Co-designing PLAY
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CREATING RESILIENT CITIES
THE ROLE OF PLAY IN PLANNING

Cities on the Frontline Speaker Series #7
Resilient Cities Network & the World Bank

May 2022
Build back better
Beirut, Lebanon
Karantina neighbourhood
Badly damaged home in Karantina, August 2020

Karantina public garden, August 2020

Karantina public garden, August 2020
Co-designing public spaces in Beirut
Handbook

Co-designing built interventions with children affected by displacement (DeCID)

unicef for every child
UN-HABITAT FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE
CATALYTIC ACTION
THE BARTLETT
• **Empower children** and have a lasting positive impact

• **Improve social cohesion** between refugee and host communities, and within the refugee community

• **Have a positive impact on the local economy**, build capacity and provide employment

• **Deliver better infrastructures** for children and their communities
• They require professionals from different fields of specialization to work together and often organizational structures do not make these collaborations easy

• Their additional value is difficult to measure, especially on the long term

• They require a larger initial investment compared to the funds required only for the built product

• They often present multiple operational challenges, including some linked to safeguarding, which prevent many organizations from taking on such projects
Designing with children

Procurement and building

Post building, impact and sustainability
Visioning Play
Visioning activity developed by CatalystAction

Visioning Play is an activity in which participants’ memories of play spaces are activated in order for them to create visions of their desired future playground, expressed through art making. Children affected by displacement might not have had opportunities to play in play spaces, or might have experienced traumatic events such as the loss of friends and family members, the destruction of their homes or other spaces where they used to play. A guided visualization led by the facilitator can engage participants’ imagination as they explore their childhoods, in order to draw on and reach new skills.

Tip: Throughout the session, be sensitive to the children’s contextual situations, and conscious of images you choose to associations they might trigger and how you discuss. Images that are associated with memories of war such as destruction, small rooms, and loud sounds may cause traumatic memories to resurface in children who have experienced displacement. It is helpful to have a professionals support.

Preparation:
- Write down the guided visualization you will share with the participants. The guided visualization will walk them through a vehicle that transports them anywhere they would like to be. Practice your guided visualization, bringing awareness to your voice, pace, breath, pauses, and choices of words. Use a remix recording device or ask a friend to give feedback and suggest areas for improvement.
- The quality of your performance will significantly affect the participants’ ability to go far with your imagination.
- For college art-making activity, print out or collect images that show textures you may find in different spaces. For example, textures of grass, flowers, forest, concrete, asphalt, bricks, tile, etc. This can suggest the participants’ preference for material used in the space. Avoid using preconceived images of objects, buildings or people, as these will be drawn by participants for a more personal expression.
- Prepare a rating college of your vision, a world you would like to play in, as an example and reference for participants.

Step by Step
Part One: Visualization Journey
- Introduce the participants to your project, such as who the team is, how you work and what it takes to build a playground. Explain that in this activity, they will be working in smaller groups to help visualize the built design.
- Inform participants that you will be telling them a story.
- Ask them to close their eyes and rest their heads on their desks throughout the story, in order to see it in their minds.
- Begin your guided visualization.

Part Two: Creating
- Introduce the participants to the collage/drawing technique that would allow them to visualize the world they have imagined and how they would be playing in their worlds.
- Share the artwork you have prepared about your imaginary world as a reference.
- Divide the participants into groups, as needed. Distribute a set of materials to each group and ask them to begin creating their play space.
- Go around the groups to interact with them about their artwork.
- When the participants have completed their designs, set up a gallery walk as described in the "Wind down" template in order to have a discussion about the work.

Notes on the guided visualization:
- Notice that the participants are guided from concrete images gradually into the world of their own. Begin with imagery that references the room you are in, for example, your bedroom or hallway, then have participants get out.
- Describe the activity in detail so it helps participants begin to visualize and imagine their playgrounds reality. You may choose a machine, a big balloon, a butterfly, etc. Preferably something that can fly and reach unexpected places.
- Ask questions to trigger images of different possible places, and keep it open to invite their own ideas.
Since the 1994 conflict in Rwanda where Shigeru Ban was a consultant for the United Nations, he has provided humanitarian design as part of relief projects for victims of mass displacement, tsunamis and earthquakes. ‘Paper Log Houses’ are temporary shelters implemented for the first time after the Kobe earthquake in Japan.

The general construction logic is based on the use of prefabricated, eco-friendly, inexpensive materials which are either locally available or recycled, and which can be dry-assembled without the aid of skilled labour. The units do not impact the soil, are easy to dismantle, and the materials can be disposed of or reused.

The basements of these houses are made from recycled beer crates filled with sandbags. Paper tubes are used as load-bearing elements for the floor, walls and roof, while the floor surface is composed of plywood panels. Waterproof sponge is sandwiched between the paper tubes for insulation, and a tenting material covers the roof structure.

Over time, this configuration was adapted to different contexts in Turkey, India, Philippines, and Ecuador, always following the same principles. The result is a shelter of reasonable quality that respects the environmental context, reduces waste materials and saves resources.

This project reduced vulnerabilities and improved the wellbeing of the community in Bar Elias through a co-produced built intervention implemented by local refugees and host community members.

The two main issues identified by the local participants were pollution and the lack of safe spaces for children. The team decided to tackle pollution through awareness raising, while the lack of children’s spaces was addressed directly. They introduced playful elements to new benches, pavements, access ramps and shading structures for the area.

To raise awareness about reducing pollution, the team decided to use recycled materials in the different components that formed the intervention. By choosing colourful materials this also addressed the need to provide colours, which is something that the community saw as important for children. The use of recycled materials has an educational function; it concretely shows how to creatively reuse waste materials to address the needs of children and their caregivers.

Discarded tiles were collected from a local factory and recycled to produce educational mosaics that cover the benches. Plastic bottles and containers (water, shampoos, yogurt boxes, etc.) were collected by the local community and transformed into small squares that form colourful shading structures (see picture). Similarly, plastic cups from large yogurt containers, vegetable crates and ice-cream cups were assembled into other shading structures, generating colourful and playful shadows.
Designing with children

1. Generating an idea
2. Building partnerships
3. Funding
4. Researching local context and needs
5. Translating children’s ideas into design solutions
6. Selecting the intervention location
7. Choosing materials, skills and technologies
8. Technical design
9. Procurement and management of building works
10. Practitioners and communities building together
11. Activation, ownership and management
12. Maintenance and follow-up
13. Impact and evaluation
A vision ...                   ... becomes reality!