



Safe and Sound Cities Programme S²Cities

Safe and Sound Cities (S²Cities) is a global programme managed by Global Infrastructure Basel Foundation (GIB) to improve young people’s urban safety and well-being. The programme empowers youth (ages 15-24) to analyse community safety issues, collaborate with local government to address challenges and work with diverse stakeholders to implement creative solutions.

GELOCATION	Naga and Baguio, Philippines; Bandung, Indonesia; Cuenca and Ambato, Ecuador; Envigado, Colombia
TIMEFRAME	2021 to present
PRESENTED BY	Global Infrastructure Basel Foundation

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DAVOS BAUKULTUR QUALITY SYSTEM Definitions	
GOVERNANCE	DIVERSITY
FUNCTIONALITY	CONTEXT
ENVIRONMENT	SENSE OF PLACE
ECONOMY	BEAUTY

The S²Cities programme empowers young people to develop and implement innovative solutions to improve accessibility of public and safe spaces for youth in collaboration with the government and private sector. Interventions are both physical and programmatic to engage and activate underused city spaces, including transforming landmark public spaces into welcoming spaces adaptable to various activities.

Each project’s implementation is unique, responding to local needs and context. For example, in Naga, Baguio, Ambato, Cuenca and Envigado, long-vacant spaces, including commercial units, were converted into youth innovation hubs with tailored activities. In

Bandung, the *Kami Ruang Ketiga* (the Third Space) team reactivated a space beneath the Pasopati Flyover, a city landmark, with a Film Park, football field and events programme. This led to its recognition as an official non-governmental organization (NGO).

Beyond the overarching governance and financing model, in some cases, local government and the private sector have contributed with in-kind or direct funding. Each project has also creatively sought mechanisms to ensure long-term sustainability and maintenance of their physical and programmatic elements through formal institutional channels.



Stakeholders



Source: S²Cities programme

Key outcomes

GOVERNANCE The collaborative governance model of each programme component and activity is designed to ensure long-term sustainability and maximize positive impacts. The programme’s first phase concentrated on capacity strengthening for the public and private sector and young people, to promote civic and entrepreneurial engagement.

GIB and its partners worked closely with young people and youth-led organizations to identify key issues affecting the safety and well-being of young people. Programme participants mapped and engaged relevant stakeholders, and developed skills and strategies to co-design solutions. In particular, the programme facilitated alignment between young people’s and local governments’ safety priorities, facilitating collaboration and trust-building, and ultimately leading to more sustainable and impactful solutions.

DIVERSITY The S²Cities programme takes a participatory, inclusive design process that brings together diverse community, public, private and civil society stakeholders, especially young people. The programme also promotes equitable gender representation, socioeconomic diversity and minority inclu-

sion, with some projects specifically working to include Indigenous youth and members, particularly young people, of the LGBTQIA+ community. Furthermore, the programme’s approach serves as a model for including youth and community voices in planning and implementing future municipal infrastructure projects. For example, the participatory process of creating the Naga Youth Hub is serving as an official municipal model backed by an Executive Order.

BEAUTY Each project of the programme is tailored and adapted to local needs. Their spatial design is co-designed by the young people with local design firms to transform the existing sites into vibrant places for the community that are inclusive and enhance the visual quality of the previously neglected space.

“Young people should be meaningfully engaged in shaping the cities they live in to create safer, more inclusive and sustainable urban environments.”

S²Cities

Replicability

The projects show how formalizing governance structures enable not only sustainability but pathways for replicability. The youth innovation hubs have been institutionalized in several geographies, laying out a roadmap for applying in diverse contexts and similarly formalizing their existence. For example, in the case of *Kami Ruang Ketiga*, government commitment was required to safeguard the space from returning to unsafe use. The recognition of the *Kami Ruang Ketiga* team as an NGO with a mandate to transform further underused public spaces throughout Bandung demonstrates how a strong coalition can become an organization. Attaining this formal recognition was crucial for long-term sustainability as it enabled the young people to sign contracts with the Housing and Settlement Agency of Bandung City, committing the agency to ongoing maintenance of the site, including through the provision of electricity and a waste management system. The establishment of the NGO also made it easier for regular programming of the site to occur, a vital part needed to ensure continuous activation of the spaces.

Lessons learned

Formalizing the projects of the programme has been key to their success. This requires persistence in navigating bureaucracy, annual budget reviews, elections and delays to successfully formalize legal instruments (e.g. Executive Orders) so that clear mechanisms for government support and funding are established. The involvement of several government agencies is key: while a particular agency may champion the project, alignment and cooperation between different offices ensure lasting impact. Local programme partners hold meetings with governmental entities at the sub-district and city levels, involving young people from the first stages of programme implementation, to forge alliances

and partnerships with government actors. The foundation for this to commence is GIB agreeing on a Memorandum of Understanding with the municipal agency.

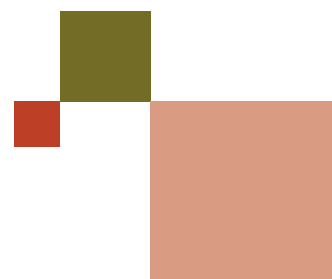
Next steps

The S²Cities programme continues to scale its work with recent launches, such as projects and placemaking initiatives in Ambato and Cuenca, Ecuador, which are addressing alcohol consumption in streets and a lack of safe pedestrian routes and access to public transport to and from a local university.

The youth innovation hubs' work will focus on both strengthening existing hubs while working to expand locations.

The *Kami Ruang Ketiga* NGO is conducting three projects: developing urban farms, establishing reading corners in public spaces, and creating community gathering spots at the Cihampelas Skywalk.

Phase II of the programme (2024–2029) will seek to expand to additional cities and countries both in the Global South (under the current primary donor) and within the Global North (in Switzerland, pending co-funding confirmation). The second phase aims to strengthen the feedback loop between the global and local programmes. Local implementation partners will use local indicators to identify lessons learned. These findings will be synthesized across projects so that insights can be shared back to project sites and communities to strengthen the impact and ensure project outcomes align with intent.



Read more

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[Innovative Practice](#)

Read the Eight criteria for a high-quality Baukultur:
[The Davos Baukultur Quality System](#)

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Sources

Source: Safe and Sound Cities programme. (2023).
Programme Impact (2021-23).

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