

# LIVABLE CITIES PROGRAM 2019-2020

## SUMMARY REPORT



### Overview

In the project period July 2019- June 2020, we encountered many challenges to the Livable Cities (LC) program because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which hit Vietnam starting in February 2020, resulting in the second half of the year being impacted. However, as a result of the LC team's flexibility, we were able to continue working closely with our local partners to find solution and initiatives to overcome the challenges presented by COVID-19. By the end of the project year, we were able to achieve several important results:

- We were able to increase the understanding and awareness of Lao Cai City and Provincial Governments on the importance of public spaces. This resulted in a commitment to develop a Lao Cai Public Space Strategy.
- We were able to improve the understanding and awareness of Hanoi authorities and local communities about the ways to improve communities through low-cost initiatives. Activities such as parklets and community gardens resulted in improved community public spaces in Hanoi and now approximately 1000 people use the spaces each day.
- We improved the cycling environment in Hoi An city by developing a pilot public bike sharing scheme. We also improved the cycling safety by creating the Hai Ba Trung - An Bang bicycle route. As of August 2020 there were 400 registered users of the system.
- We improved the understanding and knowledge of staff at the Domestic Market Department about the necessity to preserve and develop urban fresh markets in Vietnam. As a result they are now revising the National Market Policy.

The project's achievements in the past year have created new opportunities for the project team to advocate for livable cities in the next project period.



## Public Spaces:

### *Advocacy for public spaces development in Lao Cai city.*

Lao Cai city is located in the northern mountainous region of Vietnam. We were successful in advocating to the governments of Lao Cai Province and Lao Cai city to issue a decision to develop a public space development strategy for Lao Cai city using the state budget (Decision dated 10/3/2020). To reach this result, the project team and our partner, the Institute of Urban Construction Economic (ICUE), organized a series of meetings and discussions with the provincial government officials to discuss the necessity of public spaces and provide them with best practices and lessons learned from Hoi An. In addition, we worked with Think Playgrounds and local authorities to pilot test improvements of a community public space in Lao Cai city, which attracted more users of all ages and abilities. This was also a model of improving public spaces with community engagement and an example of how low cost and simple interventions can improve public spaces at community level.

However, because of the COVID 19 outbreak, the city had to focus their resources on the pandemic responses and have been unable to start developing the public space strategy. We are hopeful work can begin on the strategy in late 2021 or early 2022.

### **Low-cost initiatives to develop community public spaces in Hanoi:**

During the project period, the HBV team worked with local authorities, the community, and partners to complete designs and physical improvement of five neighborhood public spaces in Tan Mai ward (Hanoi), which was funded by UN-Habitat and Block by Block.



Construction of public spaces in Lao Cai



Construction of public spaces in Lao Cai



Enjoying the parklet in Tan Mai Ward, Hanoi



Through this project, we were able to introduce initiatives such as community gardens and parklets to Hanoi authorities. The initiatives were selected as the Joint Effort Project of the Year, ASHUI (Architecture, Sustainability, Housing, Urbanism, Interior) Award 2019.



Playing in the new playground in Tan Mai Ward, Hanoi



Community helping to build parklet in Tan Mai Ward, Hanoi



**Transportation:**

As a TUMI Awardee, the LC project team supported the Hoi An city Government to implement the Hoi An Bicycle Development Plan. This support included the pilot improvement of cycling safety on Hai Ba Trung road and included the installation of bicycle signal lights, designated bike lanes, and speed management measures. In addition, we developed a public bike sharing scheme, using the TUMI GIZ funds. The COVID pandemic and its aftermaths created many challenges to the implementation of these two activities. The project team was very flexible and creative, keeping close collaboration with partners to overcome the challenges, which resulted in the successful completion of the program.



Photos clockwise: construction on bicycle route, cyclists enjoying bike sharing scheme; bicycles



## Markets:

In November 2019, HBV signed an MoU with the Domestic Market Department (DMD) of the Ministry of Trade and Industry to collaborate and support the development of a national market policy. As a first step, we supported the DMD to conduct research that reviewed the implementation of the current market policy, which helped to identify gaps and where policy revisions are needed. The desk research and interview questionnaires were completed and the interview plan and the site survey will be conducted government restrictions are eased.



Photo of public market; interview with vendor

Despite the challenges the COVID-19 pandemic created towards the end of the project period, the project team was able to implement the project with flexibility, which resulted in the successful completion of the year. We anticipate the 2020-2021 will present similar challenges as a result of the need to social distance. However, these challenges have also created new opportunities for the project team to advocate for livable cities in the next project period.

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