

# Streets for Kids

Program Components  
and Impact



Global  
Designing  
Cities  
Initiative





# About Global Designing Cities Initiative (GDCI)



As one of the world's most influential urban design organizations, the Global Designing Cities Initiative (GDCI) was founded in 2014 by **Janette Sadik-Khan**, with the mission to transform streets around the world. Our award-winning **Global Street Design Guide** has been endorsed by over 130 cities, regions, and organizations across the globe and has been downloaded over 113,000 times in nine languages.

Our team works directly with cities to inspire leaders, inform practitioners, and invite communities to imagine what's possible when we design streets that put people first.

Together, we are reimagining streets to shape cities that are safe, healthy, accessible, and equitable for everyone.

Streets for Kids is one of GDCI's core programs, focusing on transforming streets into places where kids can move, play, and spend time - to improve their health, safety, and wellbeing. We have collaborated with over 60 cities across the globe to deliver child-focused street redesigns, build local capacity, implement projects on the ground, and catalyze systemic policy changes, based on the principles and best practices from our award-winning **Designing Streets for Kids** Guide.

## Why Streets for Kids?

Nearly a third of the four billion people living in urban areas today are children. By 2050, almost 70% of the world's children will live in urban areas. The WHO estimates that 99% of the global population currently breathe polluted air, over 80% of adolescents don't get the recommended levels of physical activity, and road traffic fatalities are the number one killer of young people, ages 5-29. All stark reminders that decisions around how we shape our cities and streets can literally be a matter of life or death.

Streets can determine whether a family has safe and equitable mobility choices, access to critical services, and healthy spaces to play, learn and grow.

We know that the built environment greatly impacts children's earliest years, shaping their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. More specifically, streets offer a primary network of open space to foster social interaction, encourage physical activity, and improve mental health. By focusing on the particular needs of our children, and involving them in the process along the way, we can ensure our streets are not only safe and accessible, but that they are comfortable and convenient, with opportunities to learn and feel inspired each day.

**Streets for Kids can ensure our children not only survive, but can also thrive.**

### ROAD SAFETY

#1 cause of death of kids ages 5-29  
500 daily traffic fatalities



### AIR POLLUTION

127,000 children under the age of 5 die each year from outdoor air pollution worldwide.



### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

81% of adolescents (age 11 to 17) worldwide are insufficiently physically active.



### CLIMATE

Children born in 2020 will experience 6.8 more heatwaves.



# Benefits of Designing Streets for Kids

## SAFER ACCESS TO SCHOOL

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death constituting 1 in 10 of all children among young people around the globe, and these crashes usually happen near schools. Lack of safe pedestrian infrastructure not only prevent some children from accessing schools, but it makes the journey to school unpleasant, stressful, and unsafe. Redesigning streets around schools and other key destinations is key to reducing traffic injuries and fatalities among children.



Before



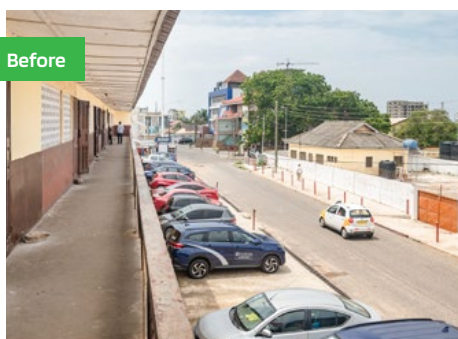
After

### Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

In Kuala Lumpur, the street redesign resulted in a 41% reduction in vehicles exceeding the 30 km/h speed limit, and 88% of the surveyed students feeling safer.

## CLEANER AIR

99% of the global population currently breathe polluted air. Air quality can significantly impact children's health and well-being. Proximity to busy roads and high vehicular traffic can expose kids to elevated levels of pollutants such as fine particulate matter and nitrogen dioxide, which are linked to respiratory problems and developmental issues. Addressing these air quality concerns is essential for creating a conducive and healthy environment that supports students' academic success and overall growth.



Before



After

### Accra, Ghana

In Accra, the transformation of the street led to reduced vehicle emissions, removing the equivalent of 259 trucks from the street each day during school hours.

## MORE ACTIVE KIDS

Streets that are hostile to pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users may encourage caregivers to drive children to school, depriving children of independent mobility and physical activity on their way to school. On the other hand, redesigning streets can encourage children to walk or cycle to school. Playing outdoors is also fundamental to children's well-being, health, and development. Streets that are car-free or slower by design encourage kids to engage in active play and outdoor activities safely, by which they can meet the WHO recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity.



Before



After

### León, Mexico

In León, the Streets for Kids project reclaimed 780 sqm of public space in front of the school, which led to 3x more children playing on the new extended sidewalk.

## COOLER, RESILIENT STREETS

Designing streets for kids creates healthier, more resilient cities. Adding trees, plants, rain gardens, and permeable materials cools streets and reduces flooding. Shade and water features make walking more comfortable, while access to nature supports children's physical and mental health. These changes also promote safer, low-emission transport, helping streets both adapt to and mitigate climate change, enriching daily life for kids and communities.



Before



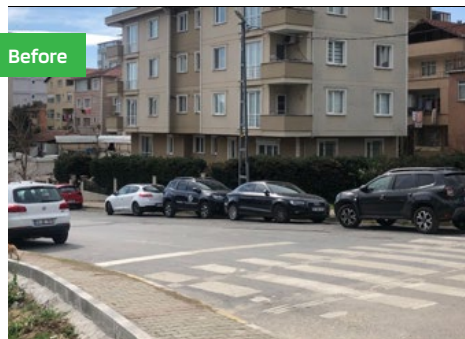
After

### Fortaleza, Brazil

In Fortaleza, the Planalto Ayrton Senna Streets for Kids project replaced 2,397 sqm of asphalt with permeable pavers and added new trees, gardens and 120 sqm of new play space.

## CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Redesigning streets to be safer and accessible, with comfortable and attractive spaces, can provide more opportunities for children, youth, and caregivers to have meaningful interactions and for families to pause and meet. Creating comfortable and relaxed spaces that support meaningful caregiving and connection results in more frequent, longer, and positive interactions between caregivers and infants and toddlers, which is crucial for cognitive development. Spaces on streets to pause, play, and connect are important for the health and well-being of children, youth, their families, and local communities.



Before



After

### Istanbul, Turkey

In Istanbul, the transformation of the street with added 700 sqm of public space led to a 51% increase in users observed socializing and a seven-fold increase in the number of kids playing outside of the school.

## EMPOWERED YOUTH

Designing streets for kids is a powerful tool for youth empowerment because it centers young people in the way cities are planned and built. When children feel safe, seen, and welcome in streets and public space, they gain confidence, independence, and a stronger sense of belonging. Streets that prioritize kids signal that their needs and voices matter—encouraging civic engagement from an early age and fostering a generation that feels empowered to shape the world around them.



Kids engagement process



After

### Solo, Indonesia

In Solo, an extensive community engagement process involved over 400 children, teens and community members through surveys, interviews and design workshops

# Empowering Cities with Guides, Resources and Tools

## Policy and Design Guidance

### Designing Streets for Kids Publication

In 2019, GDCI published **Designing Streets for Kids (DSfK)**. This guide focuses on the specific needs of children and their caregivers as pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users in urban streets around the world. With clear design recommendations, case studies, and examples, the guide shows how to make streets safe, enjoyable, and inspirational.

**Designing Streets for Kids** helps readers understand and undertake the entire process— from the first community vision, through plans, designs, construction, and maintenance—to create streets that truly prioritize children and their caregivers. The guide was developed as a supplement to GDCI's Global Street Design Guide, with support and guidance from a global advisory board of child-friendly city and street experts.

The guide has already won multiple **international awards** and is available in **ten languages**, reaching readers in approximately **100 countries**. It has been downloaded over **24,000 times** in **+150 countries** and has **influenced numerous policy documents, street design guides, and projects worldwide**.



The award-winning **Designing Streets for Kids** guide is available in ten languages, reaching over 3 billion people in their mother-tongue.

Available in:  
English  
Spanish  
Portuguese  
French  
Turkish  
Georgian  
Albanian  
Vietnamese  
Ukrainian  
Arabic

## Tools for Engagement and Evaluation

### Reverse Periscope

In 2023, the Streets for Kids program launched a DIY **reverse periscope**—a simple tool made of cardboard and mirrors that allows adults to experience streets from the height of a 3-year-old child. The companion guide and webinar provided a step-by-step tutorial on how to build and use the device to better inform street design efforts. **Since its launch, the reverse periscope has gained momentum in cities worldwide, with over 3,200 downloads and 500 webinar views.** We've showcased it in international conferences and events, and have been delighted to see it adapted by other organizations, researchers, and communities.

**"I fell in love with GDCI's publications the moment I discovered them. Their clear guidance, evidence-based case studies, and practical tools continue to inspire me to lead and shape a city that truly prioritizes the needs of children."**

—Matúš Vallo, Mayor of Bratislava

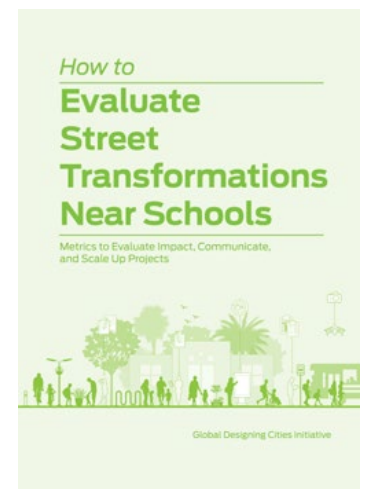
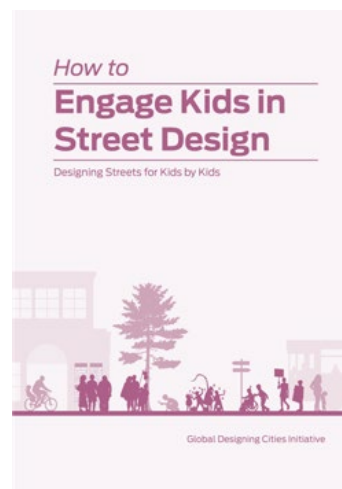


Community members exploring the street with the reverse periscope in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

## Tools for Engagement and Evaluation Streets for Kids Handbooks

In 2024, the Streets for Kids program launched two new handbooks to supplement the Designing Streets for Kid guide. Together, they offer cities extensive evidence, inspiring global case studies, and practical tools to create long-term, meaningful change in kids' ability to safely move, play, and enjoy city streets.

**Drawing on insights from over 100 experts in 45+ cities worldwide**, these handbooks equip public sector leaders, practitioners, nonprofits, educators, community members, and advocates with practical strategies and global examples to involve children in street design and understand how street transformations affect young people and their communities. Since their release in November 2024, **they have been downloaded over 4,500 times.**



**How to Engage Kids in Street Design** is a hands-on resource packed with concepts, tools, and case studies to inspire meaningful engagement with kids in shaping their streets. The handbook demonstrates how engaging kids in street design can facilitate information sharing between children and city leaders, encourage kids to advocate for better streets and involve them in street design projects.



**How to Evaluate Street Transformations Near Schools** provides specialized guidance for evaluating street design near schools. With global case studies and clear steps, it covers planning the evaluation process, setting goals, selecting metrics, collecting and analyzing data, communicating results, and charting next steps for safer, healthier streets for kids.

# Developing Changemakers: Capacity-Building Initiatives

## Streets for Kids Leadership Accelerator

The Streets for Kids Leadership Accelerator is a capacity-building program that brings together city teams to learn from global experts, explore international best practices, and develop proposals to create safer, healthier streets for children in their cities.

### Global Reach

In 2022, GDCI received nearly 100 applications for just 20 spots. The selected participants represented six continents and included planners, engineers, educators, and other changemakers. Over six months, 60 participants from 20 cities engaged in twelve intensive online sessions, gaining insights in street design and exchanging ideas and strategies.

### Regional Impact

In 2025, GDCI launched a new round of the Leadership Accelerator focused on scaling up streets for kids in South America. Ten city teams from Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador were selected from 33 applications. Over two months of weekly online sessions, these teams developed plans to amplify their impact through better street design, processes, partnerships, programs, and policies.

## Streets for Kids Online Trainings

GDCI's online Streets for Kids training course, launched in 2020, combined self-paced modules, expert guest presentations, and interactive workshops. To date, 400+ practitioners have joined, emerging with improved knowledge and tools for child-focused street design.

## Urban95 Academy

GDCI serves as a Technical Partner to the Urban95 Academy, a joint initiative by the Van Leer Foundation and the London School of Economics and Political Science. After completing the online course, GDCI partners with cities to provide tailored technical support to mayors, municipal leaders, planners, designers, and urban professionals working in local government. Since 2022, GDCI has supported 24 cities across six continents on their journey to implement better streets for kids.

Through its different initiatives, GDCI has worked with over 60 cities in building local capacity to shape Streets for Kids.



# Supporting Cities on the Ground: Project and Policy Development

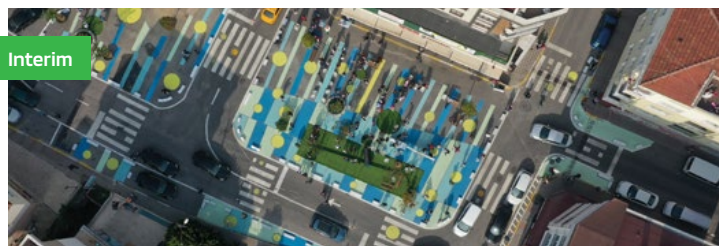
## Technical Assistance to Implement Projects

GDCI works closely with selected cities to provide targeted support, helping them to shape safer, healthier, and more inspiring streets for kids in their local context. We work directly with city governments, local consultants, and other nonprofits to build local capacity and demonstrate impact through:

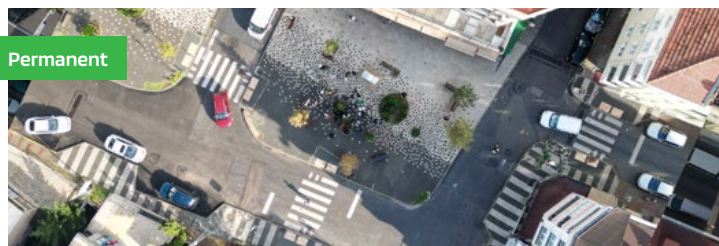
- Trainings and workshops;
- Project implementations that demonstrate global best practices;
- Data collection to evaluate project outcomes;
- Scaling for long-term sustainability through new local guidance, updating processes and practices, growing citywide programs, and catalyzing policy changes.



Before



Interim



Permanent

A three-stage street transformation in Maltepe, Istanbul set a precedent to involve local kids and their caregiver in the creation of the plaza, and inspired other parts of the city to adopt similar practices.

## Support for Program and Policy Development

Beyond one-off projects, GDCI's technical assistance to cities has helped catalyze broader change, transforming pilots into comprehensive programs and sparking policy shifts. In Fortaleza, Brazil; Cuenca, Ecuador; Istanbul, Turkey; Lima, Peru; Milan, Italy; and Tirana, Albania, our support has helped expand small-scale pilots into citywide initiatives that prioritize safe and equitable street design for children and their caregivers.



The Piazza Aperte program in Milan, supported by GDCI and Bloomberg Associates has converted 52 streets into piazzas. The program's success over the years led them to expand to improve streets and public spaces near schools.

GDCI has also inspired and supported the development of local street design manuals. In Recife, Brazil, the city's Street Design Manual uses the Designing Streets for Kids guidance as a basis for its recommendations to prioritize children in street design.



Recife's Street Design Manual provides guidance for the city to implement its Mobility Plan, approved in 2021.

# Implemented Projects

The Streets for Kids Program aims to inspire leaders, inform practitioners, and invite communities to create cities that are better for children and their caregivers. To date, the program has assisted over 60 cities and directly supported the design and implementation of more than **40 projects near schools, making access to over 90 schools safer for +85,000 children** across five continents. Examples of implemented projects can be found on the following pages:







**Safer access  
to school**



Istanbul, Turkey

Designing streets to protect children from traffic crashes

# Independencia, Santiago, Chile



## Partners

Renca Municipality  
Independencia Municipality  
Ciudad Emergente

## Funders

Fia Foundation, Fondation  
Botnar and Van Leer  
Foundation

## Timeframe

2021

## Transforming Streets for Safer School Access in Independencia

The Streets for Kids project in Independencia focused on enhancing road safety and strengthening community ties by transforming a key route used by students walking to school. The project covered three blocks and intersections on Enrique Soro street, where sidewalks were extended, vehicle lanes narrowed, and a chicane was added to calm traffic. Local collaborators contributed to the transformation by adding colorful pavement art to the sidewalks. At key intersections, protected crossings were installed, reducing crossing distances by 41%.

Data collected before and after the intervention revealed a 41% increase in pedestrian activity and a 108% rise in cycling. Additionally, there was a 28% increase in the number of children on the street, and the perception of safety for children improved by 25%.

## Project Impact



**+1.500 sqm** of reclaimed space for pedestrians



**+108%** increase in people cycling



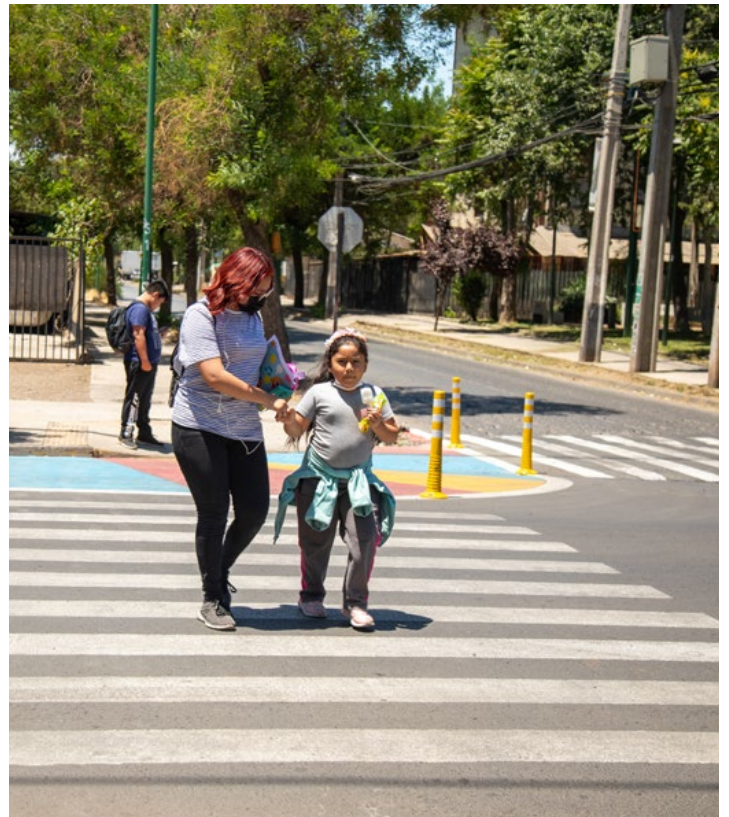
**-41%** reduction in crossing distances



**+41%** increase in people walking



**+25%** improvement in children's safety perception





# Lusaka, Zambia



## Partners

Lusaka City Council  
Road Development Agency  
Zambia Road Safety Trust

## Funders

Fia Foundation, Fondation  
Botnar and Van Leer  
Foundation

## Timeframe

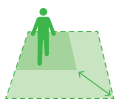
2023

## Reducing Vehicle Speeds to Improve Safe Commutes to School

Lusaka's Streets for Kids project transformed three key streets in the Chilenje neighborhood, vital routes for 1,250 students attending Chilenje Primary School and My Smart Kids Academy. Initial data from the busy arterial, Burma Road, revealed that 95% of drivers were exceeding 30 km/h, with 3.5% surpassing 80 km/h, creating a highly unsafe environment for students walking to school. Pedestrian counts showed that 255 students per hour were walking along the route during school start and end times, highlighting the urgent need for intervention.

In response, local authorities redesigned the Burma Road and Monument Road intersection and surrounding streets to include speed-reduction measures. The project added new sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, speed humps, and clear signage, along with seating and resting areas for a more welcoming environment. Post-transformation data showed a 70% reduction in vehicle speeds and 90% of children using the protected infrastructure, significantly enhancing their safety during commutes.

## Project Impact



**+245 sqm reclaimed space for landscape, play or seating**



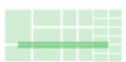
**+100% increase caregivers socializing with other community members**



**+90% increase in children walking on protected infrastructure**



**-70% reduction in motor vehicle speeds**



**1,3 km of the corridor transformed**



**Three improved intersections**





Before



After

# Cuenca, Ecuador



## Partners

Municipality of Cuenca –  
Mobility department

Public Company for  
Mobility, Transit and  
Transportation (EMOV)

Huasipichanga

## Funders

Fia Foundation, Fondation  
Botnar and Van Leer  
Foundation

## Timeframe

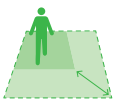
2023

## From Streets for Kids Pilot to Municipal Program

Cuenca's Streets for Kids project transformed Gabriela Mistral Street to create a safe and accessible connection between a primary art school and a nearby public park. The transformation included extending sidewalks, reducing crossing distances, and adding new pedestrian crossings and vertical signage to enhance safety. The project also introduced pavement art, benches, and planters, creating inviting spaces for rest and play for children, caregivers, and the broader community.

Following the project, data revealed a 118% increase in pedestrian activity and a 36% reduction in motor vehicle speeds. Children reported feeling safer while walking and crossing streets, which was reflected in the observed increase in playtime and active mobility to school. The success of this pilot project, along with the collected data, informed a proposal for a municipal program aimed at improving the safety and accessibility of school surroundings. **By 2025, 13 additional street transformation projects around schools were implemented following this experience.**

## Project Impact



**+250 sqm of reclaimed space for pedestrians**



**+118% increase in pedestrian volume**



**-36% reduction in vehicle speeds**

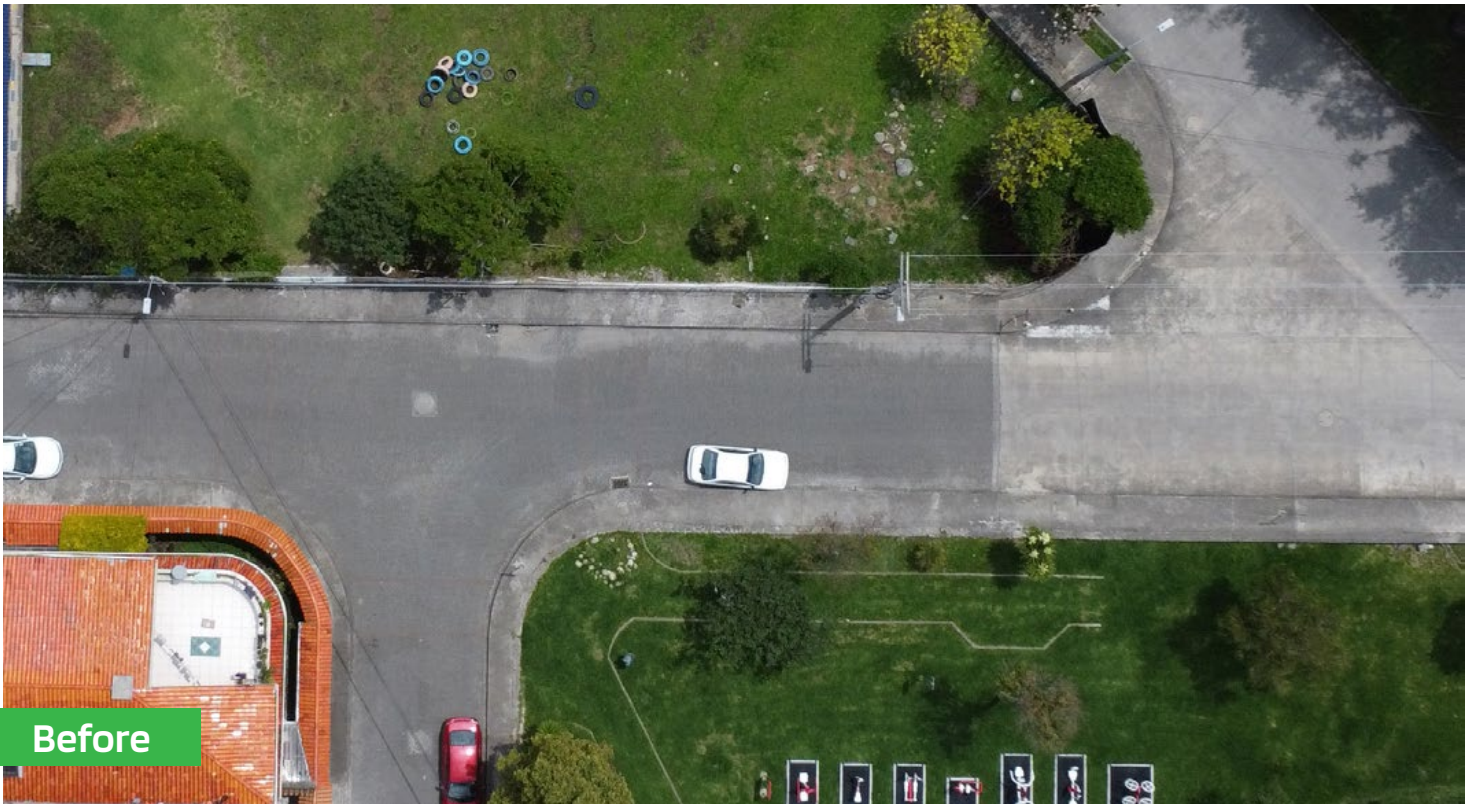


**+20 new permanent seats in the reclaimed space for pedestrians**



**Four marked crossings**









"The intervention showed the power of kid-friendly design and demonstrated it to a level of detail that it can be replicated in other areas."

Paul Moscoso, co-founder of Huasipichanga, Cuenca, Ecuador

# Cleaner air



# Designing streets to reduce air pollution and protect children's health



Accra, Ghana

# Accra, Ghana



## Partners

The Korle Klottey Municipal Assembly (KoKMA)  
Mmofra Foundation

## Funders

Clean Air Fund

## Timeframe

2023-2025

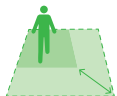
## Transforming School Spaces for Cleaner Air and Safer Play

Clean air is vital for early childhood development, yet many urban areas expose children to harmful pollutants every day. In Accra, Ghana, vehicle emissions account for nearly 40 percent of fine particulate matter pollution, making air quality a growing concern—especially near schools and playgrounds.

To address this, GDCI, in partnership with the Korle Klottey Municipality and with support from the Clean Air Fund, launched the Removing Pollution from Play project. This initiative demonstrates how targeted urban design can improve air quality and create healthier environments for children.

The first pilot project of this program transformed a former parking lot at Osu Salem 1 Primary School into a safe, pedestrian-friendly play space. The project reduced vehicle emissions during school hours, equivalent to removing 259 trucks from the area. It created 350 square meters of new play space and pedestrianized 450 square meters of street space during school hours on weekdays. Shade structures lowered surface temperatures by up to 10 degrees Celsius, while noise levels dropped by 60 percent, significantly improving the learning environment. Road safety also improved with the installation of new crosswalks and barriers that controls vehicle access to the street during school hours.

## Project Impact



**+450 sqm of reclaimed space for pedestrians**  
(6:30 am to 3:30 pm).



**+350 sqm new play areas**



**259 trucks worth of emissions removed during school hours**



**60% reduction in noise during school hours**





Before



After

# More active kids

Designing streets that encourage play, independent mobility and physical activity





Hanoi, Vietnam

# Abuja, Nigeria



## Partners

Ochenuel Mobility

Directorate of Road Traffic Services, Federal Capital Territory

Tundun Wada School

## Funders

Fia Foundation, Fondation Botnar and Van Leer Foundation

## Timeframe

2023

## Promoting Cycling as a Sustainable and Active Way to Travel to School

Abuja's Streets for Kids project launched a six-month awareness campaign to promote cycling as a sustainable and active mode of travel for students. The campaign included an open street event on Constantine Street, engaging students and caregivers from four local schools as well as participants from over ten other schools across the city. In total, the campaign reached more than 1,500 children, encouraging them to embrace cycling as a viable way to commute to school. As part of the initiative, the team donated 20 bicycles and installed a bike parking facility near the school.

The project also aimed to lay the groundwork for long-term changes by conducting feasibility studies and collecting data to support future street redesigns and policy shifts favoring walking and cycling to school. Additionally, the campaign included advocacy efforts and knowledge exchanges on active mobility, culminating in a pilot event that demonstrated the practicality of cycling to school. Following the campaign, 75% of surveyed children expressed a preference for cycling to school, and there was a 2.5% increase in the share of cyclists observed near the school entrance.

## Project Impact



**+1,500 children** were reached by the campaign



**+400 students** consulted on their travel habits and preferences



**75% percent** of children surveyed prefer to ride a bicycle to school



**+20 bicycles** donated



**One bike parking** facility installed





# Cerrillos, Santiago, Chile



## Partners

Cerrillos Municipality - Planning Department  
Ciudad Emergente  
Mayor University

## Funders

Fia Foundation, Fondation Botnar and Van Leer Foundation

## Timeframe

2023

## Open Streets for Physical Activity

The Streets for Kids project in Cerrillos transformed 7th Avenue into a pedestrian-friendly space, connecting an elementary school with a nearby park. By pedestrianizing the street, the project created new opportunities for play and physical activity, featuring playful furniture, vegetation, and vibrant pavement art in collaboration with a local university. This 70-meter block transformation not only enhanced safety but also fostered play and social connections for nearly 350 children.

Data collected before and after the intervention revealed a remarkable 562% increase in pedestrian volume. Additionally, caregiving activities doubled, while activities involving babies, small children, and older children saw a 43% increase. Engagement from teenage girls and young adults also rose by 33%. In a survey conducted post-transformation, 100% of respondents reported feeling safer and expressed a preference for a fully pedestrianized street.

## Project Impact



**+820 sqm of reclaimed space for pedestrians**



**+562% increase in pedestrian volume**



**100% of those surveyed prefer a completely pedestrianized street**



**+61% increase in people doing physical activity**



**+43% increase in activities involving babies, small children, and older children**





# Lima, Peru



## Partners

Municipality of Lima  
Urban Mobility  
Management (GMU)  
Program (PROLIMA)  
Anidare

## Funders

Fia Foundation, Fondation  
Botnar and Van Leer  
Foundation

## Timeframe

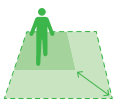
2023

## Making Space for Play and Community-Building

Lima's "Moquewawa" Streets for Kids project transformed a street next to "Colegio Andres Rosales Valencia," an elementary school located in Lima's historic center. The school sits at the corner of a busy, five-legged unsignalized intersection, making access unsafe and noisy. To simplify this critical intersection and create more space for outdoor play, the project restricted vehicle access and pedestrianized Moquegua Street. For several weeks, the street was brought to life with a variety of events and activities, including bicycle lessons, outdoor cinema, exercise classes, and community fairs. Local residents, also spontaneously used the space for soccer and social gatherings.

Following the pilot, the Municipality implemented an interim intervention, featuring ground paintings, benches, and play elements, reclaiming 850 square meters of space for students and residents to pause, play, and connect. The project also introduced additional street furniture for play and rest, leading to a seventeen-fold increase in the number of children playing on the streets. As a result, the city is now working to make the transformation permanent by proposing that Moquegua be included in the historic center's pedestrian network plan.

## Project Impact



**+850 sqm** of reclaimed space for pedestrians



**+107%** increase in caregivers' feeling of safety



**- 42%** reduction in drivers exceeding the speed limit



**18 benches** and **5 play elements** added



**17x** increase in kids playing on the street





Before



After



150 AÑOS DE ANDRÉS BELLO  
150 RAZONES PARA APRENDER

FELIZ 150 AÑOS DE INSTITUCIÓN ANDRÉS BELLO VALENCIA

ROSALINO

FELIZ 150 AÑOS DE INSTITUCIÓN ANDRÉS BELLO VALENCIA

FELIZ ANIVERSARIO 150 AÑOS

MI PADRE ANDRÉS BELLO

¡VIVA!

FELICES 150 AÑOS ANDRÉS BELLO VALENCIA

¡VIVA!

¡VIVA!

¡VIVA!

FELIZ ANIVERSARIO 150 AÑOS

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"The successful implementation of the project in Lima, inspired and financed by [the Streets for Kids Program], led to a **substantial increase in pedestrian safety and accessibility**. This success, along with similar positive outcomes in other cities around the world, has inspired the development of a new manual to design school zones, elaborated by the Ministry of Transportation of Peru."

Milagros Ramos,  
Municipality of Lima, Peru







Fortaleza, Brazil

# Cooler, resilient streets

Designing streets  
that adapt to climate  
change and provide  
cool, comfortable  
spaces for kids

# Fortaleza, Brazil



## Partners

Municipality of Fortaleza

## Funders

Fia Foundation, Fondation Botnar and Van Leer Foundation

## Timeframe

2020 - 2021

## A Sustainable Transformation for Safer, Greener School Streets

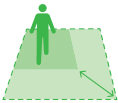
Fortaleza's Streets for Kids project was integrated into the city's Caminhos da Escola ("Pathways to School") program to create safe, sustainable streets for children. In the Planalto Ayrton Senna neighborhood, the project transformed two blocks and an intersection near an elementary school and healthcare facility. Asphalt was replaced with permeable pavers to improve drainage and reduce heat. The street was redesigned with new trees, providing more shade and comfort for kids and families. A shared street in front of the school allowed pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers to coexist on a one-way street, while extended sidewalks, protected crossings, and street furniture supported safety and play. Part of Av. Chico Mendes was also pedestrianized, adding a new play area.

Data collected before and after the transformation showed that over 90% of children felt the redesigned street was safer and more enjoyable. Additionally, more than 90% of parents reported improved social connections, and over 80% indicated they were more likely to bring their kids to enjoy the new, resilient streetscape.

## Project Impact



**+2,400 sqm of asphalt replaced with permeable pavement**



**+1,900 sqm of reclaimed space for pedestrians**



**+120 sqm of play space added**



**+80% of caregivers indicated they were more likely to bring their kids to the redesigned street**



**One travel lane removed**







Prefeitura de  
**Fortales**  
Secretaria Municipal de Educação

Prefeitura de  
**Fortales**  
Secretaria Municipal de Educação



**"I like to play on Chico Mendes [street]. It's very different. The street where I live is full of holes, which fill with mud."**

**7-year-old student,  
Fortaleza, Brazil**

# Istanbul, Turkey



## Partners

Maltepe Municipality  
Istanbul Metropolitan  
Municipality  
Istanbul Planning Agency  
Play Istanbul  
Superpool

## Funders

Van Leer Foundation

## Timeframe

2022-2023

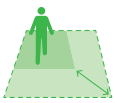
## Playful and resilient streets in the Yali neighborhood

The Yali Neighborhood, located along the Marmara Sea coast and connected by the Marmaray metro line, was selected for a pilot intervention aimed at improving pedestrian and bicycle access between coastal parks and residential areas north of a major highway.

The project focused on creating a safer and more welcoming public space near a primary school by removing irregular parking and transforming Onurlu Street into a pedestrian-priority area and neighborhood plaza.

Beyond improving mobility and safety, the transformation also integrated climate-responsive design. Impervious asphalt surfaces were replaced with more permeable pavers to support stormwater management and reduce runoff. New trees and plantings were introduced to increase urban biodiversity and create opportunities for children to engage more directly with nature. The added trees also improved thermal comfort by providing shade, particularly benefiting caregivers waiting outside the school during pickup times.

## Project Impact



**2,000 sqm of reclaimed public space for all.**



**10 benches installed**



**7 trees planted in the new sidewalks and plaza**



**2 redesigned intersections**





Before



Interim



After

# Recife, Brazil



## Partners

Recife Municipality  
Massapê

## Funders

Fia Foundation, Fondation Botnar, Van Leer Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies

## Timeframe

2023–2024

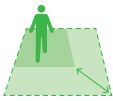
## Safe and Resilient Streets for School Access in Recife

The Streets for Kids project in Recife transformed Silva Jardim and 22 de Agosto streets in the Jordão neighborhood, where children often struggled to reach school safely due to heavy rains, flooding, and landslide risks. The project directly benefited around 566 students (ages 2 to 10), neighborhood children, and nearly 1,200 daily pedestrians traveling to and from school.

To address these challenges, the project incorporated permeable paving, new drainage infrastructure, and greenery to improve children's access to school and create vibrant, child-friendly spaces. In front of the school, new shading structures were added to create a more comfortable waiting area for caregivers, making drop-offs and pickups safer and more comfortable in all weather. An underutilized green space was also revitalized into a new plaza and playground, offering safe areas for families to play and gather.

In total, 7,000 m<sup>2</sup> of public space was transformed, featuring raised crossings, play elements, benches, gardens and trees along redesigned sidewalks. These improvements enhanced safety, accessibility, and comfort—making everyday journeys and playtime healthier and more enjoyable for children in Jordão.

## Project Impact



**7,000 sqm of reclaimed public space for all.**



**4 raised crossings implemented**



**Benches, bleachers, shading structures and play sculptures were installed in front of the schools.**



**Trees and gardens planted in the new sidewalks**





Before



After



# Connected communities



Designing streets that bring children, families, and neighborhoods together

# Istanbul, Turkey



## Partners

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality  
Maltepe Municipality  
Superpool

## Funders

Fia Foundation, Fondation Botnar and Van Leer Foundation

## Timeframe

2023

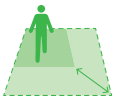
## Reclaiming Streets for Social Connections and Play in Maltepe

The Streets for Kids project in Maltepe transformed four key streets connecting a primary school and a kindergarten in the Cevizli neighborhood, turning them into vibrant public spaces for children, caregivers, and neighbors. Part of Maltepe's Play Strategy and Istanbul's city-wide walkability program, this initiative focused on expanding and linking pedestrian infrastructure to encourage social interactions and community life.

The project created inviting areas where children and caregivers could pause, play, and connect, while traffic was calmed through narrowed lanes and chicanes. It also marked the third transformation supported by GDCI in partnership with Superpool and Maltepe municipality since 2019, reinforcing the city's commitment to scaling up people-centered street transformations.

The impact was remarkable: social activity in the new plaza rose by 51%, and the number of children playing increased sevenfold. Pedestrian volumes increased by 49%, while the number of vehicles exceeding speed limits dropped by 55%—showcasing how streets can be reclaimed as public spaces that foster social connections, safety, and joy.

## Project Impact



**+700 sqm of reclaimed area for public space**



**-55% reduction in vehicles exceeding speed limits**



**+51% increase of users socializing**



**+49% increase in pedestrian volumes**



**7x more children playing on the street**





# León, México



## Partners

Municipality of Leon  
National integrated services for families (DIF)  
Colectivo Tomate

## Funders

Fia Foundation, Fondation Botnar and Van Leer Foundation

## Timeframe

2023

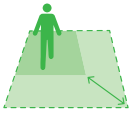
## Connecting Kids to Schools and Social Services

León's Streets for Kids project transformed a key 90-meter block on Efrén Hernández Street, linking a children's center ("DIF club") and two middle schools to create safe, inviting routes that encourage social connections among children, caregivers, and neighbors.

Beyond improving safety and mobility, the project reshaped the street into a vibrant public space where community life can flourish. Extended sidewalks, protected crossings, accessibility ramps, playful furniture, and added vegetation invite people to linger, interact, and build relationships. The space is further enlivened by murals and pavement art co-created with local female artists and cultural groups, reflecting the neighborhood's identity and creativity.

Since the transformation, the street has seen a surge in play and social activity, with a threefold increase in children playing outdoors. 75% of caregivers now feel the street is safe for their children, compared to just 1% before the project. The project has made the street a safe and welcoming place where families and children can safely explore together.

## Project Impact



**+780 sqm of reclaimed space for pedestrians**



**75% of caregivers felt the street was safe for their children**



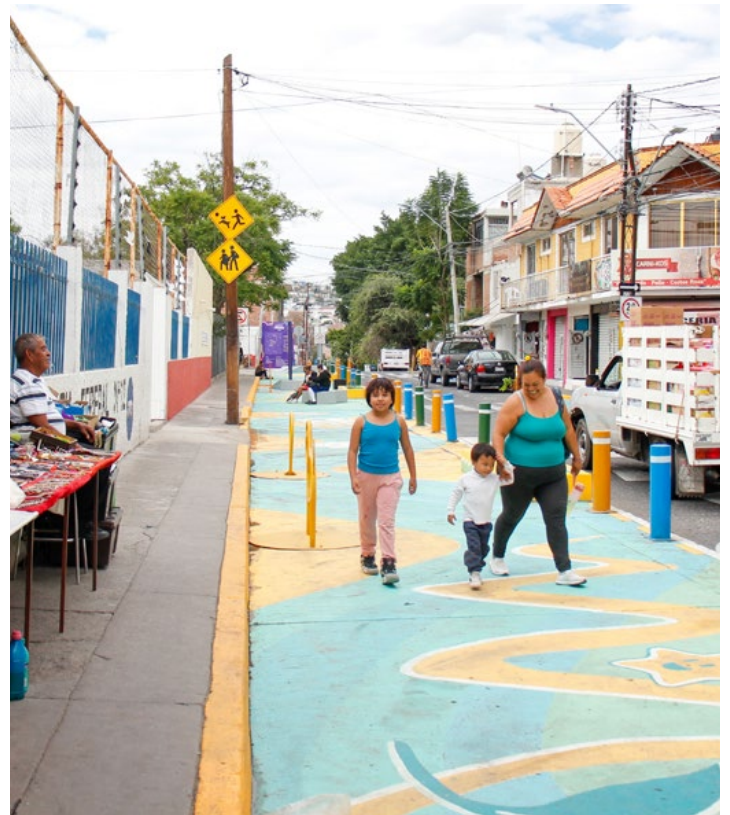
**-10km/h reduction in top speeds**



**3x observed play activities**




**- 2/3 vehicle volume on weekdays**







An aerial photograph of a pedestrian crossing on a city street. The crossing is painted with a vibrant teal background and a yellow zigzag border. In the center of the zigzag is a yellow star with a white outline. To the left, a silver car is partially visible. Several utility poles with wires are scattered across the scene. A concrete planter box with green plants is situated near the crossing. The overall scene is bright and colorful, suggesting a well-maintained urban environment.

"It seems really good to me. There's been less traffic, and the kids are in less danger. I hope they can do the same thing in other places so that kids from other schools don't face danger."

Ana, Community Member,  
León, Mexico

# Tirana, Albania



## Partners

Municipality of Tirana  
Qendra Marrëdhënie

## Funders

Fia Foundation, Fondation  
Botnar and Van Leer  
Foundation

## Timeframe

2020 - 2021

## From a Pilot Project to a City-wide Program

The Streets for Kids project in Tirana transformed Kahreman Ylli Street near Gjon Buzuku School, marking the first pilot of the city's Safe School Street program. Kahreman Ylli is a wide street where high-speed traffic poses significant risks to over 1,000 students, caregivers, and teachers who use it daily. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the project team engaged with the school community to test various design strategies aimed at slowing down vehicles and creating more play space for students.

The street transformation included extending sidewalks, adding protected crossings, and installing playful furniture and vegetation. A total of 1,680 square meters of street space was converted into pedestrian areas, and 310 square meters of underused parking space were transformed into a dynamic play area.

This pilot was crucial for the city to evaluate its impact, gather key insights, and plan for scaling the program to other locations. **By 2025, the city had implemented additional projects around nine schools, with more in the planning stages for 23 schools and kindergartens.**

## Project Impact



**+1.190 sqm of reclaimed public space**



**+310 sqm of new play spaces**



**- 59% decrease in vehicles per hour and a -16% decrease in vehicular speeds.**

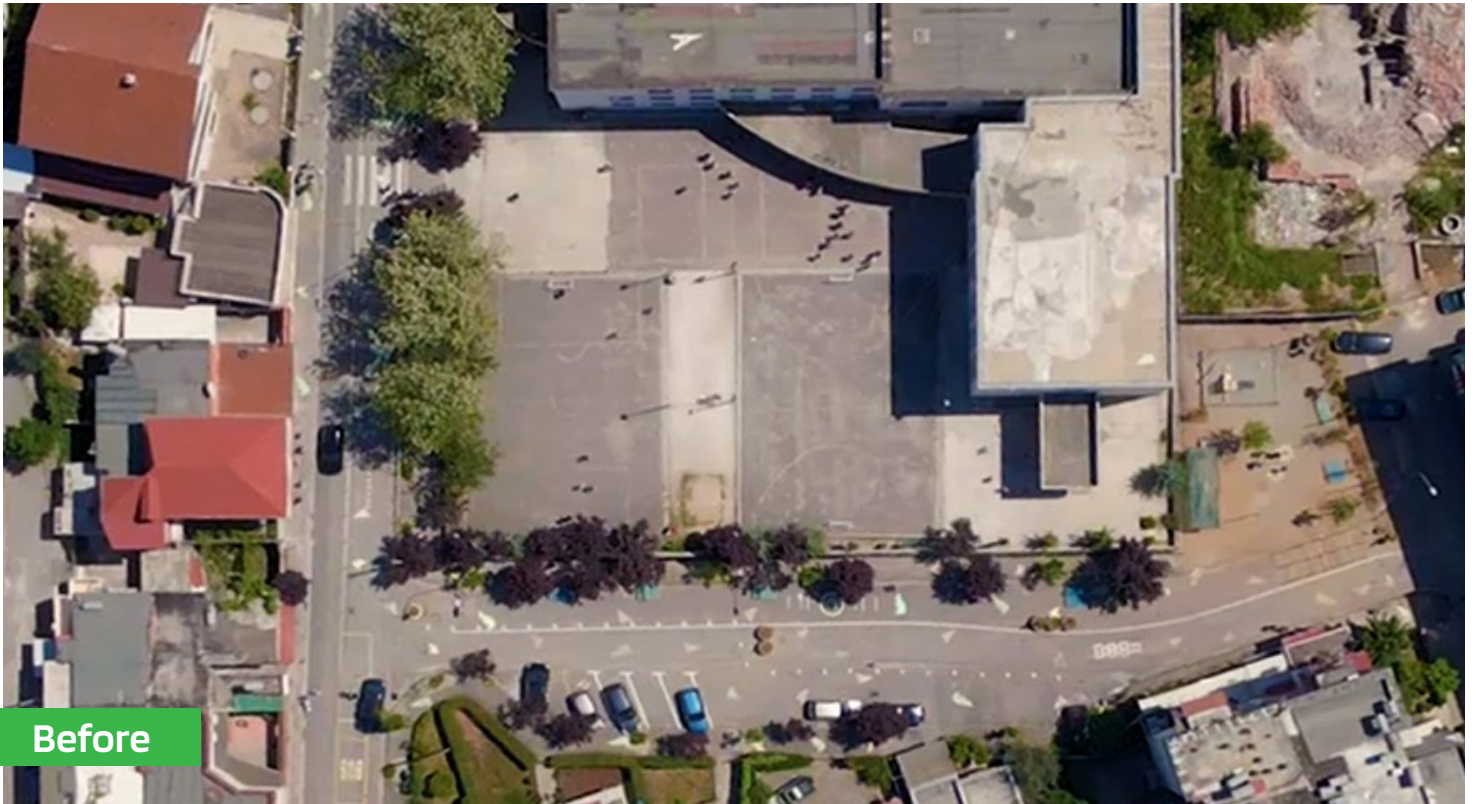


**+25 sqm of new seating and 25 trees planted**

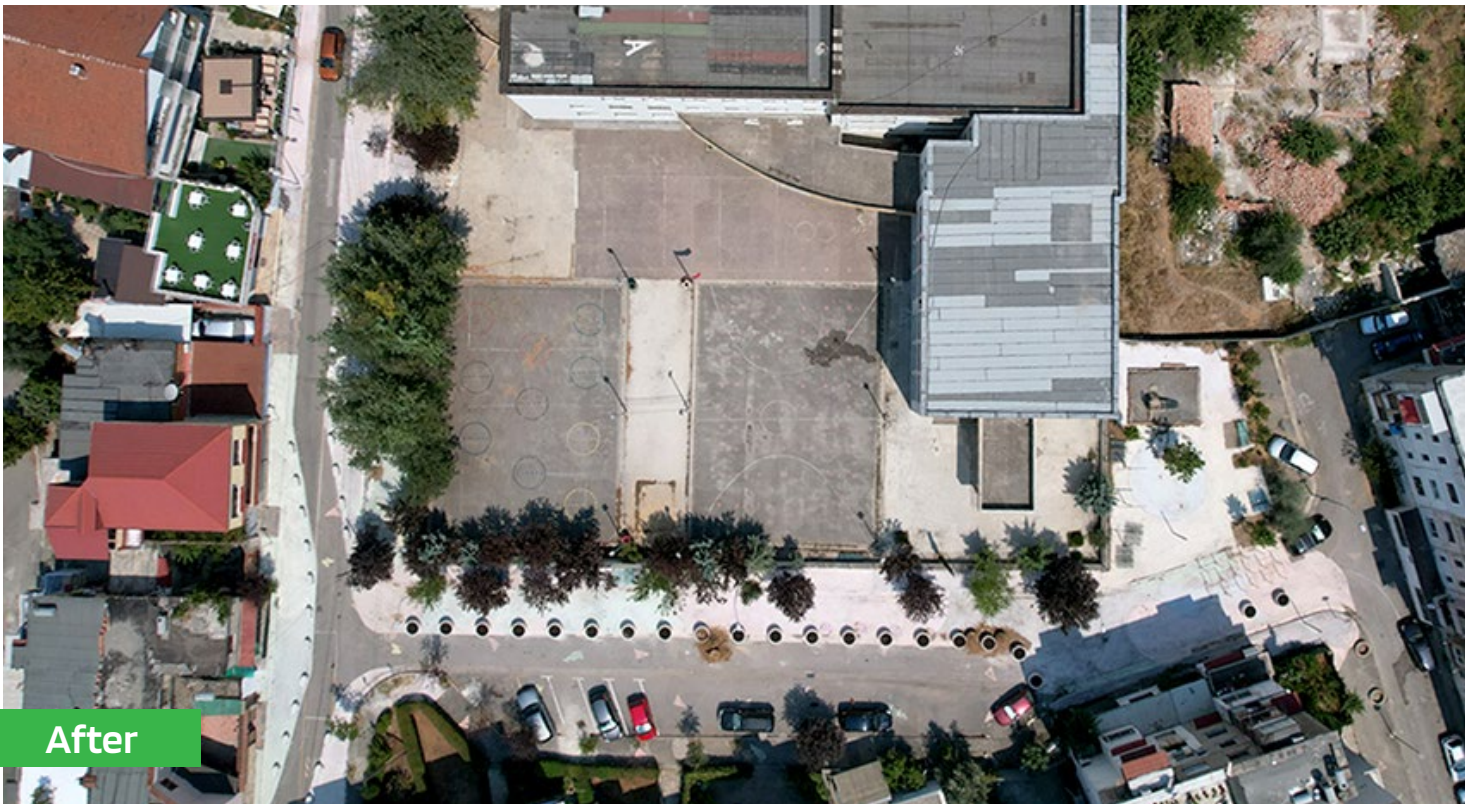


**+4.5x increase in people using public spaces near school**





Before



After



# Designing streets that elevate young voices and foster youth-led change

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# Solo, Indonesia



## Partners

Surakarta city (Department of Transportation)

School SMP Muhammadiyah

Kota Kita

## Funders

Fia Foundation, Fondation Botnar and Van Leer Foundation

## Timeframe

2023

## Empowering Youth to Transform Their Streets in Solo

The Streets for Kids project in Solo, known as "Sukaria," centered on actively engaging students and neighborhood children in reshaping the area around SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Surakarta School. Recognizing youth as key agents of change, the project used co-design workshops to empower over 500 students and residents to envision and create safer, more inclusive streets.

Located near the city center and Surakarta City Hall, this strategic project tackled narrow, congested streets that posed safety risks. Two streets were redesigned to improve pedestrian pathways, add crossings, and implement traffic calming measures that reflect the community's needs.

Temporary street paintings on Flores Street transformed the space into a shared street, encouraging safe coexistence between pedestrians and vehicles. A new seating area in front of the school, shaded by a green canopy and enlivened with vibrant murals, now serves as a welcoming place where young people can gather and connect.

## Project Impact



**+400** children, teens and community members engaged



**Three** murals by local artists



**Two** pedestrian crossings




**One** shelter with a vertical garden installed



The team received a Special Mention for Child and Youth Participation at the 18th International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD) Award for Best Practice in Citizen Participation.





“Posts about the program have attracted interest from other organizations, media outlets, and private sectors interested in collaborating on our methods for addressing school environment issues [...] Additionally, there is a suggestion from the Department of Transportation to develop the design into a safe school route plan.”

Melania, member of Kota Kita,  
Solo, Indonesia



# Tyre, Lebanon



## Partners

Municipality of Tyre  
Lebanese Evangelical School Tyre  
The Chain Effect

## Funders

Fia Foundation, Fondation Botnar and Van Leer Foundation

## Timeframe

2023

## Engaging Kids and Creating Awareness about Street Design

The Streets for Kids project in Tyre centered on raising awareness and empowering children to lead in creating safer, healthier streets through a six-month pilot project with the Lebanese Evangelical School. Students, caregivers, and teachers actively participated in engaging workshops and interactive activities—including participatory mapping, interviews, urban photo walks, bike rides, design workshops, and a final exhibition—giving kids the opportunity to understand how streets can shape their daily lives.

This collaborative process led to an interim street transformation outside the school, turning a parking spot into a comfortable waiting area with a new pedestrian crossing for safer access. A vibrant parklet with benches, planters, and a mural in front of the school became a new space for children to connect and play. In total, 300 children and teens were involved, sparking enthusiasm for future projects that give youth the tools to shape their neighborhoods. Following the process, 89% of the surveyed school community expressed a desire to see more initiatives like this in the future.

## Project Impact



**+300 children and teens engaged**



**89% would like to see more such transformations**



**+ 35 sqm of reclaimed space for pedestrians**



**+10 engagement activities including children, caregivers, and teachers**







**"It's something that makes you proud, when a child feels comfortable and happy to have done something in their school and in their city."**

**Rina, Caregiver,  
Tyre, Lebanon**



# Acknowledgements

We extend our deepest gratitude to the cities and organizations that partnered with us through the Streets for Kids program. Their unwavering commitment to creating safer, healthier and more enjoyable streets for children and communities has been instrumental in the success of this initiative.

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Mayor University

## Cuenca, Ecuador

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Huasipichanga

## Fortaleza, Brazil

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## Independencia, Chile

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Independencia Municipality  
Ciudad Emergente

## Istanbul, Turkey

Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality  
Maltepe Municipality  
Superpool

## León, México

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Colectivo Tomate

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Zambia Road Safety Trust

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Traffic and Urban Transport  
Authority (CTTU)  
Urban Maintenance and Cleaning  
Authority (EMLURB)  
Executive Secretariat for Early  
Childhood (SEPIN)  
Executive Secretary for Urban  
Innovation (SEIURB)  
Massapê

## Solo, Indonesia

Surakarta city (Department of  
Transportation)  
School SMP Muhammadiyah  
Kota Kita

## Tirana, Albania

Municipality of Tirana  
Qendra Marrëdhënie

## Tyre, Lebanon

Municipality of Tyre  
Lebanese Evangelical School Tyre  
The Chain Effect

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Founding partners:



Contributors:



## PHOTO CREDITS

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Colectivo Tomate

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Ochenuell Mobility

### Accra, Ghana

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Zambia Road Safety Trust

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