

Appropriation of public space and urban infrastructure for leisure physical activity (ALPhA)

Yaoundé stakeholder workshop report

Djeuga Palace Hotel, Yaoundé

September 21, 2021



The workshop was attended, in person and virtually (via zoom), by 43 delegates, representing organisations from diverse sectors including *academia/professional societies* (University of Yaoundé, Cameroon Academy of Science, Cameroon Young Academy of Science, University of Cambridge, University of Lagos), *government* (Ministry of Sports and Physical Education, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education, Ministry of housing and urban development, Ministry of Secondary Education, Ministry of Decentralization and Local Development, Ministry of Environment, representatives from several Yaounde municipal councils), *multilateral organisations* (World Bank, UN Habitat), *non-governmental/civil society organisations* (NCD Alliance, Green Horizon, World Green Building council Cameroon) and *private sector sports organisations* focused on physical activity (Club Star Obam, Club ASFINE, Cavour Sport, Liza Sport Group, ASHADIM, ASSYDE).

The aim of the workshop was to understand the features and health risks of public spaces informally used for leisure physical activity (exercise) and the experiences and motivation of users of these spaces. The workshop seeks to provide a platform for urban stakeholders to discuss challenges, share best practices and understand the influence and impact of leisure physical activities in shaping the form and function of African cities.

Prior to the workshop, a survey was sent to all participants seeking their perspectives of ALPHA activities in public spaces and to identify the under-exploited opportunities for leisure physical activity. The event started at about 10:40am with the presentation of all stakeholders and the event organisers. The workshop was moderated by Dr. Felix Assah and from the agenda the first event of the day was presented by Dr Tolu Oni in which she detailed out the role of urban infrastructure in health and wellbeing.

Thereafter, Dr Ebele Mogo gave an overview of the preliminary findings from the literature review on use of public space across Africa, including the use of public space infrastructure as health interventions through health education, social cohesion, employment, disease reduction, physical health and mental health.

Ms Joy Mutai from the UN-Habitat team presented tools for assessing public spaces with data from Bamenda-Cameroon. Points to be noted in her presentation include the types of public spaces people use for physical activity, the types of activities and health risks encountered by its users.

In addition, Dr Felix Assah gave an overview of ALPhA spaces in Yaoundé detailing the spaces mapped during the citizen science data collection (using the Epicollect app), the typologies, locations across the city and health risk of these spaces. He also presented data on responses from the pre-workshop survey on ALPhA spaces as illustrated in Table 1.

Around sport Stadium	Hills	Middle of road	Parks and car parks	Open or vacant spaces
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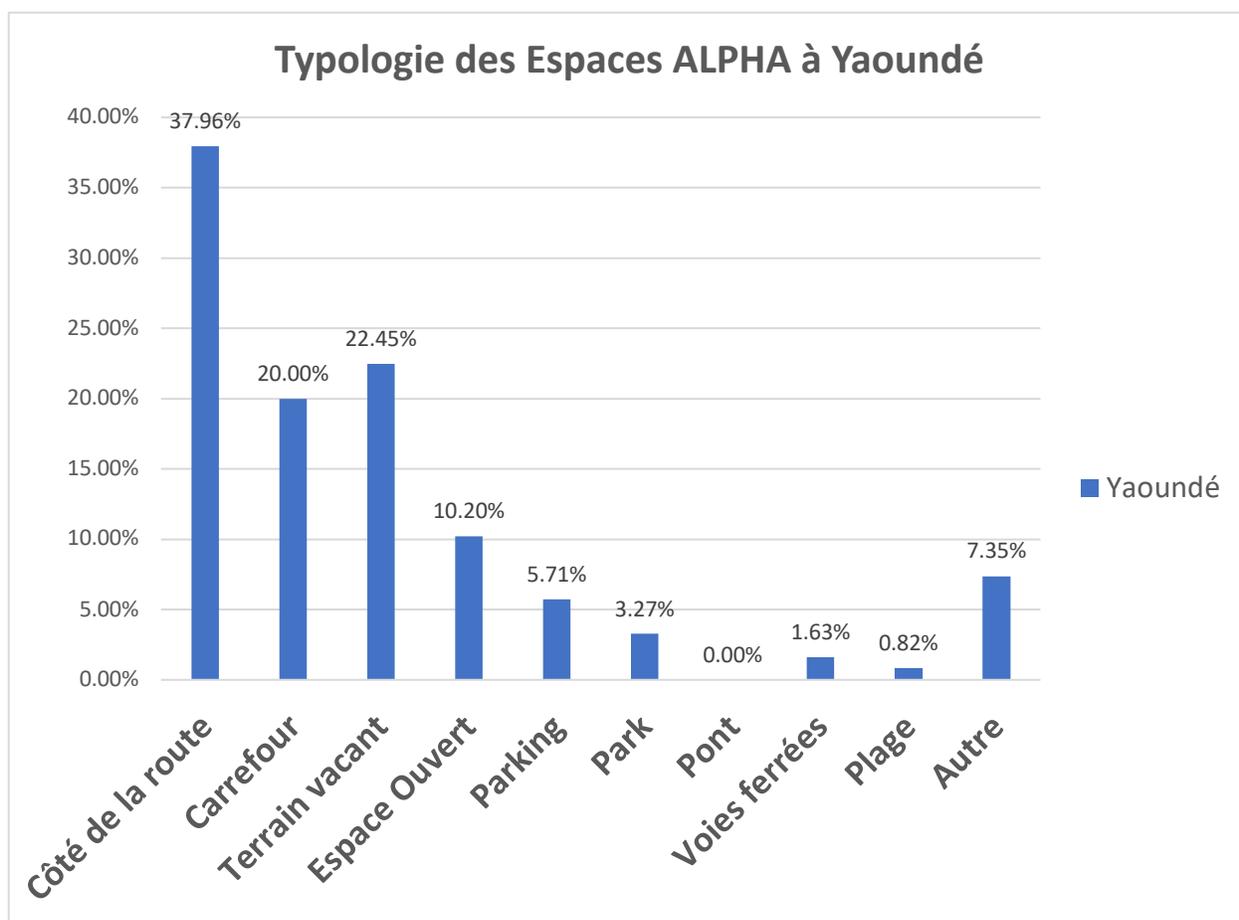


Figure 2: Typology of public spaces used for physical activities in Yaoundé.

This was followed by a presentation from Dr Joseph Ese Akpokodje from World Bank Nigeria on current data on air quality management and health outcomes in Lagos public spaces. At this point stakeholders were given the opportunity to ask questions.

Breakout session 1:

For the first breakout sessions stakeholders from different organisations were spread on different tables with rapporteurs taking notes using the Mural board app. This breakout session had four questions to interrogate typologies presented and identify any gaps. At the end of the first breakout session, every stakeholder returned to the plenary session and the mural board was projected with the different responses from each breakout room as follows:

(1) Any obvious gaps in typologies and locations presented?

For the first question in the first breakout session, participants had to give responses on gaps in typologies and locations. Examples of typologies they mentioned included spaces for swimming and golf as well as several other locations such as in front of government offices, school compounds, residential areas, to name a few (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Summary of gaps in typologies of public spaces used for physical activities in Yaoundé.

(2) Past healthy public space initiatives.

Question 2 invited participants to think back to previous healthy public space initiatives: what they were, who were involved, when did it take place and the purpose of the initiative. Among several responses (Figure 4), participants spoke of the creation of Parcours Vita in Yaoundé about 10 years ago and the promotion of hygiene in public spaces through neighbourhood hygiene competition.

Q2: Are you aware of any past healthy public space initiatives?

-what was it?

-who was involved?

-when was it?



Figure 4: Summary of past healthy public space initiatives in Yaoundé.

(3) Were they sustained and why or why not?

Question 3 explored if past healthy public space initiatives were sustained or not (Figure 5). For example, one participant mentioned that for the Parcours Vita, the public space is taken care of and well managed by the city council. According to another participant, other spaces are existent, but they lack care as they are abandoned in the hands of the people of the locality with little or no care.

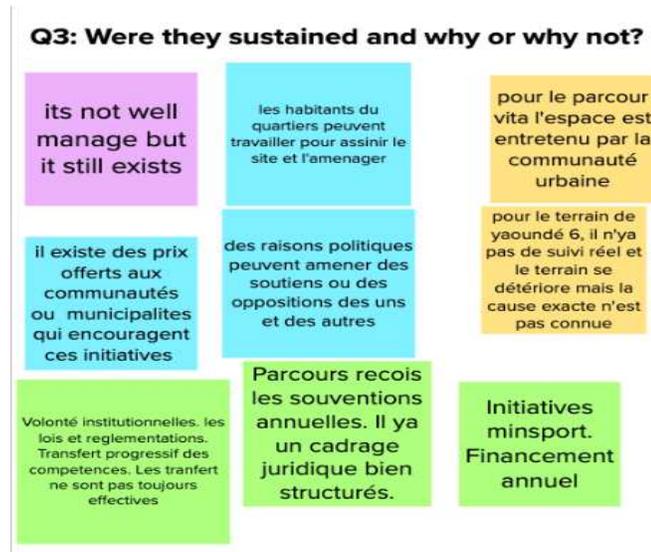


Figure 5: Maintenance of past healthy public space initiatives in Yaoundé.

(4) Enablers and challenges encountered: opportunities, constraints, shortcomings.

This question anchored on the enablers and challenges encountered and explored the opportunities, constraints and shortcomings of the aforementioned (Figure 6). Participants identified several unharnessed opportunities in terms of space and in terms of the will to help create safe and healthy public spaces for physical activities. Others cited that while policies are existent, the greatest shortcoming is the slow implementation of the initiatives.

**Q4: Enablers and challenges encountered:
opportunities, constraints, shortcomings**



Figure 6: Opportunities and constraints for future healthy public space initiatives in Yaoundé.

The next phase of the workshop focused on the governance of public spaces including barriers and enablers of the use of these spaces for exercise. Dr Felix Assah gave an overview on responses from the pre-workshop survey listing out different (government and private sector) enablers and the barriers of using public spaces in Yaoundé. This session took 15 minutes and was followed by the second breakout session.

Breakout session 2:

This breakout session focused on governance of ALPhA spaces for physical activities, actors responsible, public space safety and planned public space initiatives. The second breakout session questions and responses were as follows:



(1) What are existing regulatory/policy frameworks/institutions that can support/guide/prioritise access to healthy public space?

The first question explored existing regulatory, policy frameworks and institutions that can guide and prioritise access to healthy public spaces. This question was a follow up to the last question of the first breakout session and participants were quick to share existing policy frameworks and regulations (Figure 7). Participants also stated that despite the existence of these policy frameworks for several years, their implementation has been slow and this was perceived as a major shortcoming to having access to healthy public spaces in Yaoundé.

Q1: What are existing regulatory/policy frameworks/ institutions that can support/ guide/prioritise access to healthy public spaces?



Figure 7: Existing governance frameworks that influence access to healthy public spaces in Yaoundé.

(2) Are you aware of any examples of interinstitutional / intersectoral collaboration on public space, air quality, safety, health promotion?

The focus of the second question was on interinstitutional / intersectoral collaboration on public space, air quality, safety, health promotion. This was to enlighten everyone on who is/was involved and to understand participants' perceived functionality and effectiveness of these collaborations, their strengths and weaknesses as well as whether the collaborations were sustained. Examples of collaborations (Figure 8) mentioned by participants include the collaboration between councils through the Communes et Villes Unies du Cameroun.

Q2: Are you aware of any examples of interinstitutional / intersectoral collaboration on public space, air quality, safety or health promotion? -who was involved? -was the collaboration effective?



Figure 8: Examples of intersectoral collaboration in Yaoundé.

Participants expressed that this was a major strength for the councils as they met severally and shared the progress of councils which spurs positive competition among them. Some participants mentioned a few other inter institutional collaborations such as between the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Sports and Physical Education, Ministry of Decentralization and Local Development, in the protection, provision and allocation of public spaces. On air pollution, councils like Yaoundé 5 mentioned collaborations with a Community Based Organisation on the transformation of waste management to reduce air pollution.

(3) Who else should be at the table in discussion of public space governance?

This question anchored on who participants thought should be involved in public space governance discussions and their responses (Figure 9) ranged from the Ministry of Environment when it

concerned air quality, and the Delegation of National Security when it came to public security to the Ministry of Youth and Physical Education for the governance of physical activity.

Q3: Who do you think should be part of any discussions of public space governance?
 e.g. Actors in air quality, public space, safety/ injury, health promotion; Actors responsible for development, priority-setting, implementation, enforcement, evaluation, advocacy



Figure 9: Governance actors for access to healthy public space in Yaoundé.

(4) What are the key governance factors to consider?

For this question, participants shared key governance factors to consider (Figure 10). These included community participation at all levels including decision making and management of the public space, a well decentralised governance structure, human resources, accountability in the management of public spaces.

Q4: What are the key governance factors to consider? E.g. actor involvement, their agency (human resources, capacity, financial resources to sustain), accountability etc

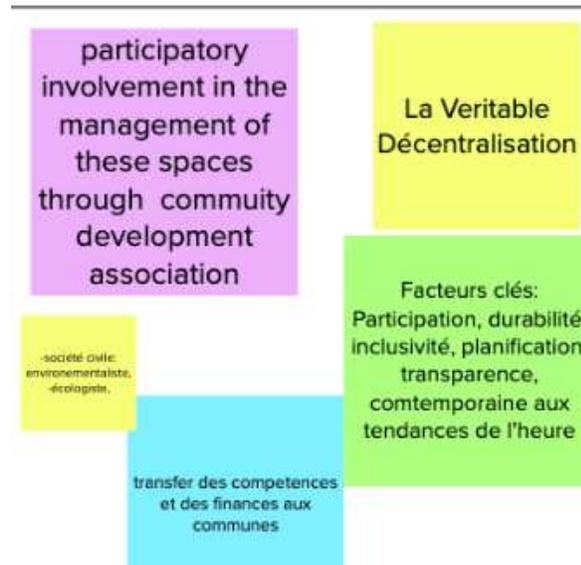


Figure 10: Governance factors to consider in the design and implementation of healthy public space initiatives in Yaoundé.

(5) Existing/planned public space/health initiatives and/or policy priorities as opportunities that could be leveraged to design healthier public space access.

For this final question, participants shared their knowledge of either ongoing or planned initiatives that shape public space that could be leveraged to support better access to healthy public space. Responses are captured in Figure 11.

Q5: Are you aware of any existing/planned initiatives and/or policy priorities that could be leveraged to design healthier public space access ?



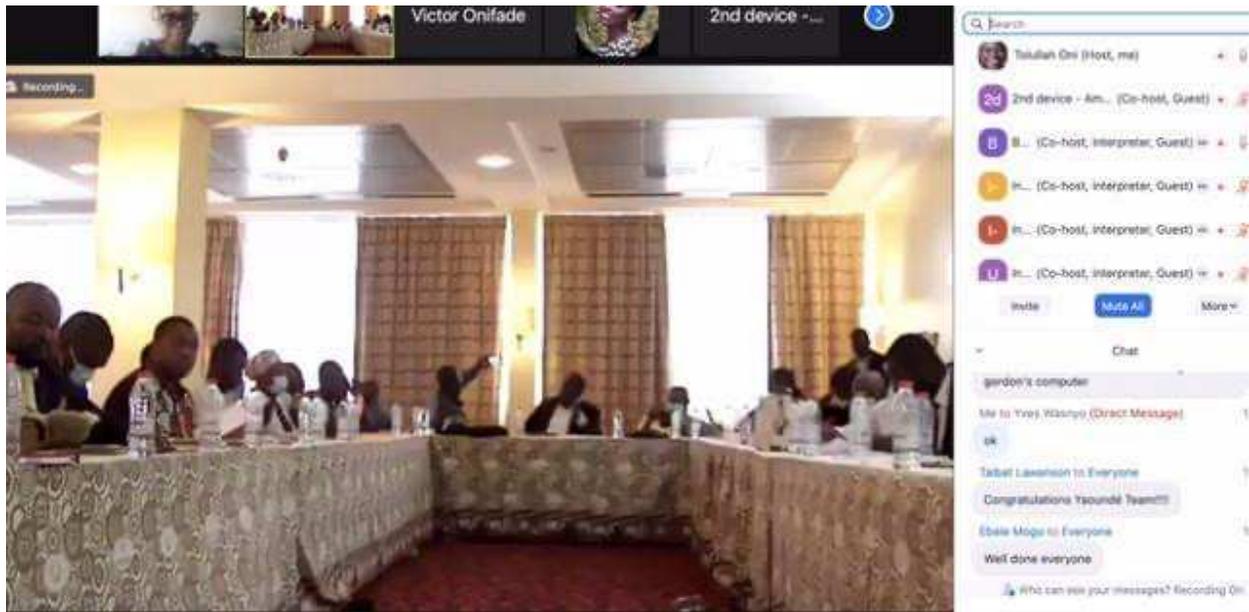
Figure 10: Ongoing or planned public space initiatives in Yaoundé.

At the end of this breakout session, participants re-convened in plenary and Dr Felix Assah presented discussions from the breakout rooms on the mural board.

To close the workshop, Dr Assah shared details of plans for a second workshop in 2022. The aim of the second workshop is to co-design interventions in healthy public spaces integrating research results and stakeholder expertise. A post-workshop survey was circulated with the following questions:

- (1) *Who do you think should be invited for the next workshop in 2022 who is currently not here,*
- (2) *Would you be interested in participating in the second workshop in 2022?*

The last part of the event was on opportunities for supporting exercise in public space presented by Dr Tolu Oni and after this presentation which marked the last point of the day, the workshop came to an end.



WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

Time	Activity	Anchor
0900-1000	Registration and breakfast PS: If participating remotely, please ensure full name and organisational affiliation shown as only recognised persons will be granted access to the zoom room	
1000-1115	PROJECT RATIONALE	
1000-1015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Role of urban infrastructure in health and wellbeing <i>Rising NCD, health inequality, and impact on human development</i> <i>Domains of Physical Activity and added health value of leisure PA</i> - Study aims and methods 	<i>Dr Tolu Oni</i>
1015-1035	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public space as public health infrastructure <i>Preliminary findings from literature review on the use of public space across Africa</i> - UNHabitat tools on assessing public space 	<i>Dr Ebele Mogo</i> <i>Joy Mutai</i> <i>, UN Habitat</i>
1035-1055	Q &A	<i>Dr Assab Felix</i>
1055-1300	Perceptions and perspectives of types of public spaces used, exercise in public space behaviour, motivations, health risks	
1055-1115	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Overview of ALPHA Spaces in Yaoundé - <i>Illustrative findings from EpiCollect: typologies, locations across the city, motivations, health risks</i> - <i>Pre-workshop survey responses on spaces</i> 	<i>Dr Assab Felix</i>
1115-1200	Break out session I: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Any obvious gaps in typologies and locations presented?</i> - <i>Perspectives on reported motivations and health risks and COVID</i> - <i>Past healthy public space initiatives (what, who, when, why)</i> - <i>Enablers and challenges encountered: opportunities, constraints, shortcomings</i> - <i>Were they sustained and why or why not?</i> 	<i>Table lead (selected on the table):</i> <i>Rapporteur:</i> <i>Nfondoh Blanche</i> <i>Kum Anab T</i>

		<p>Ngwa Edwin Dr Yves Wasnyo Dr Stephanie Tegua Dr Ebele Mogo (online)</p>
1200-1230	Report back from groups	
1230-1250	Air quality management and health outcomes -Lessons from Lagos	Joseph Ese Akpokodje World Bank
1250-1430	Governance of public space including barriers and enablers of use for exercise	
1250-1305	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governing ALPHA Spaces in Yaoundé - <i>Pre-workshop survey responses on governance</i> 	Dr Assab Felix
1305-1350	<p>Breakout Session II:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>What are existing regulatory/policy frameworks/institutions that can support/guide/prioritise?</i> - <i>Examples of interinstitutional / intersectoral collaboration on public space, air quality, safety, health promotion (Who is/was involved (sectors), Perceived functionality and effectiveness, Strengths and weaknesses, was it sustained and why or why not?)</i> - <i>Who else should be at the table in discussion of public space governance? (Actors in air quality, public space, safety/injury, health promotion; Actors responsible for development, priority-setting, implementation, enforcement, evaluation, advocacy)</i> - <i>What are the key governance factors to consider? E.g. actor involvement, their agency (human resources, capacity, financial resources to sustain), accountability</i> - <i>Existing/planned public space/health initiatives and/or policy priorities as opportunities that could be leveraged to design healthier public space access (to be further explored in next workshop</i> 	<p>Table lead (selected on the table):</p> <p>Rapporteur: Nfondob Blanche Kum Awah T Ngwa Edwin Dr Yves Wasnyo Dr Stephanie Tegua Dr Ebele Mogo (online)</p>
1350-1430	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report back and discussions - Opportunities for supporting exercise in public space: 	Dr Tolu Oni & Dr Assab Felix

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Outline co-design plans for Workshop 2 (co-design of interventions)- Completion of post workshop survey	
1430-	LUNCH and close	

For more information on the project, please visit: <https://urbanbetter.science/alpha/>