Quality Urban Public Space for Quality of Life

Ming Zhang
Urban Practice Manager, South Asia
Social, Urban, Rural and Resilience Global Practice
The World Bank

Public spaces: a basic need for cities

Economic Value
- Increased economic vitality
- Reduced public expenditure on healthcare, urban management
- Higher property prices
- Attracted human capital
- Increased business confidence...

Social Value
- Improved quality of life
- Increased both real and perceived security and safety
- Promoted social equality and stability
- Increased cultural vitality
- Social integration and civic pride...

Environmental Value
- Reduced pollution (air, noise, water)
- Increased ecological diversity
- Reduced energy consumption...

Source: World Bank Staff
Public Space is Important for People
Sustainable Development Goals

- **Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

- 11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

**Public Space as Catalyst for Slum Upgrading**

*Source: Kibera Public Space Project*
Integrating blighted areas into the cityscape

- **Vietnam Urban Upgrading Project**
  - $222 million loan
  - Improving environmental conditions of urban poor through participatory planning methods
  - Infrastructure improvements in >200 low-income areas, roads, street lights, health school and community facilities.

Taking stock of World Bank projects on public spaces

- World Bank urban sector projects often associated with basic services and infrastructure; improvements to public spaces not always apparent

- Many urban public space upgrading investment loans are typically part of larger projects, varies by region

- Range from simple street pavement improvements to more comprehensive and integrated urban planning approaches
Basic services and neighborhood walkability

- Kabul Municipal Development Program
  - $100 million grant.
  - Municipal upgrading include roads and drains, culverts, footpaths, street lighting, community parks, solid waste collection points and water supply.

Restoration of heritage buildings and enhancing the public realm

- Punjab Municipal Services Improvement Project
  - USD 50 million investment;
  - Mainly to improve the viability and effectiveness of urban services of local governments;
  - Also supported restoration of historical heritage areas in Walled City.
Upgrading of major urban public spaces contributes to inclusive local development and economic growth
- case: Colombo Municipal Town Hall Area and Victoria Park Rehabilitation

Improvement of “Urbanscape”- inclusive urban public spaces
- case: Colombo Municipal Town Hall Area and Victoria Park Rehabilitation
Improvement of “Urbanscape” - inclusive urban public spaces  
- case: Beddagana Wetland Park, Sri Lanka
Making Public Space for People

- Quality public space for quality of life
- Design public space for people
  - Walking and biking
  - Life between buildings

Making Quality Public Space for People

- Trees provide shade
- Clearly defined street scape
- Pedestrian walk zone
- Flexible space for staying/selling activities
- Wide, paved bicycle lane with protecting curb
- Two-way dirt car road

Source: Gehl Associates
Thank You