

# LIVABLE CITIES PROGRAM 2021-2022 REPORT

The project period from March 2021 to February 2022 continued to be challenging due to the COVID-19 restrictions throughout the country. Existing program plans were halted, especially those activities that were focused on community engagement. However, Advocates for Public Space (APS) leveraged the momentum of new policy opportunities to achieve the following outstanding results.



## Open Spaces

The focus of our open public spaces program is to provide universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible green spaces. We focus on marginalized groups such as women, children, older adults, and persons with disabilities.

In May 2019, the Cabinet of Uganda approved the creation of 15 cities in a phased manner over a period of three years. The initial phase operationalized seven cities which include Masaka city, Jinja, Mbale, Gulu, Arua, Mabarara, and Fort Portal City. This provided APS with the opportunity to influence the infrastructure and urban development plans as they are being created, rather than trying to influence after the built environment has already been established. APS, who had previous success studying the availability and quality of open spaces and markets in Kampala, conducted a similar study in all seven cities. With data collection completed in 2021, APS is now finalizing the reports, which will be used to discuss with local city authorities the importance and necessity of equitable public open spaces and the importance of planning for markets.

The Lukuli playground continued to thrive in light of COVID-19 school closures. The Children's Corner, which was refurbished in 2020, is well loved and enjoyed by the public. It was filled past capacity as more than 80 children, accompanied by their parents, are accessing the park each day. In addition, as Lukuli is close to schools, every week the playground accommodates about 2,416 nursery and primary school pupils from 5 schools. The ongoing success of the Lukuli playground continues to demonstrate the importance of micro-spaces and the need to save and construct more of these spaces in slum areas.

APS continues to encourage the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) to create new spaces for urban dwellers to relax, socialize and engage in activity. In 2021/2022, KCCA worked on a new space on Buganda Road, which now has seats, flower gardens, and greenspaces for people to enjoy its beautiful scenery and relax.



## Streets

The aim of our streets program is to advocate and support the development of non-motorized transport (NMT) infrastructure in Kampala to accommodate and ensure the safety of cyclists and pedestrians. Each year, the new NMT corridor in Kampala is being cautiously improved by installing road signs, painting bicycle lanes, maintaining green zones, deploying officers to the area to guide road users, and most recently installation of bicycle racks. These improvements are aimed to ensure the safety, accessibility and social inclusion for thousands of pedestrians, cyclists and people with impaired mobility (wheelchairs). However, more consideration for cyclists must be prioritized in the next phases of the project as currently they must still compete with cars and motorcycles on the roads.

To continue to raise awareness for road safety and NMT, APS, in collaboration with other civil society organizations (CSOs), KCCA, and the Ministry of Works and Transport, organized an open streets event last year. The event was officiated by the State Minister for the Ministry of Works and Transport, the Mayor of Kampala Central Division, along with various other officials. In addition, there was strong student representation from Makerere University, as well as a number of cycling clubs, groups, and individuals around Kampala. The core organizing team consisted of 16 members with strong support from KCCA, Ministry of Transport and Communications, and World Resources Institute. The event promoted cycling in Kampala and the chief guest led a group of cyclists along the NMT corridor that runs from Namirembe Road to Luwumu Street. Other activities included games, showcasing bicycles and safety gear, bicycle repairs, cycling training, and dances. In addition, there were a number of food and other vendors selling their goods. More than 1000 people attended the event and now this new NMT corridor is becoming well used by the local population for various activities such as walking to and from various shopping centers in the vicinity and socialization.

The Non-Motorised Transport Act has proven to be an important first step in creating healthy and car-free methods of transportation in the city. However, for several years the Act was not being effectively implemented. Together with our partners, APS is raising awareness of the importance of active transportation, and these efforts are resulting in the government focusing more efforts on implementing the Act in Kampala.



## Markets

Local markets serve not only as a site for purchasing goods, but also as a centre for community gathering and socialization. Due to COVID-19 our market program was not executed as planned as our community engagement activities could not go forward. Vendors and the government were struggling to ensure that people could continue to access food and so interest was low in making physical changes to the markets themselves. In addition, bomb attacks on the capital in 2021 resulted in the streets being cleared of informal vendors as the government viewed their presence as a potential threat to safety.

However, after the partial opening of the economy, KCCA opened a new market for the informal vendors called Kasubi Market. Kasubi Market, one of the most prominent markets in Kampala, was relocated from a busy, accident-prone area to a residential area where it is walking distance from a large informal community of over 10,000 people. Kasubi market serves as a facility that accommodates 1300 market vendors and allows informal vendors to buy supplies in bulk. Compared to other markets, Kasubi market has a number of improved provisions such as shelters holding vendor stalls, tarmacked roads, concrete drainage systems, an administration block, easily accessible entry/exit points, toilets, clean water access points, and electrical power. APS has been providing support to the government to evaluate the shelters and the ability of the market to control vendor overflow. We are also working on activities related to stall remodelling.

Also during this period, APS supported the Institute of Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) to provide 100 bicycles to Kasubi market vendors, the majority of whom were women, girls, and elderly men. The bicycles serve as a way of promoting sustainable transportation, service provision, and economic empowerment for market vendors to travel to and from work. This was an exciting pilot project that was well received by the vendors and helped us identify the need to address the cycling skills of the vendors and to improve the poor road conditions to the market.

Lastly, our Markets study has resulted in an exciting development related to national policy. The Ministry of Trade, Industries and Cooperatives (MTIC) began to revise the Markets Act 2021 shortly after our report was completed. Ministry staff were very appreciative of our recommendations and for the first time, the upcoming legislation will mandate that a childcare centre be available in every market, which is a direct result of our identifying the number of preschool aged children in the markets. Our work moving forward will be to encourage childcare centres to provide quality play and learning opportunities for the children.



## Conclusion

This year APS, despite the challenges presented by COVID, continued to carry out studies, run pilot projects and raise awareness of the importance of open public spaces, markets, and safe streets. Through our research, we highlighted existing gaps within our community and used projects to demonstrate the ways APS continues to create an appetite and need for services targeted towards equity-deserving groups and continues to support policy development.



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