



**Manual for  
Managing  
Public Spaces  
with the  
Community  
in Hoi An**

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*This document was prepared in cooperation  
with the Hoi An Culture and Information  
Department with the hope that it can become  
a document to help localities in Hoi An  
develop quality and effective public spaces.*



*The illustrations depicted in the manual are  
for guidance only.*

*If not stated otherwise, pictures and images  
are provided by ThinkPlaygrounds!*

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# Introduction

## PURPOSE

Well-designed and well-managed public spaces bring communities together. With the right knowledge and resources, community groups can become more actively involved, particularly in underused or neglected spaces, by managing the space themselves.

The purpose of this manual is to guide communities in managing and maintaining local public space to ensure a sustainable, accessible, inclusive, cost effective, durable and friendly environment.

The manual also fits within the UN Sustainable Development Goal 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, and more specifically goal 11.7:

**“By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, particularly for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.”**

## GOALS

- To guide managing community-based public spaces, ensuring community participation in the managing and maintaining phases.
- To create convenient and safe access to public space
- To achieve attractive and vibrant public space
- To achieve good usage and maintenance of public space

## FOR WHO?

If you are reading this, you might be an interested resident, or be part of a local government organization such as a women's union, a District or Ward People's committee, or someone in charge of managing and renovating a public space.







## HOW TO USE

Through this manual, you will gain a comprehensive understanding of the processes involved in co-managing and co-maintaining public space.

The manual is organized in two thematic chapters that allow users to quickly jump to their section of interest.

**The Toolmap p28-29** provides an easy step by step guide to give a complete approach to public space co-management.

Go directly to **p46 for Design Ideas** and references of best practice.

# Part 1 THEORY

## The Importance of Public Space

- WHAT IS PUBLIC SPACE p12
- HOI AN PUBLIC SPACE MAP p16
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& COMMUNITY MANAGED PUBLIC SPACE p22
- WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC SPACE p24

## Part 2 PRACTICE

# Community Action Tools

### ● COMMUNITY ACTION TOOLMAP

- Find common goals
- Who can help
- How to gather information
- How to analyse your information
- How to plan your action
- **Design ideas**
- How to mobilize resources
- How to put your plan in action
- Tips for ensuring maintenance and follow-up

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# **PART 1.**

# **The importance of Public Space**

# What is Public Space

In Vietnam, the government has defined 5 categories of public spaces.

Public space is essential for the wellbeing of everyone in a community. It provides opportunities for relaxation, recreation and socializing, while contributing to a neighborhood's local character and sense of place. Active, safe and enjoyable public spaces draw people to them.



City Parks



Rest areas and playgrounds



Flower gardens



Neighbourhood  
Community  
Cultural Centers



Culture and Sport  
Centers



*Playground in a Community Cultural Center*

Neighborhood centers and playgrounds are physical environments and social places for people to relax, exercise and interact. Located at a short distance from houses, they have an advantage of attracting people on a more regular basis than bigger parks that are further away.

They are the most important for the children and the elderly, who are the most in need of using public spaces and have time for it but have difficulty going too far away from home without support/supervision of others.

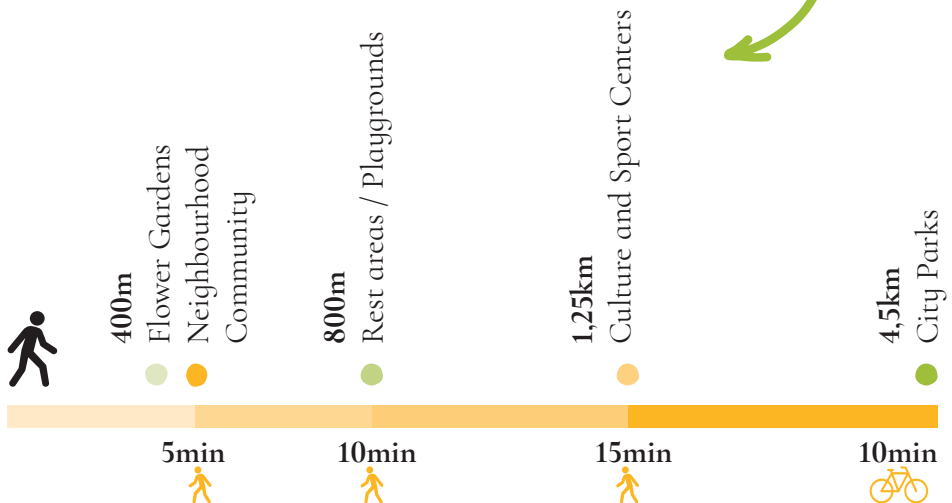
Neighborhood centers and playgrounds form a place that is dear to people living nearby and can create a specific identity for each neighborhood.

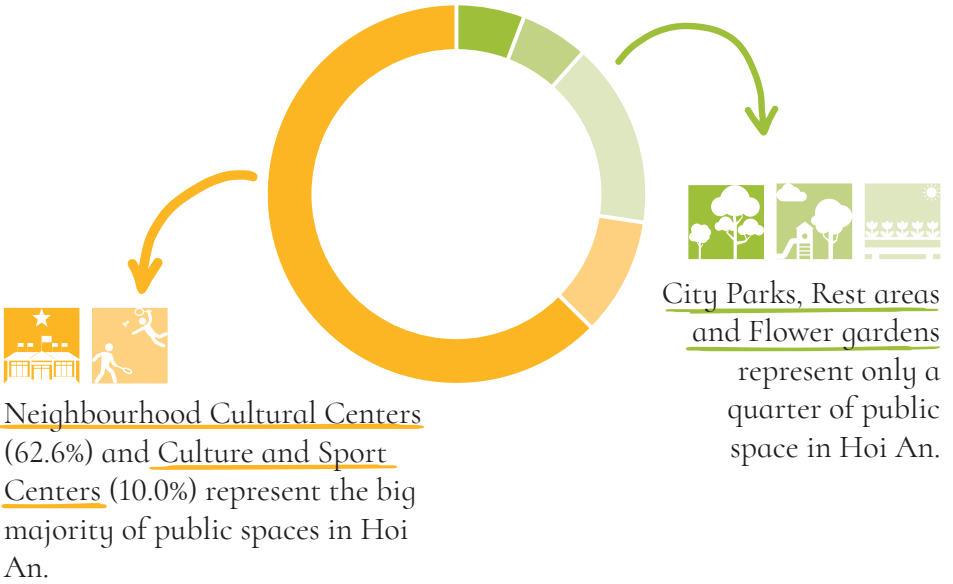


Hoi An Central Park

Service radius of public spaces.

Public space development plan for Hoi An  
2015 - 2020





- City Parks
- Rest areas / Playgrounds
- Flower Gardens
- Neighbourhood Community Cultural Centers
- Culture and Sport Centers

The City Parks are mostly located in the most dense districts of the city (Cam Pho, Minh An, Son Phong, Tan An) and are well cared for (see map on following page).

This manual therefore focuses on Neighbourhood public spaces and neighbourhood playgrounds.

# Hoi An map

The districts of Tan An, Cam Pho, Son Phong, and Minh An (Hoi An city center) as well as Cam An and Cua Dai (on the coast) are part of two regions with abundant investment in public spaces. They are the most densely populated parts of Hoi An, with all the city parks (both existing and planned) and high level of services.

The other districts (Thanh Ha, Cam Ha, Cam Chau, Cam Thanh, Cam Nam, Cam Kim, Tan Hiep) rely mainly on Community Cultural Houses for their provision of public space. They have a relative autonomy in management and maintenance.





+ Existing public space

○ Planned public space

⊕ Case studies

[ - - ] Hoi An administrative boundary

▨ Areas of high population density (high maintenance and investment in Public Space)

# Words used

To help with the understanding of this manual, words that will often be used in the context of Public Space management are defined here.



**A**ccessible: Accessible public space not only means it is within reach for pedestrians, but englobes everything that will make people go there, including how well it is indicated by street signs and information boards, or if there are sidewalks and redlights around, or simply a convenient bicycle parking area.

For accessibility to people with disabilities, see “inclusive”.

**A**dventure playground: Adventure playgrounds are easy to setup and require minimal interventions. They are based on free play and natural elements (soil, water, wood, leaves, native trees).

**A**utonomy: Autonomy in public space management means the community has reached a level of self-organisation that allow it to be less dependant from the city’s decisions and is capable of providing for the needs of its inhabitants.

**B**eneficial loop: A beneficial loop is a system of actions that repeats while constantly

improving.

**C**omfortable: Comfort in public space can relate to many topics.

- Environmental comfort (is the place shaded? well ventilated? cool in the summer?)
- Sensory comfort (is the place too noisy? too smelly? too dirty?)
- Physical comfort (area seating areas enjoyable? Are there enough?)

Does your public space feels welcoming?

**D**IT/DIWO: Do-It-Together or Do-It-With-Others are simple and replicable designs that can easily be achievable with the help of your community.

**D**urable: A durable public space is planned for the long term. It means it will be able to keep its qualities and positive aspects for several years. In order to be durable, public space requires good planning and good management.

**I**nclusive: Inclusive public



space is accessible to all. Not only physically accessible for a wheelchair, but also though for all genders, age groups and disabilities like hearing or vision impairment. The more inclusive your public space, the more diverse it will be, and the more accessible it will become.

**Resilient:** Resilient public

space describes the ability of public space to adapt to the changes of the future (including environmental or economical changes)

**Resources:** Resources include anything that you might need for the maintenance of your public space. Resources can be financial, material, or immaterial like knowledge or experience in a particular field.

**Safe:** Safe public space not only relates to traffic safety or criminality but also ensure reducing risks for accidents on play equipment for example, and clear visibility for community surveillance.

**Waste management:** Waste management includes any measure that can be put in place to reduce waste disposal in public space. Installation of public trash bins, as well as negotiations with the city's trash collectors or the *Đông Nát* is also part of waste management.

**Social engagement:** All the ways users of different groups (age, gender, or ethnicity) interact in the public space



# The importance of Play & Community managed Public Space

Creates a sense of comfort

- Visually pleasing
- Feeling of freedom
- Better environmental quality

Creates social interactions

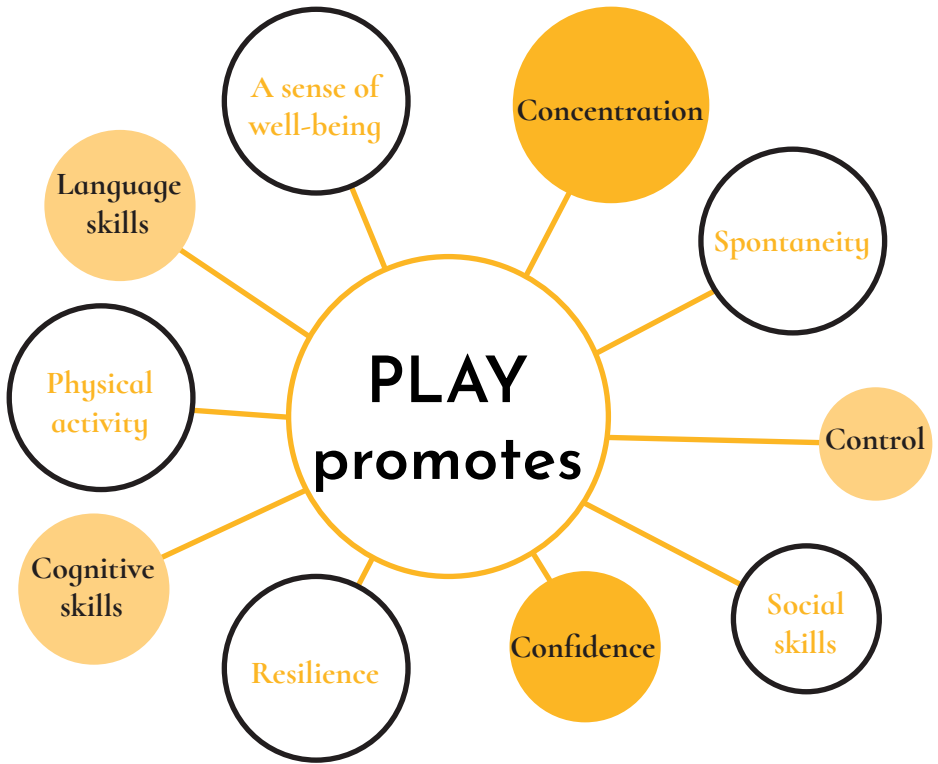
- Economic opportunities
- Community creativity
- Meeting place

Promotes health

- Physical activity
- Access to fresh food
- Stress reducing

Creates a sense of community

- Self-managing = less municipal control
- Sense of pride
- Better community organisation



# What makes a **successful** Public Space

Many different aspects make a successful public space.

In Hoi An, communities could have a big impact on some of them, greatly improving the quality of the public space by satisfying these 3 simple key elements:

- Diversifying activities through installation of DIY equipments like playgrounds or community gardens.
- Cleanliness of the space through trash management.
- Accessibility through information boards and street signs.

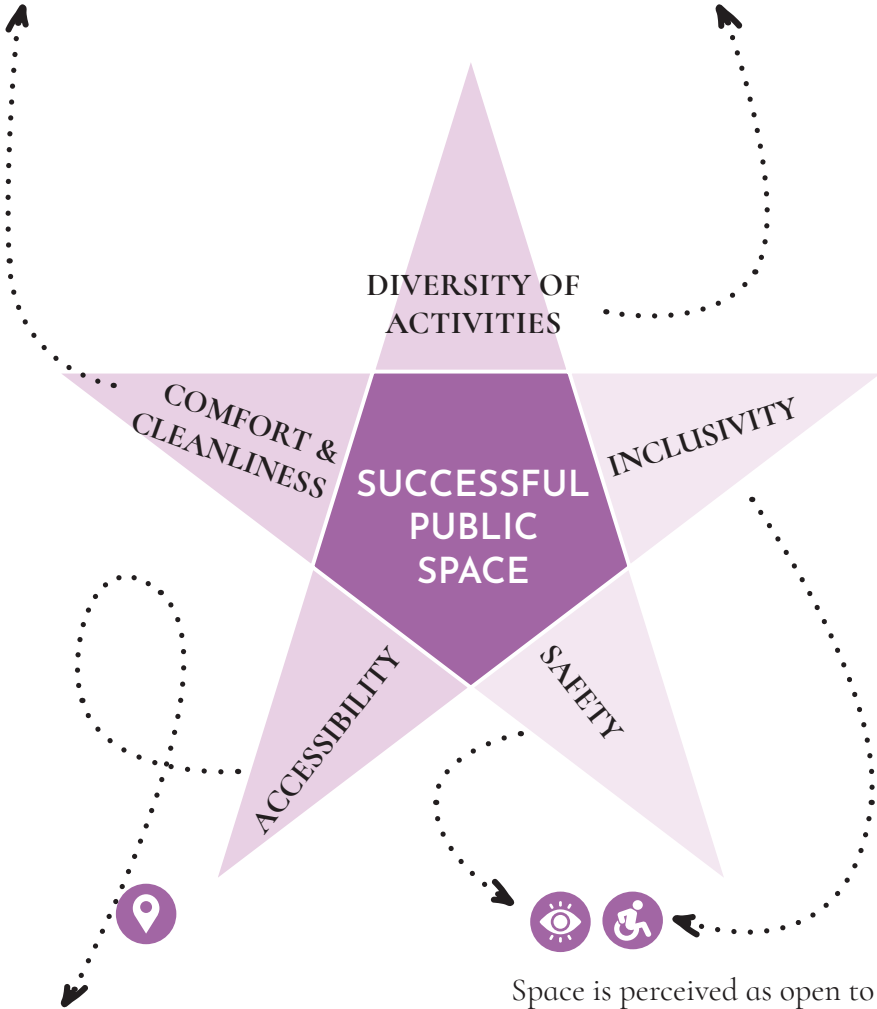




Users feel comfortable in the space designed at **human scale**. Proper maintenance and cleaning are also essential to quality public space.



Public space encourages users to move and spend time in it. **Generating feeling of identity that reinforces social cohesion with different activities.**



People living & working around the site can **access it easily** and use it regularly.

Space is perceived as open to all. It accommodates the needs and **interests of various types of users**. A space for all also means a **safer** space because no one is excluded.



**PART 2.**  
**Community**  
**action tools**



# Community action tools



What are the common goals  
p.30



Design ideas  
p.46



plan

Develop a plan  
p.44

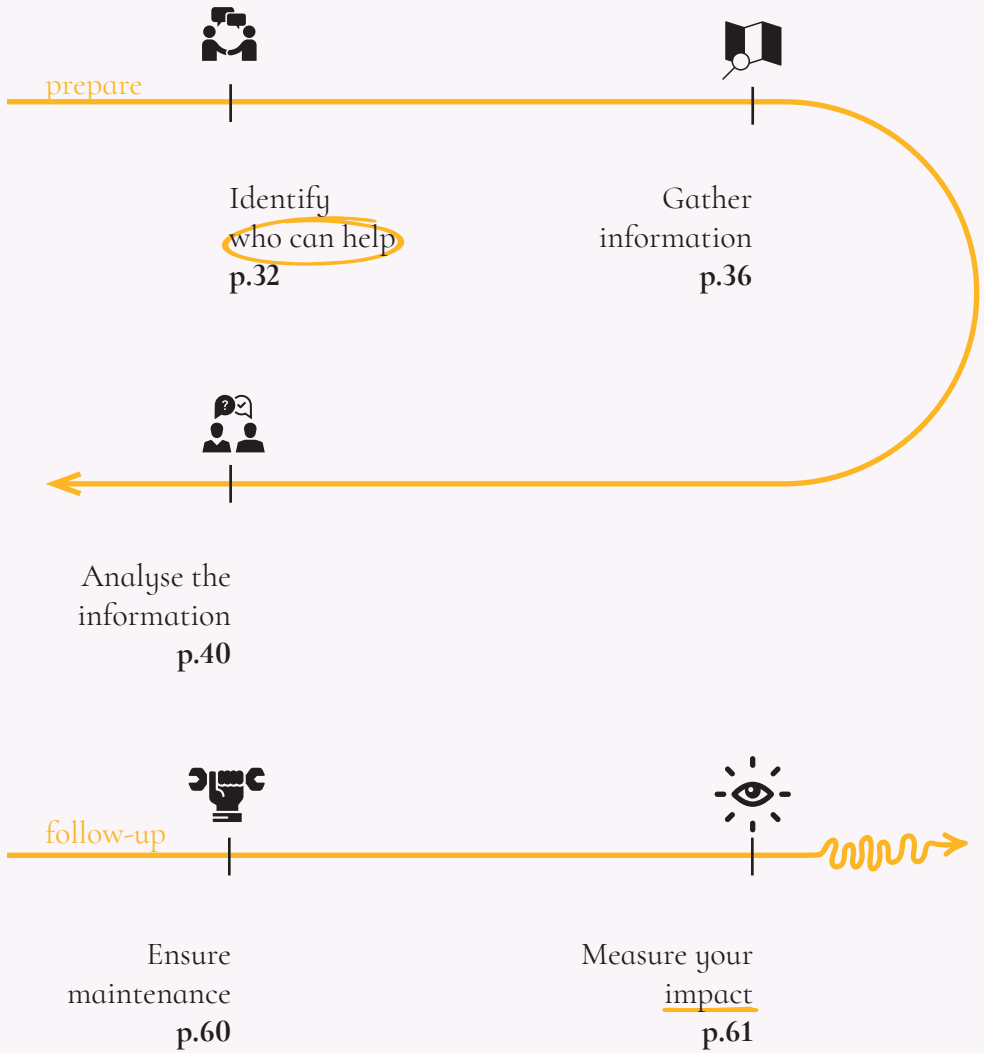


Mobilize resources  
p.56



Put plan in action  
p.58



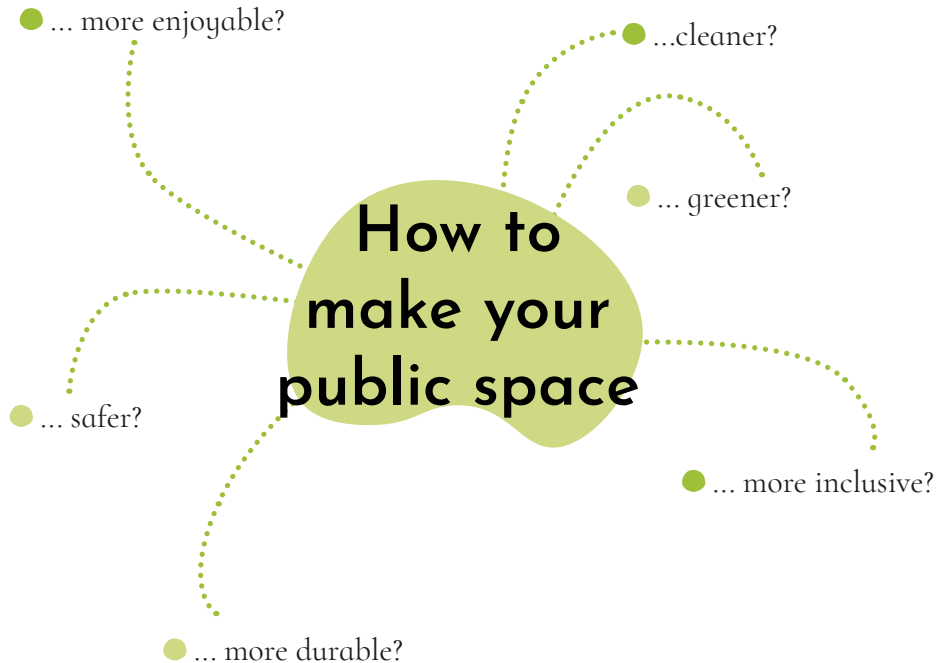


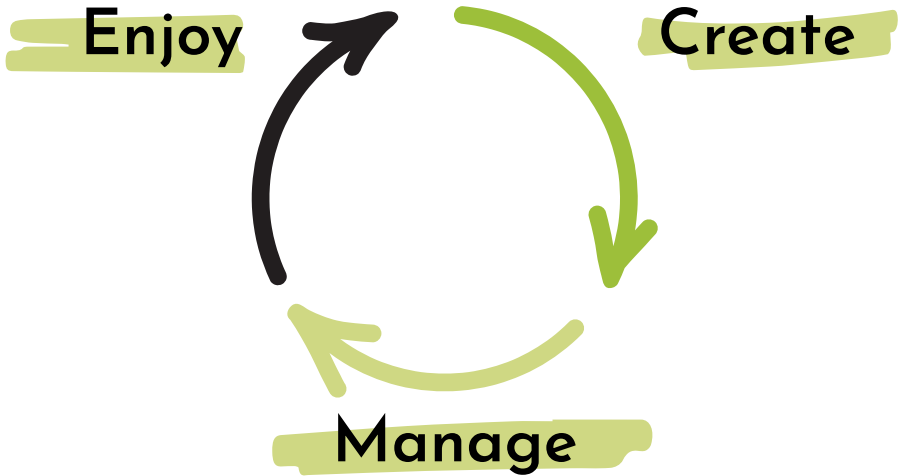


# Find common goals to a successful Public Space

## CHALLENGES

Ask yourself, what are the main problems standing in the way of quality public space in Hoi An and which problems can be addressed by your community.





## GOALS

By being involved in the creation process you will enjoy public space more!

Gain an interest in managing and taking care of your public space, give it a sense of ownership that will make the space more enjoyable for you and your family.

**It is a beneficial loop.**



## Who can help

This tool helps to find out who can support your community initiative. Who are the actors that can participate and how.

With the help of the following pages, try fill in as many names as you can and write down in which way these people can help your community project.



Government

Community



Maintenance of Neighborhood  
Public Space in Hoi An



Sponsors



# Who can help...

## Unions

In the community

Neighbours  
Informal trash collectors

in the Government

Hoi An cultural department

Sponsors  
Banks

Tourists

outside of the  
community

Private Donor

Local businesses

Social enterprises & NGOs

ThinkPlaygrounds!

Healthbridge

Try fill in as many names as you can and write down in which way these people can help your community project.

# ... and How

Donations

Money

In-kind

Planning

Knowledge

Resources

Materials

Labour

Management

Experience



Is there someone missing for a specific task...?



“I live on the other side of the street. I come here everyday to exercise my legs and have a chat with the neighbors. The kids really like this place because of the abandoned building; they can explore inside, and climb on the roof. It is made of palm leaves so it stays agreable and cool despite the heat. It’s much more fun there than on the hot metal playground under the sun”

*A resident of Cẩm Thanh*





## Comfort & Image

|                          |   |   |   |   |   |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall attractiveness   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Feeling of safety        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Cleanliness              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Comfort of places to sit | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Access & Linkage

|                                    |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Visibility from a distance         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ease in walking to the place       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Clarity of information and signage | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Ease of access for wheelchairs     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Uses & Activities

|                               |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mix of activities             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Frequency of activities       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Overall busy-ness of the area | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Economic vitality             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

## Sociability & Interactions

|                                  |   |   |   |   |   |
|----------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| People gathering in groups       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Evidence of volunteerism         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Sense of ownership               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Presence of children and seniors | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |



# Analyze

The football lawn is clean and separated from the volleyball court by a seating area that doubles as resting spot and parking zone. The kids playing there are separated from the older men playing on the court but still visually connected.



Highlight the positive and negatives aspects gathered in the previous pages.  
Find out what you should improve.



Efficient public light makes the space usable during the evenings.



The trash bin is damaged and not used. The location of the trash bin behind the playground makes it difficult to access and to see from far. It is inconvenient and therefore not used properly.



The new metal playground on the foreground is empty, as young teenagers prefer to play on the roof structure of the abandoned building on the back. It gives them a sense of privacy as well as being more stimulating because of the risk and unpredictability.





Public furniture is placed in an unuseful way, it is damaged and its location does not help maintenance and proper use. Basic amenities such as waste bins or public toilets are also lacking.



Trash and rubbish are still common occurrence after school when kids come to the space for snacks. Lack of rubbish bins and proper signage does not help maintaining the place clean for all users.





# Plan

Clearly map out what you want to achieve in the public space and what resources you will need.

The plan should also include a clear budget and how you plan to finance it.



## MAIN TOPICS FOR YOUR PLAN

- Trash management
- Information board
- Increase accessibility
- Diversify activities
- Equipments
- Greenify



Find some design ideas in the following pages...





# Design Ideas

- Trash management
- Information board
- Increase accessibility
- Diversify activities
- Equipments
- Greenify



## ● TRASH MANAGEMENT

Trash management is an important part of public space maintenance. A well-located trash bin will make a big difference in how the space is perceived by users.





## TIPS

Below some simple DIT design changes can help improve trash management and raise awareness among young public space users in a playful way.

- Normal trash bins are for the official trash collector system, but classified trashbins can be installed for Đồng Nát.
- The classified trash bins should focus on urban trash which is usually thrown like snack plastic packaging, cans, or glass bottles.
- Make sure there are always some trashbins visible and accessible to make it easy for trash collectors.
- Organize picking trash days with users: the unions or community leaders could lead the events.
- Using professional tools and outfits (like bags, pick-up tool, yellow jackets...) can attract other users to join (such as social enterprises like Keep Vietnam Clean or tourists and passerbys).



# Design Ideas

## ● INFORMATION BOARD

Information boards also help raising awareness about issues concerning public space. They can describe rules and good behaviour but also general

informations such as names of plants, sponsors of a particular equipment, opening hours or guidelines for self-maintenance.



## TIPS

- Raise awareness of plastic wastes with fun or interactive info boards. Youth union or women union can paint the informations on the wall activities.
- The info board could also advertise and show others the process undertaken by your community to manage your public space.
- Such boards work as great communication tools that in turn will attract more interest and investment by all.



Examples of information boards



# Design Ideas

## ● INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY

### TIPS



- Examine if the gate, the road, the relaxing areas are accessible for people in wheelchairs or crutches.
- Inclusive playgrounds for kids with disabilities could provide some very simple equipments.
- The best way to know what disable groups need (blind, hearing impaired, wheelchairs...) is to find them and ask them!

LET'S MAKE OUR  
PUBLIC SPACE LIVELY  
AGAIN!



## ● DIVERSIFY ACTIVITIES

### THE POWER OF 10

A great place needs to have at least 10 things to do in it or 10 reasons to be there. It's really a matter of offering a variety of things to do in one spot – whose quality as a place then becomes more than the sum of its parts.

### ACTIVITIES & SPACES



Community garden  
Meeting point for elderly  
Hide and seek  
Playgrounds for different age groups  
Balance structures  
Sandbox  
Football field  
Picnic  
Cycling  
Relaxing, seating area  
Exercise for youngs, for elders  
Neighbourhood surveillance  
Privacy while being connected  
Bicycle parkings  
Green areas  
Shaded areas

...



# Design Ideas

## ● EQUIPMENTS

- Climb and balance equipments
- Slide and swing equipments
- Loose part play
- Elderly equipments
- Resting areas
- Bicycle racks

## ELDERLY EQUIPMENT

Parrallel bars are useful for exercises. But sometimes even just painting a chessboard on a bench can be enough for elderly to gather.



## CLIMB AND BALANCE

Ropes, nets, and car tires are easy materials to find and can quickly become challenging play structures for kids.





## RESTING AREAS

DIY benches can also include planters to provide greenery and shade when seated.

## SLIDE AND SWING

Just a few wood planks can make a slide. Car tires are also suitable to hang with a rope or chain from a tree and make a swing effortlessly.



## BICYCLE RACKS

Easy bicycle rack designs will help you locate parking areas and avoid bicycles be parked anywhere on your public space.



# Design Ideas

## ● INCREASE GREEN

green-ify your public space has many advantages and qualities.

The community garden not only contributes to creating a green space, but more importantly, it is a space where local community connects and discovers sustainable practices like organic composting or local varieties of plants.

The gardens are also a sustainable solution to reduce air pollution, regulate the temperature (reduce the surface of concrete), and absorb excess water in the rainy season.

By managing the garden according to sustainable methods, it also contributes to raising awareness about choosing more healthy and natural food for themselves and their families.



## TIPS

- With the help of a local union (women's union, gardener's union for examples...), choose local plants and species that are easy to take care of, easy to grow, and that provide benefits such as edible vegetables or medical herbs.







# Mobilize resources

- How to find resources
- Who to ask for what
- What can you do to raise money

## IDEAS & TIPS

- **Organize a fair like a fresh market with local products!**
  - You should connect with small business in your neighborhood that provide healthy and environmentally friendly local products.
  - The community fund raised has to be fully public and transparent.
- **Organize fundraising workshop with your local leaders, government and users!**
  - Use placegame to identify the wants and needs .
  - Identify your target audience for fundraising .
  - Fundraisers should be cheap, fast, local and plan for long term repeatability (like a frequent market).



*Example of community led fundraising event  
ThinkPlaygrounds!*



● **Hoi An tourism industry could also help a lot!**

● Try reach out to tourist agencies or tourist volunteer donation and support for construction.

● **Ask!**

Some things like concrete flooring or stone benches can quickly and easily be asked from the local government.

● **Crowfund!**

Momo is a wonderful platform with 99% success rate. You will need the help of a legal entity such as the Women's Union to provide a good written case with photos and budget estimation. Please not you can only fundraise for 20-30% of the total budget through Momo.





## Action

- Organize the schedule of work and make sure the tasks are followed-up.
- The vision, goals and objectives of the public space plan should be clear.





**Example of Community garden  
in 279 Doi Can, Hanoi.**

From community planning to site  
cleanup, planters constructions  
and garden setup.





## Ensure maintenance

How to make sure your public space stays clean and well managed.

### TIPS

- Set up a management board of the public space. The board members should be directly involved as users and should have at least one local government representative.
- Make sure the board has contacts with the manufacturers of equipments to call for warranty or ask for replacement (VietPhap, Merry Land or ThinkPlaygrounds for example).
- Get contacts of local workers who can help fix and build small things when necessary. (thợ gỗ, thợ tre, thợ nề, thợ cơ khí...)
- Setup a zalo group (with a QR code on the information boards for example) so that any user can join,

to discuss the space situation, join activities and events, or support punctually...

- Build a community fund for maintenance: This fund can be used for minor repairs as soon as they are reported to avoid unsafe use and larger damages.





# Measure your impact

● You can easily reuse the tools you used to gather data from pages 38-39 and measure your impact by re-assessing the quality of the public space one year after its implementation.

This will help you understand what worked best in your process and what you will need to improve in your next action.



| Section                               | Item                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Comfort &amp; Image</b>            | Overall attractiveness             |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                       | Feeling of safety                  |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                       | Cleanliness                        |   |   | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|                                       | Comfort of places to sit           |   |   |   | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Access &amp; Linkage</b>           | Visibility from a distance         |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                       | Ease in walking to the place       |   |   |   | 4 | 5 |
|                                       | Clarity of information and signage |   |   |   | 4 | 5 |
|                                       | Ease of access for wheelchairs     |   |   |   | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Uses &amp; Activities</b>          | Mix of activities                  |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                       | Frequency of activities            |   |   |   | 4 | 5 |
|                                       | Overall busy-ness of the area      |   |   | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|                                       | Economic vitality                  |   |   | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| <b>Sociability &amp; Interactions</b> | People gathering in groups         |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                       | Evidence of volunteerism           |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                       | Sense of ownership                 |   |   |   | 4 | 5 |
|                                       | Presence of children and seniors   |   |   |   | 4 | 5 |



**3.**

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