REAL PLAY CITY CHALLENGE Report 2022 Edition



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **1 THE REAL PLAY CITY CHALLENGE**

 - playful spaces
 - 1.2 The Challenge in a nutshell
 - 1.3 This year's categories
 - 1.4 Our High Profile Jury
- 2 Impact of the Real Play City Challenge
 - 2.1 Outreach figures and measures
 - 2.2 Insights from the 2022 themes
 - 2.3 Ten lessons from the winners
 - 2.4 Knowledge products delivered
- 3. WINNERS
 - 3.1 An overview
 - 3.2 The winning projects



This report has been produced by PlacemakingX as part of the Real Play City Challenge.

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1.1 The importance of placemaking for creating

1 THE REAL PLAY CITY CHALLENGE

After a hugely successful launch in 2019, the challenge was back in 2022 for a second edition to help cities overcome pressing global challenges in their local communities and neighbourhoods through playful placemaking.

We believe cities should provide a playful backdrop for children and communities, thereby reclaiming and integrating play into everyday life. After all, play is an essential right that nurtures children's happiness and well-being. It is proven to equip them with social and emotional skills, build their resilience and creativity, and help them thrive.

The Real Play City Challenge awards inspiring cities and urban practitioners that have successfully used placemaking to create environments that give people time, space and opportunities to play.

The Real Play City Challenge is an international competition led by the Real PlayCoalition (Arup, Ingka Group [IKEA], The LEGO Foundation, National Geographic, and UNICEF) and PlacemakingX (represented by STIPO and Huasipichanga).

The Real Play Coalition was formed with the key ambition of creating a movement that narrows the play gap for 100 million children by 2030.

PlacemakingX is a global network of leaders from more than 70 countries worldwide, who, by accelerating placemaking, are turning the spaces we live in into places we love.



Credits: Mikael Sjorgen

1.1 The importance of placemaking for creating playful spaces

Placemaking is a global movement to improve public spaces together with the community, by learning from small interventions in order to create a great and long lasting impact. Placemaking is a creative, fun and playful approach that builds on the community's participation and their collective vision to realise a better public realm. Throughout the world civic initiatives, artists, and community organisers work together with local policy makers and social entrepreneurs to turn a place around. By working together to reclaim public spaces for play, they can completely change the city experience for all.

Play is rocket fuel for learning and development. A stimulating, safe, and playful environment supports children's social and emotional wellbeing, and supports community cohesion for more resilient cities. Every city should be able to provide places beyond the playground for children to reclaim and integrate play in their everyday life beyond the playground.

Great playful cities employ both a long-term city-wide strategy, as well as the short-term action of local initiatives, so that top-down and bottom-up work together. This is why we invited both cities and placemakers to join the Challenge. Inclusive, safe and playful placemaking:

- Brings children, caregivers, and the community together through play;
- Integrates formal and informal play in public space beyond the playground, transforming spaces that were not associated with play before;
- Combines planning, design, social, and research interventions to foster real impact for children and for the big contemporary challenges;
- Stimulates communities to create their own initiatives, and make an impact with limited resources;
- Represents smart investment and high impact interventions in the short term with potential for longer-term resilience;
- Can reduce risk by testing ideas before making substantial political and financial commitments, enabling financially constrained cities to build back better from the impacts of COVID-19.



The Challenge in a nutshell

The winners of the 2022 Real Play City Challenge were revealed on 18 November by the Real Play Coalition, ahead of World Children's Day on Sunday (20 November). Run with PlacemakingX, a global network of advocates who accelerate placemaking as a way to create healthy and inclusive communities, the international competition celebrates and awards inspiring uses of play to tackle global challenges.

In general the Real Play City Challenge aims to shine a light on all the great examples around the world that inspire and show the way to a better, more resilient, playful public realm with people of all sizes and shapes at its heart. For this second edition, the challenge awarded initiatives addressing the theme of Local Communities, Global Challenges.

Whether a community or city is:

- experiencing the effects of conflict and displacement
- facing the challenges of adapting to climate change
- or struggling to create places that cater to the diverse and varied needs of the local community

The submitted initiatives were evaluated by an expert jury panel that took into account a balanced selection of proposals with a diverse range of impact, stakeholders, location, scale and contexts. This edition awarded two winners for each theme. One winning initiative by cities and one by urban practitioners. This gave us 6 winners in total. Additionally, special mentions were granted to projects that can still be an inspiration to others around the globe. The shortlist of nominated initiatives was announced at the Placemaking Week Europe in Pontevedra.

The 2022 winning initiatives had successfully used playful placemaking to help local communities address global challenges. The jury paid close attention to those initiatives, which:

- show new and innovative ways of combining global challenges with play in the public realm
- have succeeded in creating sustainable • ownership in the local community
- are also mindful and have an impact on the other two topics
- have high impact and are easily replicable in other cities around the world
- can help to extend the evidence of play



Shortlist announcement during Placemaking Week Europe in Pontevedra Credits: Placemaking Europe - María Blau

1.3 This year's categories

The Real Play City Challenge, this year, wanted to contribute to the pressing global challenges that are facing our societies and affect kids everywhere. We therefore decided to look for inspiration and good practices that address play on three urgent themes:



PLACES WHERE PLAY HEALS PEOPLE

A playful public realm is the place where people meet, communities heal and develop a shared sense of purpose. In all situations, it is important that people have access to spaces for play, and even more so in situations where life is challenging. These could be cities destroyed by war or other catastrophes. Or where people need to seek refuge in unfamiliar crowded cities and temporary settlements. Or even places where people who were once friendly neighbours suddenly stand on the other side of conflict.

Placemaking can create guick impactful change to the public realm, providing relief in both temporary and permanent environments.

The Real Play City Challenge was looking for inspiration and good examples that show how playful placemaking initiatives are making a difference in cities affected by conflict, migration or disaster.



PLACES WHERE PLAY SUPPORTS CLIMATE ACTION

There is a great urgency to de-pave and de-brick the public realm to make room for increasing rainfall, more greenery and more shade. Shade is a necessity for healthy daily life, and allows for livelier streets and higher levels of labour productivity. The WHO prescribes that every person needs access to shade within 300 meters of their home. Given the urgency presented by climate change for all the planet's inhabitants, compelling, engaging and generationally relevant tools for thinking differently about our public realm are needed more than ever.

Cities worldwide also need to adjust their public spaces to beat heat stress, prevent flooding, improve biodiversity or harvest rainwater for dry seasons. These investments create a great opportunity to both educate and create places for play

This is why the Real Play City Challenge wanted to award placemaking initiatives that add nature-based play, or advocate for climate action whilst reclaiming play in cities, benefiting the people and the planet.



PLACES WHERE PLAY UNITES US ALL

When a play environment is not appropriate to the abilities and needs of all its people, they feel left out, unsafe or unwelcome using that space. People do not bring discomfort or disability to a public space, they find it there when they are faced with obstacles to their participation through a lack of inclusive, sensitive design. The public realm should provide safe and healthy recreation opportunities for all citizens - regardless of age, wealth, gender, sexual orientation, physical or psychological challenges, culture or spiritual beliefs.

Good neighbourhoods provide playful public spaces for both specific groups and for all to join and meet alike. Activities that foster inclusivity help to develop selfesteem, improve social skills, stimulate the mind, combat loneliness and enable stronger ties and understanding between different people.

The Real Play City Challenge was looking for inspiring and stimulating examples that show the way forward in providing opportunities for inclusive play in our cities and neighbourhoods.



Credits: Victor Zamith

Our High Profile Jury



Amanda O'Rourke **Executive Director at 880 Cities**

Amanda O'Rourke is the Executive Director of 880 Cities, a nonprofit organisation with a mission to create healthy, equitable, and sustainable cities. She has over 15 years of experience in the nonprofit sector leading strategic planning, partnership development, and managing high impact teams. She has led diverse equitable mobility and public space projects in cities and towns in North America, Europe, and Australia.



Madhav Pai

Program Executive Director at WRI India Ross Center

Madhav Pai is the Program Executive Director of WRI India Ross Center. He spearheads a large urbanization policy research, prototyping support program that informs key areas of India's urban growth story. For the last two decades, Madhav has led, designed, and implemented urban programs and projects, across continents, in over a dozen countries.

Leticia Lozano

Co-founder at MACIA Estudio

Leticia Lozano is a co-founder of MACIA Estudio, an architect and a play-researcher with a passion for public space, human behaviour and spatial justice. Her hybrid profile has led her to collaborate with international organisations and governments designing public spaces, urban strategies and public policy recommendations to position play and urban childhoods at the centre of cities' transformation. MACIA Estudio's project Tamaulipas was a winner in the first Real Play City Challenge.





Rongedzayi Fambasayi Managing Director at Play Africa

Rongedzayi Fambasayi is the Managing Director at Play Africa. He has a global outlook having previously worked with leading international and pan-African child rights organisations driving law reform, campaigns, and advocacy across Africa. Rongedzayi currently serves as an independent External Expert in the Working Group on Children's Rights and Climate Change of the African Union's Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.



Lauren Sorkin

organization.

Tim Gill

England).

Nhial Deng

Nhial Deng is a 23-year-old South Sudanese refugee, writer, youth advocate, community activist and organizer. He spent 11 years in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya and as a youth leader and community activist in Kakuma, Nhial initiated a number of projects in the camp to help young people build better futures such as the Refugee Youth Peace Ambassadors and SheLeads Kakuma. He sits on a number of advisory boards including the Government of Canada's Refugee Education Council and is involved in several global youth movements.

Dr. Bo Stjerne Thomsen Vice-President and Chair of Learning Through Play at the LEGO Foundation Dr. Bo Stjerne Thomsen is an expert on how children and adults learn through play and he provides consultation at a bilateral, regional and multilateral level to international partners and leaders. He represents the LEGO Foundation and the LEGO Brand Group at international forums, and advises leadership teams across the LEGO entities, to attain the overall LEGO Brand Vision of becoming a global force for Learning Through Play.









Executive Director at Resilient Cities Network

As Executive Director, Lauren oversees global efforts to strengthen cities in the face of the complex and interconnected challenges they face. Leading a team of professionals in London, Mexico City, New York, and Singapore in collaboration with Chief Resilience Officers in over 40 countries, she drove the co-design process to launch the Resilient Cities Network as an independent city-led network

Independent scholar, consultant, writer

Tim Gill is a global advocate for children's outdoor play and mobility, and an independent scholar, writer and consultant based in London. He is the author of Urban Playground: How child-friendly planning and design can save cities and No Fear: Growing up in a riskaverse society. He is a Design Council Ambassador and Churchill Fellow, and former director of the Children's Play Council (now Play

Member at the Government of Canada's Refugee Education Council

Ŋ **Impact of the Real Play City Challenge**

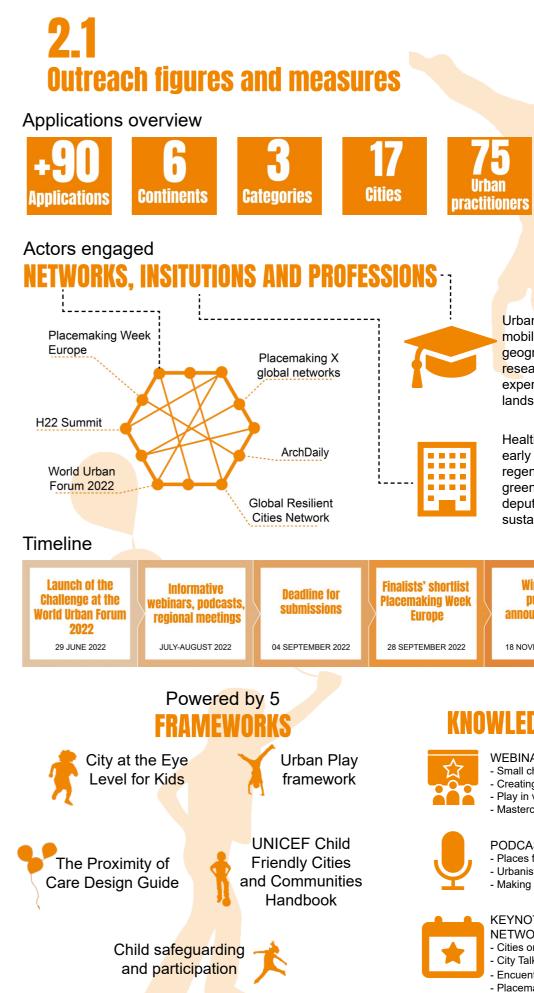
With the second edition of the Real Play City Challenge we set out to widen our audience and reach all continents. Through intense collaboration with the placemaking networks in Asia, North America, Latin America, Africa, Middle East, Australia and Europe and diverse play organisations worldwide we are proud to say we both succeeded in raising the total number of applications and increasing the global spread. This

goes particularly for the practitioners applications. A point of improvement for future challenges is the amount and variety of applications by cities. We see many possibilities for reaching out and ensuring more involvement of city officials, especially now that a solid foundation for reaching practitioners is created with this year's investment in network building.

FROM 41 COUNTRIES AROUND THE GLOBE



LOCAL COMMUNITIES **GLOBAL CHALLENGES**







Urban planners, architects, mobility experts, psychologists, geographers, economists, researchers, early childhood experts, health workers, teachers, landscaping professionals, lawyers.

Health, care, transport, planning, early childhood, education, social, regeneration, urbanism, recreation, green and environment, mayors, deputy mayors, municipalities, sustainability.

Winners public

18 NOVEMBER 2022

Online sessions for winning Cities and Urban **Practitioners**

DECEMBER 2022

NLEDGE SHARED

WEBINARS

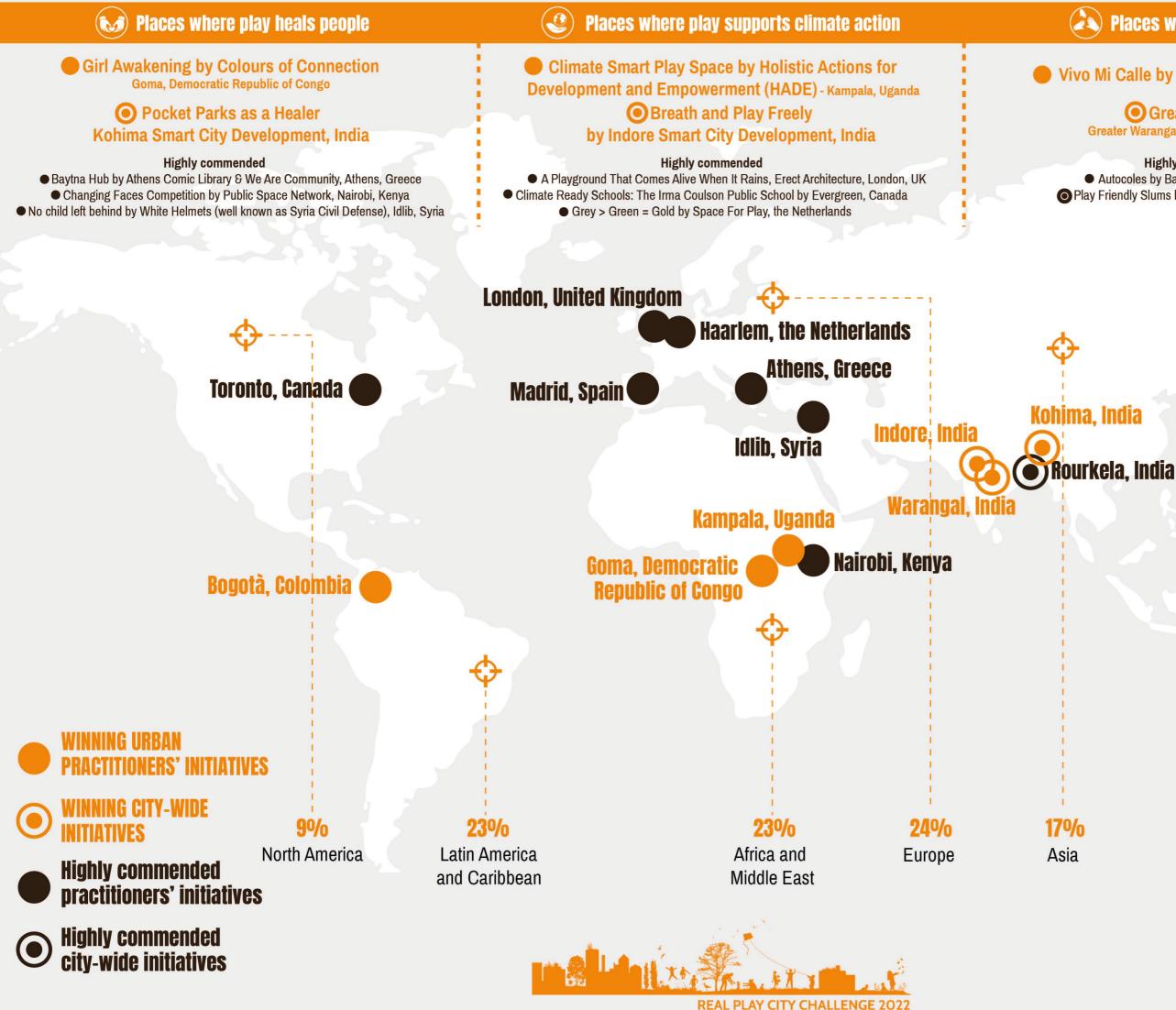
- Small change to big impact
- Creating real impact
- Play in vulnerable contexts
- Masterclass for cities

PODCASTS

- Places for good
- Urbanistica, cities for people
- Making it happen. Peacemakers Pakistani

KEYNOTES & REGIONAL NETWORKS' MEETINGS

- Cities on the Frontline: Playful cities
- City Talk & Keynote at H22 Summit
- Encuentro Latinoamerica
- Placemaking US



Places where play unites us all

Vivo Mi Calle by Despacio - Bogotà, Colombia

• Greater Warangal Greater Warangal, Municipal Corporation, India

Highly commended

 Autocoles by Basurama, Madrid, Spain O Play Friendly Slums by Rourkela Smart City, India







Awarded

Region



Reach





2.2 Insights from the 2022 themes

It's inspiring to see cities and urban practitioners passionately committed to creating opportunities for communities to thrive. These phenomenal playmakers are making a positive difference in very pressing global crises and show how also with limited resources you can improve the health and well-being of kids and their communities around the globe.

The projects from the category 'Play that heals people' show:

- It is always possible to make space for play, even in war torn cities, harsh neighbourhoods or under COVID restrictions;
- Play space for kids provides time and headspace to parents for them focus on their own recovery and healing process;
- Not any type of play works. It takes careful understanding of the situation to offer play that helps kids and youth to work through trauma and connect to their emotions.

The projects from the category 'Play that supports climate action' show:

- Existing playgrounds increasingly become too hot to use. Action is needed now;
- By including circularity also small business opportunities can arise, for caregivers and youth themselves;
- Climate adaptive play spaces, in their co-design process and end result, also educate kids, youth and caregivers about the need for climate action and what they can do differently.

The projects from the category 'Play that unites us all' show:

- Play spaces directed to minority groups are an invitation and recognition of these kids and their families, and also create a positive visibility in society;
- Creating a playspace and assuming that it will be used by all, is a wrong assumption. It requires thoughtful design and reaching out with good programming.

Some great remarks from our jury:

Dr Bo Stjerne Thomsen, VP and Chair of Learning Through Play, The Lego Foundation said: "These winners represent the future of urban design. Not only were they great ideas, but these six winners have made a tremendous effort to bring them to life into real play environments, discussing and testing whether they could be sustained and scaled. I am excited to see what they do next."

Tim Gill, Global advocate for children's outdoor pay and mobility added: "The Real Play City Challenge provides a unique opportunity to give those in lower income countries a platform. Some may think that the goal of creating more playful, child- and youth-friendly places and neighbourhoods is only relevant or meaningful to the global North. However, as this year's winning cohort all come from South America, Africa, and Asia, the RPCC shows how wrong that idea is. Congratulations to all."

2.3 Ten lessons from the winners

The Real Play City Challenge aims to share knowledge between participants and the rest of the globe. These are the ten tips from the Real Play City Challenge 2022 edition:

- 1. Design for climate change makes urban initiatives not only cope with, but also perform well during extreme weather.
- 2. Variation in weather conditions can be used as a tool to vary the use and layout of the space throughout the year and seasons.
- 3. Scalability depends on the context, so in many places around the globe, interventions with non-skilled labour 9. are easier to replicate and apply.
- 4. Existing resources can be an opportunity to recycle, but similarly also to generate income for the local communities.
- 5. Public space can have true like generating income or learning transformative power for minority opportunities for the caregivers. groups and vulnerable people in **10.Play is a powerful tool to unite people** society, such as children and young with different needs, ages, backgrounds girls, people suffering from disease, and cultures. When children, adults and handicap or trauma, people from the the elderly play, they learn to trust and LGBTQ+ community or indigenous work together with their community. people.
- 6. Lighter and quicker placemaking solutions enable local champions and leaders to make big changes in difficult situations for their communities.

- 7. Mental health is a big factor to take into account when planning public spaces where people can come together and support one another while providing protection and comfort.
- 8. Accessibility for all people to play in the public space should be a priority, especially in areas where conflict and humanitarian crises are rife.
- Playful placemaking in public spaces can and should be co-created with caregivers. This creates better, safe, spaces for children and caregivers alike while enlarging possibilities

Knowledge products delivered

Podcasts

Urbanistica Podcast

On Urbanistica's channel, Mustafa Sherif has led a series of interviews with Real Play Coalition partners and placemakers working on playful placemaking initiatives for all:

306. OPEN CALL to Real Play City Challenge - Hannah Wright

318. The LEGO Foundation & Real Play City Challenge - Bo Stjerne Thomsen 321. UNICEF's play hubs in neighbouring countries of Ukraine - Jessica Katharine Brown

Making it happen - Peacemakers Pakistani

On the Peacemakers Pakistani channel, Azbah Ansari led an interview with Sara Candiracci from ARUP, in which they discussed the Real Play City Challenge, telling the main features and inspiration from the previous year. There has also been more conversation on ARUP's work related to the Urban Play Framework, Playful Cities Toolkit and many interesting inputs on how to build a city that encourages space and time to play:

Real Play City Challenge 2022 with Sara Candiracci / Special Podcast

Places For Good Podcast

Boopsie Maran, Founder and Director of Places for Good podcast, did a full series discussing case studies on the three main themes of the Real Play City Challenge, together with various speakers from all around the world:

Episode 0 - Viviana Cordero Episode 1 - Riccardo Conti Episode 2 - Guillermo Bernal Episode 3 - Zviko Kanyoka Episode 4 - Vanessa Lainez Episode 5 - Minouche Besters

Articles

The real play coalition produced a number of articles related to the three themes for this year.

- The role of play in healing children and communities in crisis settings
- Reclaiming play whilst supporting climate action
- Places where play can unite us all

Regional networks meetings

Encuentro Latinoamerica

More than 150 people from 12 countries in Latin América met online to talk about the importance of play and placemaking for the region. In this event, the Real Play City Challenge was presented and two winners of the 2020 Edition shared their experience of joining the Challenge:

Leticia Lozano from Macia Studio presented Tamaulipas, a permanent urban toy in Mexico City. Nestor Tello from the Municipality of Zapopan presented how the Afuera Strategy brought play to public spaces in their city and part of their program is now being replicated in other cities in Mexico.

PlacemakingUS for play and placemaking

The PlacemakingUS network met on July 28th to discuss play and placemaking. During the session, we heard from Real Play Coalition members Ethan Kent, Marta Popiolek and Viviana Cordero as well as ideas and presentations about playcemaking by Tina Govan, Aaron Greiner, Carmen Mays, Christy Samad and Chelsea Brown.

The Real Play City Challenge Award Ceremony was a space for the winners to come together to exchange knowledge, and showcase their initiatives. A Networking Session was hosted by the Real Play City Challenge team with the winners right after the ceremony. The winners were very motivated and looking for ways to engage with the organising team and with each other to scale their impact:

Real Play City Challenge Awards 2022



3 WINNERS

An overview

We received applications from North and Latin America, Europe, Africa and the Middle East, Asia and Oceania. The expert jury selected the winning cities and urban practitioners for creating places that give people time, space, and opportunities to play, to help their community tackle three global challenges-Climate change, inclusivity and conflict. Winners of the 'Places where play heals people' category utilise play to help communities through issues of trauma and conflict, 'Places where play supports climate action', were recognised for enabling a community response to climate change, and winners of the 'Places where play unites us all' are addressing inequality through play.

One city and one urban practitioner project has been awarded the win across each theme, and the jury selected several highly commended projects.

Places where play heals people:

- Winning urban practitioner: Girl Awakening by Colours of Connection, Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Winning city: Pocket Parks as a Healer by Kohima Smart City Development, India Highly commended:
 - Baytna Hub by Athens Comic Library & We Are Community, Athens, Greece
 - Changing Faces Competition by Public Space Network, Nairobi, Kenya
 - No child left behind by White Helmets (well known as Syria Civil Defense), Idlib, Svria

Places where play supports climate action:

- · Winning urban practitioner: Climate Smart Play Space by Holistic Actions for Development and Empowerment (HADE), Uganda
- Winning city: Breath and Play Freely by Indore Smart City Development, India Highly commended:
 - A Playground That Comes Alive When It Rains, <u>Erect Architecture</u>, London, UK
 - Climate Ready Schools: The Irma Coulson Public School by Evergreen, Canada
 - Grey > Green = Gold by <u>Space For Play</u>, the Netherlands

Places where play unites us all:

- Winning urban practitioner: Vivo Mi Calle by Despacio, Colombia
- Winning city: Greater Warangal, Greater Warangal, Municipal Corporation, India Hiahlv commended:
 - Autocoles by Basurama, Madrid, Spain
 - Play Friendly Slums by <u>Rourkela Smart City</u>, India

The winning projects



City: Pocket Parks as a Healer, Kohima, India

Due to the unique land holding system in Kohima, all land is owned under the Constitution Act. There is a scarcity of open spaces around neighbourhoods of Kohima, which has resulted in children not having many opportunities to play outdoors.

Kohima Smart City identified unused spaces, refuse sites and residual spaces around steep street turns and corners and envisioned how they can be transformed into safe child friendly pocket parks. These spaces played the role of treasured spaces that helped children overcome their fear of the pandemic, and also provided resting points for care-givers.

Category: Places where play heals people

Urban Practitioner: Girl Awakening by Colours of Connection, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

In DRC, girls face enormous challenges on a daily basis - genderbased violence is pervasive, HIV affects 2x more women and girls than men and boys, sexual violence is experienced by 46% of girls, and educational outcomes are poor with just 1/3 girls completing primary school

Founded in 2020, the project has already supported 300 girls, working leaders and 30,000 community are to provide scholarships for all girl program participants to pursue their education and provide opportunities for girls to learn how to manage their menstrual cycle, reproductive health, and understanding their rights and consent.



3.2 The winning projects

Category: Places where play supports climate action



City: Breath and Play Freely, <u>City of</u> <u>Indore</u>, India

Indore is amongst the 25 most densely populated cities in India, with 12% of the population under 6 years old. Rapid growth has increased the lack of exposure to nature in the city for these children.

The "Breath and Play Freely in Clean & Green Indore" initiative focuses on developing play spaces which improve the quality of life for citizens and support climate action. Under the initiative, the city identified 504 open spaces at city level, neighbourhood level, and pocket park level to convert to play spaces, sponge points, and oxygen banks. *Urban Practitioner:* Climate Smart Play Space by <u>HADE</u>, Uganda

Climate Smart Play Space is designed to give children in the Ghetto communities in Kampala an opportunity to create play toys using safe, recyclable materials as they learn and embrace the value of climate change and environmental conservation.

Many children in Ghetto communities have limited opportunities to enjoy a playful childhood, and this project gives them an opportunity to work with their mothers to collect waste materials and create their own toys, while developing an understanding of climate change adaptation and mitigation.



Category: Places where play unites us all



City: Greater Warangal, <u>Warangal</u>, India

Faced with a lack of green spaces in the city, Greater Warangal developed a new children's park in the slum of MH Nagar, but with no Government land available close-by, they transformed an abandoned garbage dumping yard for the park. The initiative has helped the discriminated minorities settled in the slum areas to access positive, safe, and joyful family playscapes, with 50 children using the park daily. *Urban Practitioner:* Vivo Mi Calle by <u>Despacio</u>, Colombia

Vivo Mi Calle is an initiative that seeks to improve the health and wellbeing of young people in Cali and Palmira, as well as empower them, through the creation and regeneration of public spaces that foster their right to healthy cities.

Vivo Mi Calle operates in an area where several gangs operate and divide the community, aiming to transform public spaces but involving children and adolescents in deciding which places to intervene, and identify risks that may limit their access to them. Vivo Mi Calle has transformed two derelict spaces in eastern Cali, as well as improved access and safety for young people through a segregated cycle lane in Palmira.



Keep on learning and sharing join the placemaking movement!

Are you a city, organisation or community leader that loves play and placemaking as much as we do? Follow our placemaking networks around the globe and find your local leader!

<u>PlacemakingX</u> Placemaking Europe Placemaking Mexico Placemaking US Amaken Placemaking Network Placemaking Colombia Placemakers Asia Placemaking Aotearoa

Placemaking Australia Placemaking Brasil Placemaking Canada Placemaking Collective UK Placemaking Malaysia Placemaking Cuba

Placemaking India Placemaking Japan Placemaking Latinoamerica Placemaking Pakistan **Placemaking Nordics**

For more information about the first and second edition of the Real Play City Challenge go to <u>www.realplaycitychallenge.org</u>

A big thanks to:

Winners of the Real Play City Challenge Special Mentions of the Real Play City Challenge Nomination jury members: Winners jury members Speakers at Webinar Series Speakers at Regional Meetings Moderators Speakers and interviewers at Podcast Series Facilitators **Technical Support**

Team:

Real Play PlacemakingX coalition

