“Strengthening social bonds in Bujumbura through public space:
Redesigning Jardin Public de Bujumbura for the restoration of the city’s sense of community.”

Gwendoline Albright N. | Advisor: Andrew Von Maur | School of Architecture and Interior Design

Abstract

In the last century, public spaces have been of the most studied elements in urban design as some of the most used and impactful places that shape public life. Unfortunately, the necessity of public spaces for public life is not a focus everywhere. In places that have continuously experienced war and instability over the years, like Burundi, the public realm is often perceived as a source of problems rather than a promoter of the city’s well-being. Public spaces are seen as settings that contribute to an increase of insecurities and instabilities in the city. This project seeks to harness the possibility of intentionally redesigning an existing public space using design principles and patterns into a well-designed space that would help promote positive public life in the city. It will consist of assembling a toolbox of design principles and patterns that can be used in the redesigning of Bujumbura’s public park “Jardin Public,” as one of the underutilized parks in Burundi, with the hope of promoting a peaceful and community-oriented neighborhood in Bujumbura.

Keywords: Jardin Public, Bujumbura, Placemaking, Principles, Patterns, Tools.

Presentation Outline

Forward - My introduction to public spaces

I. Introduction
   A. History of a country at a crossroad
   C. Park as an instrument for social incorporation and identity of a community

II. Investigation and analysis
   A. Site description and current situation
   B. Neighborhood analysis

III. Raw materials for the toolbox
   A. Literature reviews
      1. The placemaking analogy & the public-yard design principle
      3. Essential principles for the toolbox
   B. Case studies – From 3 different continents

IV. Tool Box
   A. Toolbox concise
      1. Public spaces with limited access
      2. Public Spaces
   B. Design principles and design patterns + Recommendations

V. Summary and conclusion
   A. Discussion and limitations
   B. Future recommendation
Selected annotated bibliography

Jane Jacobs in this book writes about what makes streets safe, what constitutes neighborhoods, and how they all function within the larger organism of the city. She discusses why some neighborhoods and cities stay impoverished while others regenerate themselves. From this book, I was able to get some answers to the question of why Bujumbura has not been able to restore itself besides the fact that it has gone through war instability for so long. Jane Jacob also provides essential frameworks for evaluating the vitality of cities which gave me ideas on what I can focus on while redesigning Jardin Public.

A Pattern language is one of the most popular books in the history of Architecture. The book discusses that people always rely on specific languages while designing. This according to the author allow people to articulate and communicate design concept in two-phase – the problem statement and the problem-solving. These languages consist of describing a problem that occurs in an environment and then finds the solution to that problem which a designer will use as an inspiration or guidance to implement in the design. This book has a collection of over 253 different pattern languages that provided diverse ideas on how to use the pattern and principles in my project.

This was a study that was conducted to explore the level of access to, satisfaction with, and perceptions of the quality of Jardin Public parc in Bujumbura. The overall goal was to assess the role of this park in promoting social integration in a historically divided community and country. Some concerns and lack in the park today were also pointed out in this study and helped to direct my research. Moreover, recommendations made to improve the facility, add more programs and support for play and recreation programming in Rohero I neighborhood park were appreciated and helped me gather a variety of specific design patterns and principles to discuss in my project and endorse specific tools to attain a better design.

Africa Drawn is a book the shows one hundred of the most connected cities on the continent. It was written mainly to break the norm that Africa is just a continent of small villages in the jungle and Savannah. The author presents the historical character of African locations while illustrating their contemporary and historical place-making actions in Africa. The book introduced me not only to the history of urban spaces in Africa but provided me with a variety of urban forms that exist across the continent from which I recruited some case studies that I used in the study. It also helped me pick patterns and principles that could help in the design of Jardin Public more specifically.

This book like Jane Jacob’s book discussed how intentional good design is essential to the revival of cities. The book contains many different studies, facts, and observations that aim at promoting good design for cities as a key structural element of the city to improve the quality of life for local citizens. Another aim of this book was to instruct designers, encouraging them to rethink the methodologies of design responses. The book ends with a toolbox that provides a recommendation of design principles and patterns that I used in my project.