



The Proximity of Care - project lifecycle

The guide is structured around four sections that represent the main stages in the life cycle of an urban project: Understand, Design, Implement and Influence. Each stage contains clear steps to guide you through the process of adopting a child and family-friendly approach at every point of a project.

Effective design begins with understanding

To improve the living conditions and well-being of young children, their caregivers and pregnant women in a specific context, it is necessary to understand their constraints and needs, as well as their experience of the home, neighbourhood, and city environment. An approach that works in one context may not be successful in another. While we can compare and learn lessons from a range of experiences and examples, effective design that changes long-term behaviour is rooted in the holistic understanding of the local context.

Understand

Make the right design choices for impact

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for improving early childhood development in cities. Every community and context has different considerations and norms to be carefully weighed, alongside those of a safe, durable and sustainable design that maximises the social, environmental and economic return on investment. Making design decisions based on detailed understanding of your project context and community, being open-minded and collaborative, and placing creativity at the centre of your approach, is critical to effective and context-sensitive design that will generate a lasting positive change.

Design

Put your design into practice with community collaboration

Implementation is where the understanding, vision, and designs that you have created start to take shape and confront reality. Make sure you build enough flexibility along the implementation process to continue to learn and return to some of the steps that you have taken through the previous stages. Engagement, for example does not stop after the Design and Understand stages but is reshaped and embedded into the implementation. In this stage, you will find relevant guidance on how to make a child-centred approach a reality and how to undertake steps like a pilot, procurement or a public launch and guidance on how to think about future maintenance and impact measurement for long-lasting change.

Implement

Influence

Gain and sustain support for your project and a child-friendly approach

Influence is essential to achieving a successful design that positively encourages, enables or changes behaviours as intended. A consideration of who we need to engage with and influence to maximise opportunities and overcome challenges, is relevant at every stage of a project. An effective, planned approach to influence can help gain community ownership and support, secure permissions, shape the best possible design solutions and sustain long-term funding.

