

Municipal Safety Case Studies Project

PUBLIC SPACES THEME: AUGUST 2023

Building Vibrant and Resilient Neighbourhoods

Galeshewe Active Box

KIMBERLEY, NORTHERN CAPE

CASE STUDY



Supported by:





The Cities Challenge 2.0, funded by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), in partnership with Cities Alliance and UN-Habitat, launched in 2019 prompts and supports interventions to enable liveable, resilient, safe and economically thriving areas within marginalised communities. The first edition supported initiatives in Ecuador, Jordan, Namibia and Serbia. The current edition (2022/2023) supports initiatives in South Africa, Mexico, India and Bangladesh under the theme *Building Vibrant & Resilient Neighbourhoods*. through the implementation of Urban Living Labs.

Sol Plaatje Municipality (SPM) was the South African municipality awarded a small scale grant for an intervention at neighbourhood level to support the development of an informal traders hub targeting young women entrepreneurs and contribute to social and climate resilience, in March 2022, to construct the Galeshewe Active Box. The concept was a space for women traders to trade safely and a project to support and strengthen heritage and environmental sustainability work by SPM and its partners, in the Galeshewe township outside Kimberley in the Northern Cape.

Active Box project

Galeshewe is the largest and oldest township settlement in SPM. It was established in 1871 to house labourers working on the diamond mines for which Kimberley quickly became and remains famous. The township exemplifies the history of apartheid in South Africa, with racially segregated settlements established to support mining, served very differently according to the racial hierarchy. The expansion of Galeshewe over the last 150 years reflects the racist policies of inhumanely neglecting or prioritising the needs of black and white settlements respectively.

The relative living conditions in Galeshewe and Kimberley furthermore reflect the current challenges of dismantling the inequities which were designed and built into the fabric of our towns and cities. Galeshewe, while only a few kilometres distant from the Kimberley CBD, is isolated from services and transport routes and access to opportunities.



The Active Box project was designed to respond to the challenges experienced on a daily basis by women traders in Galeshewe: unsafe routes to and from trading sites, unsafety in the sites themselves, lack of shelter from the elements, lack of toilet facilities, competition for desirable trading sites. It was also intended to contribute to broader integrated development goals and processes in Galeshewe by:

- Developing a **Trader's Hub** for women traders, along a busy route that connects Galeshewe township with Kimberley CBD
- Establishing **food gardens** around the community hall to promote a multi-use and multi-functional space for community members, especially women and children.
- **Revitalising Hulana Park**, a central public park facility used for leisure.
- **Integrating with the area-based management of the Hulana Park development** as part of the future Mike Weir Uprising Precinct, planned around the 'active corridor', identified in the Urban Network Strategy (UNS) and supported by the Department of Treasury through the Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant (NDPG: for more on this grant see KwaDukuza: Sustainable development always relies on integration and collaboration) and by the Department of Cooperative Governance through the Integrated Urban Development Grant (IUDG, [click here](#) for more information on this grant) with a vision of enhancing non-motorized transport nodes to reduce decongestion, improve access and reduce carbon emissions between the Kimberley CBD and Galeshewe and to unlock further economic opportunities and contribute to passive surveillance of the site.
- **Support mapping** of the heritage assets and historical data around the corridor to support a heritage walk linking to the history of Galeshewe, also aligned to the precinct plan.



Why women?

Women traders were identified as the target users of the hub, partly because of GBV and the need for women's empowerment in South Africa, and partly as a key catalyst in building resilience and sustaining development in marginalised communities. Women are typically the caregivers for vulnerable members of communities including children, the elderly, people with disabilities and others. Supporting women's income enhances the care they can offer to those who depend on them.

“When you empower a woman,
you empower an entire household

– Ignatius France, VPUU project co-ordinator

Trader's Hub

The hub was envisaged as a multi-faceted space for women, promoting community cohesion through linking a food garden, a shelter for rest and relaxation on the commuter route, and safe toilet facilities, especially for women and children, with easy and safe access for the traders and their customers. The hub was finished with special attention to gender and safety needs in order to provide women traders with services such as electricity connections, water and sanitation facilities, storage facilities, and Wi-Fi.

Partnerships



Sol Plaatje Municipality

The project was led for SPM by the Local Economic Development unit. It was the role of this directorate to recruit the participation and support of other units within the municipality, including Parks and Recreation, to manage and maintain the hub, and the services such as water and sanitation and electricity to equip the hub. The IDP unit was also engaged to ensure alignment to the plans for Galeshewe and hopefully to attract further funding to spread the impact of the project into surrounding spaces. The municipality supported VPUU to build a stakeholder map and ensure inclusiveness in the co-design phase of the project.



Galeshewe Youth Network

Galeshewe Youth Network (GYN) is a community-based organisation, led by five young men born and living in the township. Since 2019 GYN has focused on 'fast-tracking the development of youth through collaborative efforts'. In this project GYN played a liaison role with the youth of Galeshewe, supporting the capacity building workstream by delivering the clay brick training, and also facilitating the activation of the space. GYN was and remains central to the heritage work under way in Galeshewe, initiating the development of a 'heritage route' with the SPM tourism unit.



Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention Programme (VCP), implemented by GIZ

VCP was the local agent for the Cities Challenge funding, supporting networking, planning, implementation and reporting.



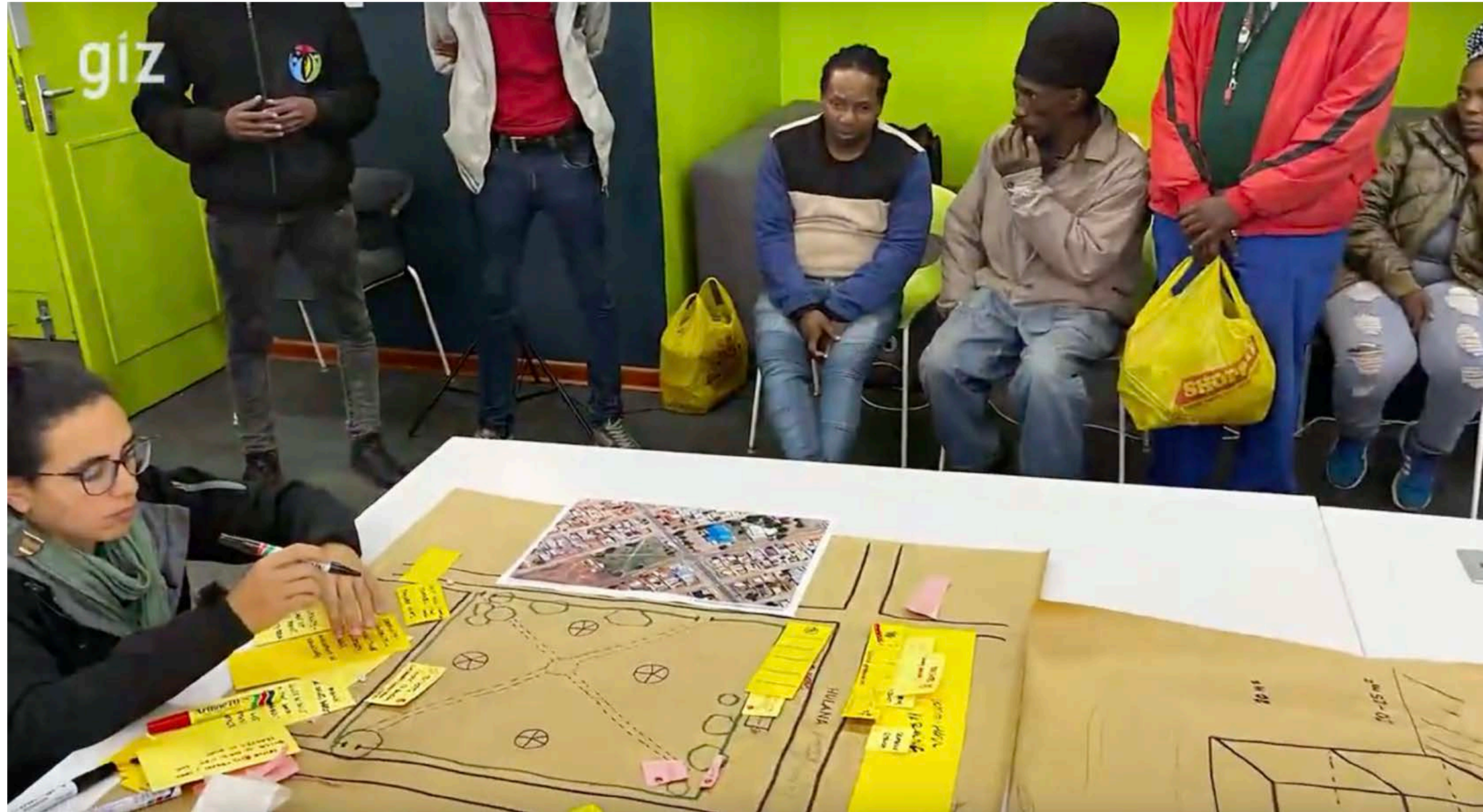
Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading (VPUU)

Founded in 2013 and a well-known practitioner in safe public places in South Africa, VPUU works with the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), supporting community engagement, innovative interventions for improved community cohesion and well-being in marginalised communities, informal settlements and townships. VPUU was the key implementing partner to the Cities Challenge, providing technical support and engagement to enhance municipal integration and partnership, led the co-design and supported the development of an operation and maintenance plan in line with the proposed precinct management plan.

Ward councillors

Ward councillors are critical to engagement and mutual understanding between cities and communities. Officials designing and managing public space projects are executive appointment, whereas ward councillors are elected officials. Political processes can disrupt the reliability of ward councillors as the medium for community engagement, potentially alienating groups in communities, or generating politically motivated resistance to projects or processes introduced by ward councillors.

The municipality relies on ward councillors to communicate and engage community members on projects to be implemented in their communities. The municipality has intentions to replicate the Trader's Hub project in other sites, but the role of ward councillors will have to be carefully strategized to mitigate the risk of political disruption of the process.



Co-Design

The intensive co-design process was carefully crafted by VPUU to enable responsiveness to community needs and vision, and shared ownership of the space. The process involved informal engagement on site as well as focused and purposeful consultation and collective design.

THE PROCESS

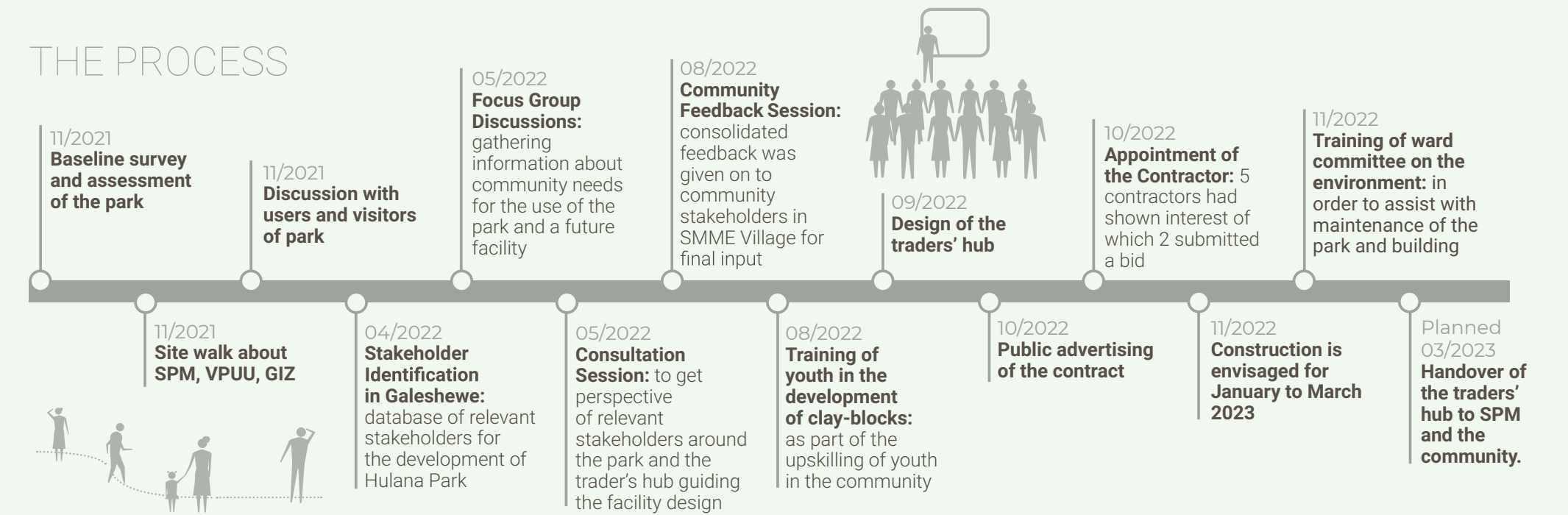


Image by: GIZ GmbH, 2022: the original timeframes shifted as various challenges delayed the project, which is now due to be finalised at the end of September 2023.

Sustainability



Environmental: clay block brick

Clay bricks are climate friendly building materials that keep the room temperature stable. Unlike cement, the naturally occurring clay is not burned but merely dried and therefore has a primary energy requirement that is 85 per cent lower than cement. The durable bricks can be constructed manually by individuals with limited construction skills, making them an accessible and affordable alternative to traditional bricks in the Northern Cape. *“Some people view clay bricks as a building material for the poor. However, clay bricks are an environmentally friendly building material as it is cool in summer and warm in winter. It is perfect for the weather conditions experienced in the Northern Cape”* (Thomas Hellmann, VCP).



Skills transfer: capacity building

VPUU trained GYN in the manufacture of the clay bricks. The GYN team then transferred these skills to a group of 14 young people from Galeshewe, equipping them to participate actively in the construction of the hub and to have transferable skills to support their own livelihoods beyond the horizon of this project. These young people are in the process of registering a co-operative to refurbish deteriorating homes, including the restoration of structures with heritage significance in Galeshewe, using the clay bricks they have been trained to produce.



Sustainable livelihoods: heritage route

A digital mapping exercise supported by VPUU training has been carried out by GYN and some of the participants in the clay brick capacity building, to identify houses in need of refurbishment. During the first survey 98 heritage houses and structures were mapped. The project, a partnership between GYN and the SPM Tourism unit aims to attract funds to create a heritage route around Galeshewe, which will include an Arena and Art Centre in the same street as Hulana Park and the Trader’s Hub. *“We are trying to make ourselves useful to the Tourism Department so that when the time comes we will be their preferred service provider for the Heritage Route.”* (Joel Sethlabi, GYN)

Project Crisis

In Galeshewe, whether as a result of political affiliations or perceptions of ward councillors or community members, a group of community members claimed resistance to the site for the project, Hulana Park, and sabotaged the construction process. They claimed that they had not been adequately consulted and that the project benefited a small group of traders who had been unfairly selected. The Executive Mayor engaged with the group, but the project was eventually relocated to a site further down the same street. This is not an uncommon scenario in South Africa; individuals who do not benefit directly from projects don't see the benefit to them of wider community development and transformation. This despite a carefully crafted and inclusive consultation process.

Final Project

The new site, the open air arena further down Hulana Street, is itself ripe for refurbishment, and this project will hopefully prompt investment to transform this space into an asset for community cohesion. The new hub is constructed from recycled shipping containers, in continuation of the environmental sustainability objective. The connecting walls between the containers are built using clay. These clay walls keep the room temperature stable, cool in summer and warm in winter. The structure contains small lockable shops, a service hub with an elevated viewpoint to provide a janitor and a local Neighbourhood Watch Group (NWG) good oversight of the area.

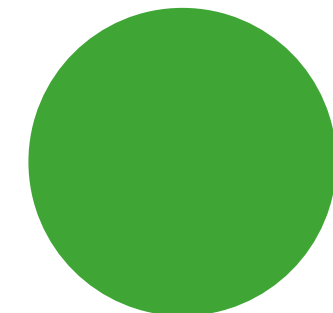
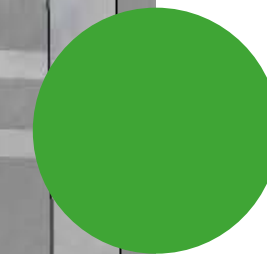
“The Informal Traders Hub does not only support female entrepreneurship but also contributes to the safety of the whole area. It is very beneficial for our community to place the hub and its elevated viewpoint within the activity route at the Hulana area where many young people are going in and out every day, making sure that the area is safe day and night.

– Sobuza Mathebula, Local Economic Development, SPM

Active Box Design



The food garden developed on the site contributes to upgrading and beautifying the site, while also prompting sensitisation of residents on urban gardening and its link to cost saving and good nutrition. The food garden is coordinated by the Department of Agriculture and serves 50 local households and the community school.



Other Challenges

- Electrical cables discovered during the excavation of the site had to be redirected and this delayed the finalisation of the project, requiring transversal cooperation within the SPM.
- Some members of the ward committee remain resistant to the project, posing a risk of vandalism or sabotage in the future of the project.
- Increases in prices of materials between costing and implementation resulted in the need to identify further funds beyond the Cities Challenge. This is often the case; budgets are tight and there is very rarely a budget for contingencies. Funding partners should address this at the outset of projects, since it puts their investment at risk.
- The volunteers conducting the digital mapping exercise encountered unforeseen challenges, with concerns for their safety and the equipment while working in Galeshewe. This work is a response to unsafety in a marginalised community where people are battling for survival, and vulnerability of project workers is often a problem. Sustained, insightful communication and negotiation should underpin work in such communities. The claim that community members don't see the benefits where they are not direct beneficiaries has been heard too often and must be addressed. Community buy-in is a pre-requisite for successful integrated development and cannot be premised on direct benefits, where systemic change is the final goal.



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