses. In Hanoi, the local public markets are an important source of employment for women with approximately 75,000 female informal traders in Hanoi.

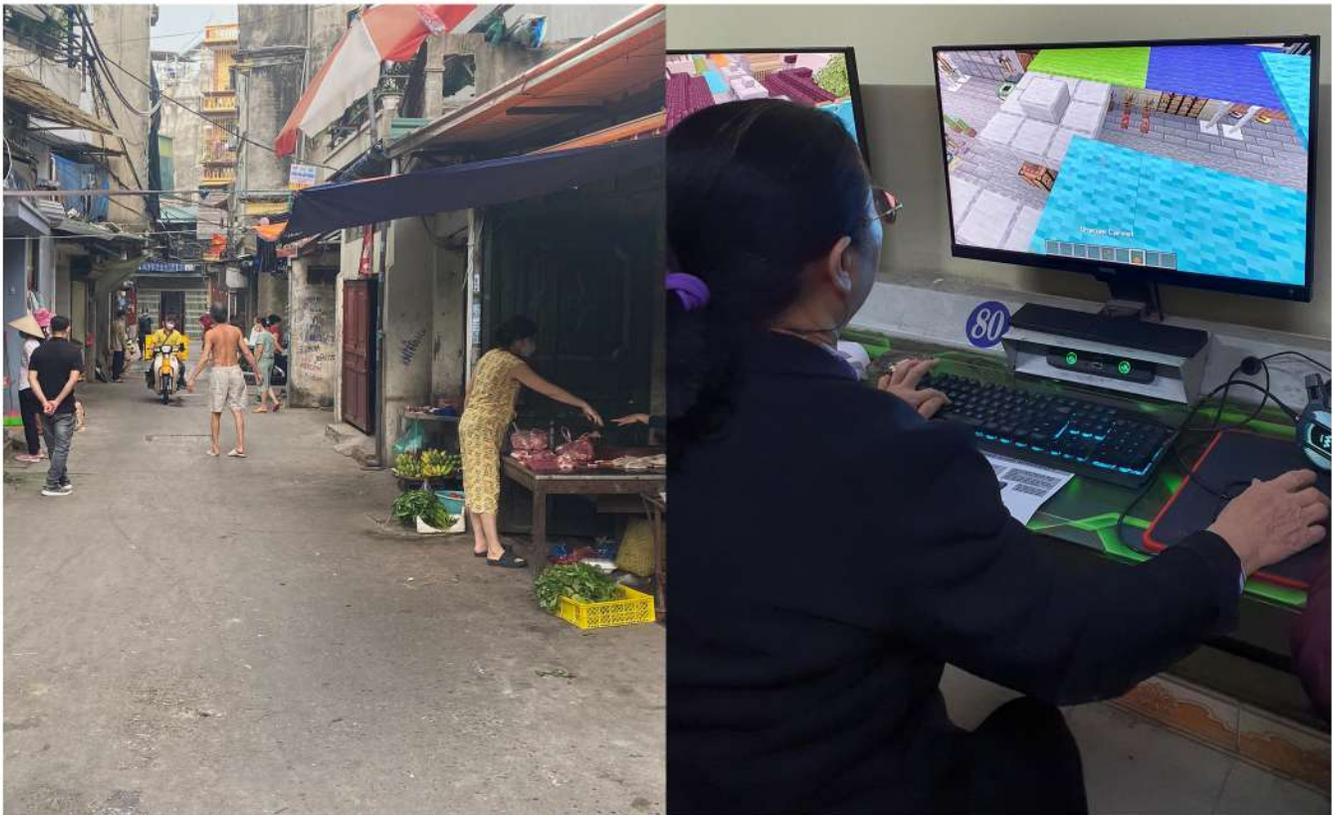
Unfortunately, for many years the city of Hanoi, in an attempt to “modernize” the city, destroyed the local public markets and rebuilt them as commercial centres and shopping malls that favour supermarkets. The result is the disappearance of the traditional markets and the displacement of the informal traders to the street. In Tan Mai Ward the only roofed market available for local residents was rebuilt into a commercial centre with the market underground. This underground market proved to be unpopular with both customers and vendors and now the local people buy their fresh foods at a street market. However, as with most street markets, it was badly organized, under poor management, and unhygienic. With the support of the People’s Committee of Tan Mai ward, we improved the situation by redesigning the open street market to address these concerns and make the street market an inviting public space for the community.



In order to redesign the street we worked with the local authorities, residents, vendors, and partners to create the newly improved street. Our activities included:

- A baseline survey that observed the existing infrastructure and operations along with key informant interviews with 40 vendors and 40 residents.
- Four meetings with partners and the local authorities to identify and prioritize problems to be solved.
- One Minecraft workshop with 23 participants, which included seven vendors and 16 local residents. At the workshop the participants used the program to develop several models for how to improve the street market.
- Newly developed partnerships with COAPS Centre, an organization focused on organic waste, and Rikolto, an organization focused on food safety and hygiene.
- An online consultation with 100 vendors and local authorities to collect opinions on the detailed designs. The consultation was held online due to the social distancing orders at the time.

As a result of our consultation and because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we revised our initial designs to better address the social distancing needed because of the pandemic.



(Tan Street Market before intervention)

(Participant designing street at Minecraft workshop)

## Infrastructure Changes

## Painting Lines:

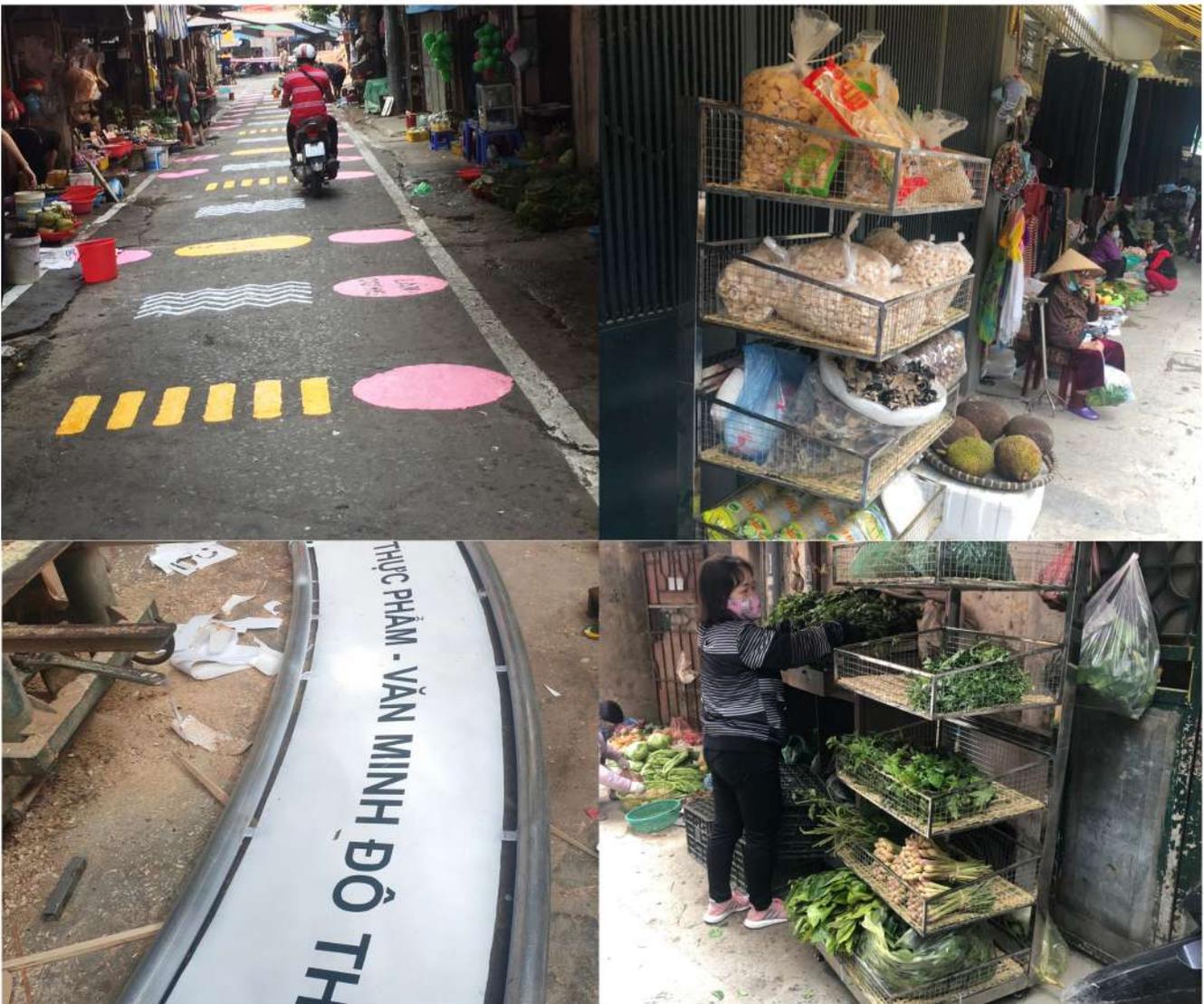
We painted 120 m<sup>2</sup> of pavement of the street market to designate vending areas, organize traffic flows and maintain physical distance between shoppers and buyers.

## Signage:

We developed signage for the market to enhance the customer the experience.

## Mobile Display shelves:

We produced two samples of the mobile display shelves and gave them to vendors to test for one week. After receiving their feedback, we revised the design and produced 25 displays and gave them to the vendors for displaying vegetables, fruits and dried foods. These displays helped to reduce the selling areas of the vendors, which means they do not occupy as much space on the street.



## Results:

In total, 150 vendors, most of whom are women and people living on low-incomes, and 1,500 local residents are benefiting from the newly improved markets. The market provides a cleaner, safer and more hygienic place that is easier to move around in, so people can have access to fresh food.

The response from residents was overwhelmingly positive with many residents commenting on the community Facebook page that they appreciated the changes.

In addition to the changes we made, the Tan Mai People's Committee agreed to use the state budget to improve the drainage system, pave the lane, and move the electricity underground. Unfortunately, due to construction delays resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, these government improvements have not yet commenced. However, continued advocacy by the local project teams will ensure that the changes are made when the lockdowns ease.

Because city officials participated in every step of the project, they have a much better understanding of the participatory approach to developing public spaces and more skills to create well-designed street markets. The Tan Mai Street Market is now a model street market for the rest of the city and HealthBridge Vietnam will work with other local governments in Hanoi to replicate the model.

The project was successful in redesigning a street market that works better for vendors and provides a better, and safer, customer experience. The strong collaboration between HealthBridge and partners and the active participation of the community were the key for the success.

