Urban Maestro

New governance strategies
for Urban Design

The use of soft-power tools in urban governance towards higher quality environments in South Africa

Karina Landman

Associate professor,
Department of Town and
Regional Planning,
University of Pretoria

UN⊕HABITAT
UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME

BOUWMEESTERMAITREARCHITECTE

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INTRODUCTION

The post-apartheid, democratic era gave rise to a renewed focus on development towards creating more opportunities and better conditions for all South Africans. This development drive has been enhanced using soft power tools such as a plethora of research documents and practice guides, as well as a huge uptake of partnerships between the public and private sectors. There have also been increasing levels of participation from communities, either to voice their needs or to physically get involved in the establishment and/or maintenance of public space. The use of soft-power tools in combination with hard power-tools have not only contributed to higher quality environments, but also an improved quality of life for many people. This has been due to several ingredients to success such as: 1) the presence of dedicated organisations or groups, 2) a committed champion driving the initiative, 3) fruitful partnerships, 4) working together with formal power-tools and 5) the ability to demonstrate the benefits of changing environments. The use of the soft power-tools has, however, often been linked to major flagship or urban upgrading projects, with limited utilisation for less high profile projects. This use, therefore, has the potential to be scaled up largely in order to reap greater benefits for the country.

1. THE RAPID GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN CITIES

In 1994, South Africa held its first all-inclusive democratic elections with Nelson Mandela becoming the country's first black president. Since then, South Africa has experienced major socio-economic and spatial transformations that have been both the product of a wide range of new policies and development plans, as well as challenges such as poverty and unemployment, crime and insecurity, and large-scale corruption.

Post-Apartheid cities have generally been characterised by a huge increase in urbanisation. Although this also includes the growth of medium-sized cities, most of the rapid growth occurred in the eight large metropolitan regions. Between 2001 and 2011, the population in Metropolitan Municipalities grew by more than 25%,

compared to 10% in the rest of the country[1]. In line with the UN Report[2], noting the 'urbanisation of poverty' as a trend, most of the urban growth in South Africa has been characterised by poor people migrating to the cities to look for employment opportunities. Spatially, the city-areas experiencing rapid growth tend to be concentrated in former black townships and informal settlements, as they "are the first recipients of rural (and foreign) migrants in search of work."[3] In 2013, only 77% of households were living in formal dwellings[4]. Those living in informal conditions also include households living as tenants in backyard shacks, which occur mainly in former black townships and new low-income housing settlements. Additionally, household sizes have also decreased. Therefore, although South Africa has made huge progress in the provision of basic services, there is a growing demand for low-income housing and service delivery in cities[5].

According to the National Development Plan, in 2011 more than 60 percent of the population in South Africa lived in cities, creating a greater demand for infrastructure, affordable housing and spaces for recreation. Yet, amid increased urbanisation, South African cities continue to struggle with high levels of inequality and unemployment[6]. Currently, the level of unemployment is estimated to be at 30.8%. This has been exacerbated further by the Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, which resulted in the loss of 648 000 jobs in the second quarter of 2020 and a further 701 000 in the 4th quarter [7]. Furthermore, youth unemployment is estimated to be at 55%[8], contributing to low morale and little hope for the future. This also contributes to high levels of poverty, as almost 20% of South African households had inadequate or severely inadequate access to food in 2017[9]. As well, child hunger remains a major challenge, with more than half a million households with children younger than 5 years having experienced hunger[10]. Many households also depend on social grants

[1] Turok, I, & Borel-Saladin, J. 2014. Is Urbanisation in South Africa on a sustainable trajectory? Development Southern Africa, 31(5):675-691.

[2] UN-Habitat. 2004. The challenge of Slums: Global Report on Human Settlements 2003. UN-Habitat.

[3] Mahajan, S. (ed.) 2014. Economics of South African Townships: special Focus on Diesploot. World Bank Studies. Washington, DC: World Bank, p.8.

[4] Statistics SA Website 2021. Household Service Delivery Statistics. Accessed online on 2021-01-25 at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=739&id=2&paged=2

[5] *State of the Cities Report*. 2016. Produced by the South African Cities Network. Accessed online at

https://www.sacities.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/SoCR16-Main-Report-online.pdf

[6] The National Development Plan. 2013.

7Statistics SA. 2021. Quarterly Labour force survey, Accessed online on the Statistics SA Website at http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/P02114thQuarter2020.pdf

[8] Jonas, M. 2019. *After Dawn: Hope after State Capture*. Johannesburg: Picador Africa

[9] According to Oxfam, food security occurs when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to meet their dietary needs for an active and healthy lifestyle. Food insecurity occurs when people's access to food is minimally adequate and they have trouble meeting their basic needs, while severe inadequate access to food occurs when there is a critical lack of access to food. https://www.oxfam.org/en/food-insecurity-infographic

[10] Statistics SA Website 2021. The Extent of food security in South Africa. Accessed online on 2021-01-25 at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=12135

for survival[11], while informal trading has grown exponentially. The condition of the poor is further exacerbated by the spatial patterns in the country, as most low-income areas are located on the periphery of the cities. As many of the job opportunities continue to be located more centrally, this results in high transport costs and long travel times, which further impacts negatively on the quality of life of the poor. Despite the development of many progressive policies to facilitate social and spatial development, their implementation has often been slow and hampered by large scale corruption, which has been referred to as state capture.

Crime remains a major challenge. Between 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 aggregate crime levels increased, including crimes such as: theft of motor vehicles (19%), hijacking (14%), assault (12%), deliberate damage of residential buildings (7%), trespassing (7%), murder (4%) and home robbery (3%). These include numerous types of crime related to where people live, as well as contact crimes, both being categories that significantly increase the fear of crime. Given this, it is not surprising that only 32% of South Africans feel safe walking alone in their neighbourhoods at night[12]. In response, the built environment has also been transformed into a series of gated enclaves for the middle and higher-income households, referred to as gated communities or developments. These developments include large luxury estates, gated townhouse complexes, secure office parks and security-controlled mixed-developments or shopping centres. Many lower-income households also aspire to live in gated developments. Following suit, the public open space has been changed to address these challenges.

2. CONTEXTUALISING THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC SPACE IN SOUTH AFRICA: CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

There is a long tradition of public space development in South Africa. However, during the colonial and apartheid eras, the well-developed spaces were mostly limited to the historic city centres and wealthier white areas. Leafy suburbs with tree-lined streets and well-maintained parks often stood in stark contrast to undeveloped open spaces in the former black township areas. Despite attempts to address this

[11] Statistics SA Website 2021. How unequal is South Africa? Accessed online on 2021-01-25 at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=12930

[12] Statistics SA Website 2021. *Crime statistics.* Accessed online on 2021-01-25 at http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=737&id=5

situation after 1994, recent studies have indicated that large inequalities remain in terms of the provision and nature of the public realm in different parts of the country and within cities. Urban green infrastructure remains unequally distributed across income and race geographies in South Africa and is mirrored in both private and public spaces, from gardens to street verges, parks and greenbelts.[13] Public space in former township areas, with some exceptions, are still to a large extent un- or underdeveloped and where they are developed, often vandalised or unmaintained (Figure 1). The quality of space in smaller rural towns has also dramatically declined due to limited or a complete lack of maintenance, broken furniture and severe damage to existing vegetation (Figure 2). Many small low-income houses are scattered across a barren and underdeveloped landscape. This overall situation raises several questions about the quality of the built environment, from growing informal settlements (Figure 3) and state-delivered low-income housing projects to the condition of the streets and open spaces.

Figure 1: Vandalised play equipment and pavement in the Pienaarspoort Park in Mamelodi, City of Tshwane.

[13] Venter, Z.S., Shackleton, C., Van Staden, F., Selomane, O. & Masterson, V.A. 2020. Green Apartheid: Urban green infrastructure remains unequally distributed across income and race geographies in South Africa, Landscape and Urban Planning, 203: 1-2.

Figure 2: Derelict and vandalised park in Harrismith, a rural town in the Free State Province.

Figure 3: Growing informal settlements in Mamelodi East, City of Tshwane.

Several challenges contribute to low-quality environments. With high levels of poverty, limited employment opportunities and high demand for low-cost housing, housing delivery and basic services remain the priority of lower-income earners. Most municipalities, facing restricted budgets, focus on service and housing delivery. The result is that the quality of the built environment is therefore influenced by low budgets and competing needs. Secondly, competing needs also refer to the function of public spaces—while many users long for well-maintained and safe spaces of a higher quality, others frequent theses spaces as a matter of survival, for example, informal traders and the homeless. This creates tensions and fear in many spaces. Thirdly, where there are some ideal examples of higher quality environments, these

tend to be either linked to highly controlled spaces (pay-to-enter parks, pseudo-public spaces connected to shopping centres and common open spaces in gated developments) across the country (Figure 4), or to selective spaces in metropolitan municipalities that have benefited from regeneration programmes. Thus, many of the higher quality environments have utilised the use of soft-power tools to enable the (re)development of the spaces.

Figure 4: High quality common open space in Dainfern, a luxury estate in northern Johannesburg.

3. INNOVATIVE AND INTERESTING PRACTICES RELATED TO THE USE OF SOFT-POWER TOOLS IN URBAN GOVERNANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The South African governance framework consists of a three-tier system based on a constitutional democracy and an independent judiciary. All three levels of government—national, provincial and local—have legislative and executive authority in their spheres and are defined in the Constitution as being distinctive, interdependent and interrelated. Besides, there are advisory bodies drawn from traditional South African leaders that operate at both the national and provincial levels. The intention, as highlighted in the Constitution, is that the country be run on

a system of cooperative governance[14]. Additionally, the country moved towards a more developmental state since 1994, which implied the need to address the knowledge gap. An attempt to address the restructuring and developmental goals has required more efforts to increase the capacity and skills of both built environment professionals and other decision-makers in municipalities.[15]

Urban design governance is defined as "the process of state-sanctioned intervention in the means and processes of designing the built environment to shape both processes and outcomes in a defined public interest"[16]. Soft governance includes a casual administration approach related to spatial advancement and planning[17], which breaches the formal authoritative and political boundaries through informal procedures to provide interventions in a given geological area.[18] In recent years, the use of several informal (soft-power) tools has become more widespread to complement the use of formal (regulatory/hard) tools within the public sector[19]. This has also been the case in South Africa, with an increased focus on involving various stakeholders from both within and outside the public sector to increase the feasibility of built environment projects and the quality of space. It reflects the power of the state to encourage development in a way that is not compelling or forceful. [20] The following discussion presents an overview of the use of soft power-tools in South Africa.

3.1. State of policy development

While there is no policy addressing the quality of public space or the built environment at the national level, the issue is mentioned in several high-level policies. For example, the National Development Plan 2030 encompasses the country's road map towards improved socio-economic development. This plan includes an entire chapter on the envisioned nature of the built environment entitled *Transforming human settlement and the national space economy*. The NDP specifically notes that "more attention should be given to the design and quality of

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[14] South African Government, Structure and functions. https://www.gov.za/about-government/government-system/structure-and-functions-south-african-government

[15] Coetzee, J. 2012. The transformation of municipal development planning in South Africa (post-1994): Impressions and impasse. Town and Regional Planning Journal, 61:10-20.

[16] Carmona, 2017. The formal and informal tools of design governance, Journal of Urban Design, 22(1): 6.

[17] Allmendinger, P. & Haughton, G. (2009). 'Soft spaces, fuzzy boundaries, and meta-governance: The new spatial planning in the Thames Gateway,' *Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 41 no. 3, pp. 617–633.

[18] Olesen, K. (2011). 'Soft spaces as vehicles for neoliberal transformations of strategic spatial planning?' in Olesen, K. *Strategic Spatial Planning in Transition - A Case Study of Denmark,* Aalborg University: Unpublished PhD thesis, pp. 145-162.

[19] Carmona, M. *op. cit.*

[20] Urban Maestro. *op. cit.*

urban public space"[21], yet gives limited direction to what this quality should entail or how it should be achieved. The Integrated Urban Development Framework (IUDF) seeks to foster a shared understanding across government and society so as to manage urbanisation and achieve economic development, job creation and improved living conditions. The IUDF also emphasises the need for multi-functional urban spaces and expanded public amenities to transform the quality of life through a whole-of-society approach.[22] Additionally, numerous Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs) from local municipalities acknowledge the importance of a high-quality public space.

The City of Cape Town prepared a detailed urban design policy in 2013 that outlined the nature of urban design, desired outcomes, interaction with stakeholders and broad urban design principles. This policy is structured around nine broad objectives to guide future interventions and ensure higher quality environments. Objective 2 specifically focuses on an improved quality of the public realm and public spaces.[23] Furthermore, there is the case of Gauteng Province, the smallest province in the country yet that is considered the economic powerhouse. The province includes three powerful metropolitan municipalities, namely the City of Johannesburg, the City of Tshwane (including Pretoria, the capital city) and the Ekurhuleni Metropolitan Municipality. Ekurhuleni developed a comprehensive approach to urban design,[24] and a draft urban design policy framework with detailed guidelines for reshaping the built environment.[25] These policy documents have contributed significantly to increasing the role of urban design in South Africa and focusing further attention on the importance of higher quality environments.

3.2. Finding evidence through analysis

The first set of soft-power tools assists policy and other decision-makers with understanding how the built environment is shaped through various processes and how these give rise to certain outcomes. These tools, therefore, present evidence to inform governments and built environment professionals about the consequences of

[21] The National Development Plan. 2013. Developed by the Planning Commission in the Presidency. Accessed online at https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/ndp-2030-our-future-make-it-workr.pdf, p286.

[22] Integrated Development Framework. 2016. Developed by the Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs. Available online at https://iudf.co.za/knowledge-hub/documents/

[23] Urban Design Policy. 2013. Developed by the City of Cape Town. Accessed online at http://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Bylaws%20and%20policies/Urban%20Design%20-%20%28Policy%20number%2012986%29%20approved%20on%2004%20December%202013.pdf

[24] https://www.ekurhuleni.gov.za/about-the-city/priority-projects/urban-design/urban-design-precinct-plans/urban-design-policy.html

[25] https://www.ekurhuleni.gov.za/about-the-city/priority-projects/urban-design.html

certain types of interventions and decisions through research and audits.[26] It most often provides evidence for ongoing policy processes and decisions around the prioritisation of certain types of interventions.

There are several organisations in South Africa that commission research ranging from different spheres of government to non/pseudo-governmental organisations. Various departments of national government initiate research to support certain directions or encourage specific approaches. In recent years, the quality of the built environment has become increasingly important to demonstrate greater alignment with international trends, expressed through the New Urban Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Yet, it still receives limited attention in major continental documents such as the African Agenda 2063 and "Opening Doors to Africa", developed by the World Bank.[27] This is probably due to the enormous scale of the challenges faced in Africa and the need to prioritise. From a National Perspective, the Treasury has commissioned research to support the Neighbourhood Development Programme (NDP) and the development of specific guides. In another case, the Department of Human Settlements, Sanitation and Water, calls for research to support policy formulation and implementation, such as the development of the New Redbook for example (see the next section for further details).

At a local level, some municipalities have commissioned research to support the development of policies and guideline-documents for special focus areas such as safety. For example, the City of Johannesburg asked the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) to develop a framework to mainstream Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) into the activities of the municipalities, while eThekwini municipality (including Durban) commissioned them to investigate the incorporation of CPTED into Area-Based-Management.

Research in the country is also commissioned and carried out by some non/pseudo-governmental organisations, such as the CSIR, the South African Cities Network (SACN), the Isandla Institute and the Development Action Group (DAG). First is the CSIR, an entity of the Department of Science and Innovation,[28] and regularly carries out research on the quality of urban space in the country; for example, the Smart Places Cluster recently completed a study on Inclusive Smart Cities and whether they are appropriate to the South African Context.[29] There is also the SACN an established network of cities in the country and partners that encourages the exchange of information, experience and best practices on urban development and

[26] Urban Maestro. 2019. Informal tools of Urban Design Governance, the European picture. www.urbanmaestro.org

[27] https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview and https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25896

[28] https://www.csir.co.za/

[29] CSIR. 2020. Inclusive Smart Cities. Available online at https://www.ukesa.info/library/view/inclusive-smart-cities-appropriate-to-the-south-african-context2

city management[30]. They regularly carry out or commission research on important issues influencing the development of cities in the country, such as the quality of the built environment. These include the *Smart Cities Paper series*[31] and *Planning for Green Infrastructure: options for South African Cities*.[32] The Isandla Institute is a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) and key role player in the local government sector that produces quality research and facilities dialogue between key role-players. They focus on issues related to addressing poverty, inequality and vulnerability.[33] DAG is another influential NGO that produces important research to shape the built environment, for example, by conducting a report on value capture, another on financing affordable housing and infrastructure in cities and one on upgrading informal settlements.[34]

Finally, the private sector has also been involved in commissioning research. Future Part is an initiative founded within Boogertman and Partners Architects as a creative engine to enable research and experimental design thinking.[35] For example, they recently funded an inquiry into the future of Corporate Privately Managed Space in Johannesburg and Nairobi, which resulted in several documents and a large-scale exhibition in early 2020.[36] Future Part's studies tend to focus more on the problematic issues influencing the quality of the built environment, such as the impact of technology on the nature and use of the built environment, the vulnerability of the poor, and the implications of the privatisation of public space.

Another form of evidence in South Africa, and that tends to be more place-orientated than problem-orientated[37], are audits. In the past, the Department of Housing commissioned a State of the Cities report in 2001 and a Sustainability Analysis of Human Settlements in 2002[38], both of which were carried out by the CISR. Since then, the SACN has filled a large gap in this regard, thereby becoming well-known for their State of the Cities reports, such as the latest one published in 2016 for example.[39] They also carry out other audits such as those on the State of Crime and Safety in SA Cities and the State of Water in cities.[40] The variety of SACN audits

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[30] https://www.sacities.net/

[31] https://www.sacities.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Smart_Cities_Papers_Volume_1_Final-Draft.pdf

[32] https://www.sacities.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/SAcities_GreenerCities_Web.pdf

[33] https://www.isandla.org.za/en/

[34] https://www.dag.org.za/research-reports/

[35] https://futurepart.co.za

[36] https://futurepart.co.za/a-future-of-corporate-privately-managed-public-spaces/

[37] Carmona, *op. cit*.

[38] http://researchspace.csir.co.za/dspace/bitstream/handle/10204/3522/Du%20Plessis_2002.pdf;jsessionid=77C86FCE7C0AF97BA5AB7293DE5EE53D?sequence=1

[39] https://www.sacities.net/state-of-cities-reports-2/

[40] https://www.sacities.net/publications/

offers valuable information to assist various spheres of government with planning, designing and managing aspects and portions of human settlements and contribute to the improvement of the quality of the built environment. Local municipalities also carry out audits from time to time. The eThekwini municipality has a record of conducting Business and User Survey Satisfaction Surveys, which offer a baseline for design impact assessments and are used as a basis to monitor progress.[41] The Department of Public Safety in the City of Johannesburg also carries out safety audits to understand the state of safety in public spaces[42]. This is because, as mentioned previously, safety is a critical issue that affects both the qualities of place and life in public spaces in South Africa.

The Gauteng City-Region Observatory (GCRO) is another important research organisation that contributes evidence on how the built environment is shaped and what it means for planning and design. The GCRO focuses on research in the Gauteng City region that comprises South Africa's economic heartland. This region includes more than 15 million people and generates a third of the country's GDP on just 2% of its land area. The GCRO aims to collect and compile data in order to inform development in this region.[43] Recent reports include *Towards applying a green infrastructure approach in the CGR*O, *Social Cohesion in Gauteng* and *Taking Streets Seriously*.[44] Not only have they become significant providers of evidence in Gauteng, but also strong voices to influence the trajectory of development in the most powerful region in the country.

3.3. Disseminating knowledge to offer information

Once there is evidence, it needs to be distributed to key decision-makers and other stakeholders. The main purpose of knowledge tools is therefore to disseminate knowledge about the nature of design practices and processes so that key influencers can learn from what has worked, but also what has not worked well. Knowledge tools comprise a wide range of practices, including **practice guides**, **best practice case studies** and **education or training activities**.[45]

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[41] eThekwini Municipality IDP:2019-2020 review. Available online at: http://www.durban.gov.za/City_Government/City_Vision/IDP/Pages/default.aspx

[42] The city of Johannesburg. 2021. Safety ad Public Spaces.

[43] https://www.gcro.ac.za/

[44] https://www.gcro.ac.za/outputs/research-reports/

[45] Carmona, M. op cit. & Urban Maestro. 2019. Informal tools of Urban Design Governance, the European picture. www.urbanmaestro.org

The development of **practice guides** has been very popular in South Africa. These have been produced by various spheres of government, as well as some non/pseudo-governmental organisations. As mentioned previously, the National Treasury has been instrumental in the development of the NDP in order to facilitate the development of higher quality neighbourhoods through grant funding and technical assistance provided to municipalities for capital projects.[46] To address the fragmented nature of South African cities and the often underdeveloped township areas, the NDP aims to reconnect the important nodes in marginalised or degenerated inner-city areas with those areas of higher potential in cities. This includes the development of several guides to explain the involved processes and design requirements, including an *Urban Hub Design Toolkit* to restructure the hubs to be more sustainable through better connections, integration of land use and compaction, alongside the spatial preconditions necessary to create vibrant, people-friendly environments.[47] The Department of Human Settlements also commissioned a major guideline document in 2000, which was upgraded in 2020, entitled *Guidelines for Human Settlement Planning and Design*, or more commonly known as The Redbook. This document provides performance-based guidelines for informed decision making[48]. As well, the National Department of Safety and Security commissioned a CPTED Manual, called *Designing Safer Communities*,[49] which not only offered knowledge on how to reduce opportunities for crime in the built environment, but also provided a foundation for further practice guides, such as the *Safer Cities Guidelines* produced by the City of Cape Town[50] and the *Public Space Handbook* and *Safety and Public Space Guide* produced by the City of Johannesburg (see the next section). The Nelson Mandela Bay Metropolitan Municipality developed the *Sustainable Community Planning Guide* to highlight several sustainable planning principles to contribute to more integrated and sustainable cities and neighbourhoods.[51] Other types of practice guides include the *Building Better Neighbourhoods through co-production* by the Isandla Institute[52], the *Sustainable Neighbourhood Design Manual*, produced by the Sustainability Institute[53] and a highly innovative guide to upgrading informal settlements, produced by the Afesis-corplan in both English and IsiXhosa. The guide provides a very basic step-by-step

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[46] http://ndp.treasury.gov.za/About%20NDP/Forms/UNS%20Support%20Guide.aspx

[47] Urban Hub Design Toolkit. 2014.

[48] https://researchspace.csir.co.za/dspace/handle/10204/3750 and http://www.dhs.gov.za/sites/default/files/u16/RB_CouncillorsBrochure_10August17_Final.pdf

[49] https://www.csir.co.za/designing-safer-places

[50] Design and Management Guidelines for a Safer City. 20. Developed by the City of Cape Town. Accessed online at http://resource.capetown.gov.za/documentcentre/Documents/Procedures%2c%20guidelines%20and%20regulations/Design%20and%20Management%20Guidelines%20for%20a%20Safer%20City.pdf

[51] https://www.nelsonmandelabay.gov.za/datarepository/documents/TZ62e_Introduction%201-13.pdf

[52] https://www.isandla.org.za/en/

[53] http://www.cityenergy.org.za/uploads/resource_139.pdf

blueprint to residents on the process of informal settlement upgrading in the country and the potential role that they can play, as well as other initiatives to improve the quality of the area through community work programmes, etc.[54]

Compared to practice guides, **case studies** are a more raw form of knowledge tool that also share best practices. It is typically written with a common structure to allow for comparisons and to reveal key issues.[55] The Department of Human Settlements, Sanitation and Water have from time to time commissioned case studies to spotlight best practices, for example on sustainable housing practices. At a local level, the eThekwini municipality has also engaged in case studies on housing typologies, which scrutinized best practices in this regard.[56] Over the years, the CSIR has also engaged in the production of several case studies. This includes those on medium density mixed development in South Africa, which examined seven cases across the country according to a three-layered framework of 1) critical success factors, 2) key factors to an enabling environment and 3) its relation to sustainability. These were documented in seven individual documents and one comparative case study document[57]. DAG has also been involved in producing several best practice case studies, including a best practices case study of capacity development, and another on capacity building through the People's Housing Process (PHP), a review of international and national trends and best practices in housing and design options and delivery models for hostel development.[58]

Education and training are other informal tools that involve both formal and informal education programmes. At the National level, Treasury placed a large emphasis on training as part of the NDPG. This involved the development of NDP Training Guidelines[59] as well as hands-on workshops in order to assist local authorities and consultants in the development of precinct plans for the NDP hubs. For example, when a project has been awarded to a consultant team, they have about two weeks to analyse the precinct and thereafter develop a draft concept plan. This plan is then presented at a workshop involving all the key stakeholders from the local municipality in which the precinct is situated. Subsequently, all of the participants drive and/or walk around the precinct, after which they return to the workshop to reconsider the plan with a leading urban designer that has been appointed to assist the group with refining the concept plan (Figure 5). Such a workshop can take more than half a day,

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[54] http://afesis.org.za/upgrading-of-informal-settlements/

[55] Carmona, M. *op. cit.*

[56] http://www.durban.gov.za/City_Services/engineering%20unit/City%20Architects/back-up/Housing_Typologies_Study/Pages/default.aspx

[57] Landman, K., du Toit, J., Mmonwa, M. and Matsebe, G. (2010). Comparing seven case studies of medium density mixed housing in South Africa. CSIR Report: Document reference number: CSIR/BE/PSS/IR/2009.

[58] https://www.dag.org.za/case-study/

[59] Neighbourhood Development Programme: Training Guideline – templates and Tools. 2015.

though the outcome is enormously beneficial in not only getting every stakeholder involved and contributing valuable information, but also to building the capacity of all the participants under the guidance of a skilled urban designer.

Figure 5: NDPG Workshop to refine the concept plan of the CBD precinct Emafuleni

The Sustainability Institute is a living and learning centre, which teaches, explores, and applies planning, design and management mechanisms towards greater sustainability in the built environment. They operate in partnership with the School of Public Leadership at the University of Stellenbosch, and although they offer a Master's Programme in Sustainable Development, they also offer numerous other degree courses and other shorter-term courses in order to transfer and cultivate skills and knowledge to and in those interested in the sustainable development.[60] This is an example of a highly local organisation that contributes to capacity building and skills development across the country. Training is also provided by the Green Building Council South Africa (GBCSA), who offer specialised knowledge so as to empower people across the design, property and construction industries towards more sustainable buildings.[61]

The dissemination of knowledge can also take place through the development of a knowledge platform. The CSIR's Urban Knowledge Exchange Southern Africa (UKESA) is a knowledge platform that hosts a wide range of documents or provides links to access them. This allows built environment researchers and professionals, as

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[60] https://www.sustainabilityinstitute.net/

[61] https://gbcsa.org.za/

well as decision-makers, to gain access to valuable information and improve their knowledge on important issues in the country.[62] The themes that are featured include climate change/resilience, economics, environmental management, food security, gender, governance, law, livelihoods and markets.

3.4. Persuading the right people in the right place

Distributing information alone, however, is not going to have a major impact. Promotional tools present the case for particular design responses in a more proactive manner so that the message can be extended to persuade the right people in the right place to take note and implement them. Persuasion tools include awards and campaigns to spread the notion of good design and to advocate within the government to influence legislation and policy. It also involves partnerships towards more effective delivery options and allows for collaboration between key role players[63].

In terms of awareness-raising, there are not many awards in South Africa that acknowledge good design and practices. The most notable of those that do exist include the Awards bestowed by the South African Institute of Architects (SAIA), which include Awards of Excellence and Merit, as well as a gold medal that is awarded to an outstanding individual who has provided distinguished service to the profession. Concerning urban design, the Institute of Urban Design in South Africa (UDISA) has recently launched the Roelof Uytenbogaardt UDISA Memorial Lecture, a prestigious award bestowed on a leading urban designer that has made a distinguished contribution to urban design in the country. This Lecture was launched in memory of Roelof Uytenbogaardt, one of the most prominent and influential architects and urban designers in the country who passed away at the turn of the century.

The second promotional tool refers to the use of active campaigning through media events and networks to promote awareness among the general public, professionals and regulators about the key issue of concern in the built environment. The aim of this is to raise awareness about design quality to encourage its incorporation in projects and cultivate appreciation among everyday users—this is closely linked to advocacy and fostering partnerships, as the role of advocacy is to convince audiences of the value of a particular approach. [64] For example, organisations such as the SACN have been actively involved in the promotion of higher quality

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[62] https://www.ukesa.info/

[63] Carmona, M. *op. cit.*

[64] Carmona, M. *op. cit.*

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environments in the country. This includes their *Strategic Conversations*, occasional sessions where leaders from South Africa's largest cities, including metropolitan and secondary cities, as well as other key stakeholders, convene to discuss topical issues and examine key evidence related to strategy, planning, leadership and governance of these cities.[65] Another key role player is the GBCSA, which in addition to offering training, also hosts events and campaigns to advocate for a better environment. These advocacy platforms aim to create critical foundations for a green economy and to highlight the role of the built environment in the drive towards greater sustainability.[66]

At a more local level, departments within municipalities have also been involved with advocacy within their organisations in an attempt to promote design quality and better environments. For example, Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo (JCPZ) has been actively involved in internal advocacy to promote the important role of well-developed and maintained public spaces across the City of Johannesburg. The JCPZ is responsible for the development and management of over 3000 parks and public open spaces in the metropolitan area but has limited resources, budget and capacity to deal with the challenges. They have partnered with several organisations to carry out pilot projects, involve the communities, and develop a series of strategies and practice guides towards their goal of transforming public parks into safe and inclusive community spaces. These partners have included the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA), the Johannesburg Safety Programme and the Special Projects Unit in the Office of the City Manager (all internal partners), as well as the Inclusive Violence and Crime Prevention Programme (VCP), a joint programme between South Africa and Germany implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). For the development of the practice guides, they also partnered with the UN-Habitat. The innovative work of the CJPZ and its partners also resulted in the upgrading of the End Street North Park in the Johannesburg Inner City area where they worked with the GIZ-VCP (providing technical support), the UN-Habitat Global Public Space programme (sharing best practices), Sticky Situations (a social enterprise assisting with public participation and stakeholder engagement) WITS University students and professors (collaborating with park assessments and providing expert input), Tshimololong precinct Techno Hub to facilitate the Minecraft Workshop with the public space users, and the Department of Development Planning (providing input on design considerations for public open spaces.[67] Additionally, the JCPZ also hosts several

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[65] https://www.sacities.net/strategic-conversations/

[66] https://gbcsa.org.za/

[67] Transforming public parks into safe and inclusive community spaces: lessons on collaboration and participation from the City of Johannesburg. Available online at www.jhbcityparks.com and www.saferspaces.co.za.

environmental campaigns and events throughout the year to raise awareness and promote the active use of green spaces.

The GIZ VCP is also actively engaged in promoting good design and management to contribute to safer spaces through their website, Safer Spaces[68]. This is an interactive platform run by and for community safety and violence prevention practitioners in South Africa to connect, share knowledge and learn from one another. Therefore, although they also have a knowledge sharing and educational role, through the production of guides and training events, their main focus has remained on campaigning for safer spaces and building partnerships to enable this in practice. An example of this is the *#Eksê My voice, My safety* project which has also been jointly sponsored by the Gauteng Department of Community Safety, the South African Police Service, the Youth Crime prevention desk and the Community Police Forum. This is noted in the *#Eksê My voice, My safety* project booklet, which has also been jointly sponsored by the Gauteng Department of Community Safety Booklet and includes references to the quality of the built environment and its link to safety.[69]

DAG has also been actively involved in raising awareness, especially concerning the quality of housing in the country—they are actively involved in advocacy for change, enabling citizen coalitions to create change and re-imagining neighbourhoods through facilitation. They have often worked in partnership with local governments on project implementation to improve conditions in lower-income housing areas.[70] Another NGO, the Isandla Institute, seeks to promote and contribute to urban governance systems and practices that are democratic, inclusive, equitable, accountable and sustainable. They aim to do so through the promotion of urban citizenship in order to influence progressive policy, planning frameworks, programmes and practices, as well as through strategic partnerships and coalitions for change.[71] For example, one of the projects has included building communities based on practice to advance participatory approaches to informal settlement upgrading, including cultivating community capability, supporting sustainable livelihoods through upgrading, securing tenure, facilitating incremental approaches, etc.[72] Both of these NGOs are regularly involved with events to campaign, advocate and involve communities within the project and therefore create valuable partnerships with local municipalities.

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[68] https://www.saferspaces.org.za/

[69] https://www.saferspaces.org.za/uploads/files/Ekse_booklet.pdf

[70] https://www.dag.org.za/what-we-do/

[71] https://www.isandla.org.za/en/what-we-do

[72] https://www.isandla.org.za/en/projects/urban-land

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The (re)development and management of the Alkantrant Park in the City of Tshwane also highlights the valuable role of Public-Private Partnerships. Although the park is still publicly owned and accessible, it was redeveloped and remains managed and maintained by the private sector. During their negotiations to obtain development rights for the Lynnwood Bridge Development, Atterbury Properties agreed to develop and manage the Alkantrant Park. The city drew up a contract with the developers, and a schedule of appropriate horticultural services was incorporated into the agreement to avoid confusion. According to a city official, the city has certain policies in place to guide park maintenance, while the management of these parks is influenced by existing challenges such as squatters in the open space, vehicles, human and waste pollution in streams and illegal dumping. Although this is an ideal example of a public-private partnership, it also demonstrates the use of both informal and formal (incentive) tools working together.

Finally, City Improvement Districts (CIDs) have also been used as a successful method for fostering partnerships to improve the quality of the built environment. For example, through a CID, the Central Johannesburg Partnership (CJP) is involved in the co-management of the inner city and Joubert Park, one of the most historic spaces in the city. They do this together with other partners, such as the CJPZ, who is responsible for the park, the Metropolitan Trading Company and the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department. The establishment of CIDs has also contributed to good quality spaces in Nelspruit, located in the City of Mbombela, the capital of the Mpumalanga Province. The development of the CIDs has resulted in a higher concentration of mixed economic activities that offer more employment and improved property values. Through the use of soft power-tools and the relationships established between the CID managers and the municipality, the revenue from property owners has increased significantly, giving rise to a higher revenue base for the municipality. In Cape Town, the CID contributed to a large-scale transformation of the inner city through cleaning, maintenance and improved safety. They have, however, been criticised for targeting and excluding homeless people and informal traders from public spaces.

3.5. Reconsidering the quality of place or process

Once persuaded, decision-makers and professionals have to make sure that the required outcome or impact has been achieved in order to confirm that their efforts have been worthwhile. Rating tools allow judgements to be made about the quality of design structurally and systematically by independent groups. They include both

formative (indicators and design reviews) and summative (certification and competitions) evaluation tools.[73]

As part of their Urban Design Policy, the Ekurhuleni Municipality developed a tool for evaluating development applications with a set of indicators, in addition to establishing an Urban Design Review Committee. [74] Examples of other formative evaluation tools can be found in the eThekwini Municipality, which established an aesthetics committee to assess building design and how this contributes to overall place-making in the Inner City. This committee is comprised of municipal officials and experts from the private sector.[75] The municipality also has a Design Review Panel (DRP) which was, for example, involved in the assessments of design proposals for the Durban Point Development Project. This large project was officially launched in 2001 to regenerate the Point in Durban, one of the most historic areas between the harbour and the Durban Promenade. The DRP involves individuals from the Council and the development team such as planners, architects and engineers who scrutinise the proposals to ensure that they reflect the overall vision for the Point, commenting on the plans and then forwarding them to the municipality for approval. This process has been so successful that it has been rolled out to other catalytic projects in the municipality.[76]

There are also a few examples of summative evaluation tools. In addition to advocacy and education, as mentioned earlier, the GBCSA also carries out the objective measurement for green buildings in South Africa and Africa. The certification processes governed by the GBCSA involve the certification of buildings utilising tools such as the Green Star, Net Zero, EWP and EDGE rating tools.[77] This process has recently been extended to also assess neighbourhoods through the Green Star System, adapted for South Africa from the Australian version.

Design competitions are focused on raising the standards of design through a competitive process.[78] This has only occurred occasionally in the country and only with major flagship projects of national concern. One of the most famous examples includes the design competition for the Constitutional Hill Development in Johannesburg. The Constitutional Court, established in 1994, was operated from rental accommodation in its first few years. Subsequently, an international architectural competition was held in 1997 for the design of the new building, with

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[73] Carmona, *M. op. cit.*

[74] https://www.ekurhuleni.gov.za/about-the-city/priority-projects/urban-design.html

[75] eThekwini Inner City Regeneration Strategy – A Roadmap for Regeneration of the Inner City: 2019-2020 review.

[76] Gouden, K. 2010. Waterfront Development as a Strategy for Urban Renewal – A case study of the Durban Point Waterfront Development Project. Unpublished Master's thesis. School of Architecture & Planning, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

[77] https://gbcsa.org.za/certify/

[78] Carmona, *M. op. cit.*

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the competition being widely advertised and eventually drawing an overwhelming response of 580 applications and 185 formal submissions from 30 countries. An international team of judges, led by Charles Correa, awarded the winning entry to a group of young South African architects from OMM Design Workshop in Durban in partnership with Paul Wygers from Johannesburg. They proposed a design that was comprised of a series of pavilions subtly linked by internal and perimeter pathways and public plazas.[79]

3.6. Enabling the development of higher quality spaces

Funding is always a challenge – even more so in South Africa. One way to increase the likelihood of higher quality developments in the built environment is through indirect and direct support in the form of financial assistance and enabling organisations to produce better environments. Financial support to organisations can include the provision of grants to projects or through less direct means such as the support of officers on the ground to take action that would improve the quality of the environment.[80]

As mentioned before, the NDP was established in 2006 within the National Treasury, with this programme being responsible for managing the Neighbourhood Development Partnership Grant (NDPG). This grant is driven by the idea that public investment and funding can be used creatively to attract private and community investment to unlock the social and economic potential in targeted and underserved neighbourhoods. This type of investment then has the potential to improve the quality of the built environment and the quality of life of its residents. The purpose of the grant is thus to fund, support and facilitate planning and development of key urban hubs through catalytic infrastructure to leverage third-party public and private sector investment for more sustainable and future development. Grant allocations are earmarked for municipalities that align with the NDPG prioritisation criteria, including population densities, levels and diversity of economic activity, the concentration of poverty and the presence of connectivity networks such as public transport.[81] This has given rise to the identification of 18 municipalities in larger urban areas and key regional service centres. The investment has indeed contributed to the improvement of these areas, for example, the Solomon Mahlangu Square in Mamelodi (Figure 6) and the Refilwe Park in Cullinan, both located in the City of Tshwane.

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[79] https://www.concourt.org.za/index.php/about-us/the-building

[80] Carmona, *M. op. cit.*

[81] http://ndp.treasury.gov.za/default.aspx

Figure 6: The Solomon Mahlangu Square in Mamelodi with the statue of Solomon Mahlangu, one of the heroes of the struggle, in the centre at the back.

The JCPZ also supports several park rangers who share information with park users and provide security. However, park rangers have no mandate to arrest people. For this, they have to rely on the Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department (JMPD) for support.

Support tools can also focus on more direct financial support through key initiatives such as professional enabling, providing direct-targeted assistance on projects[82]. The Neighbourhood Development Programme also assists in professional enabling through the support of an urban designer to facilitate the precinct workshops. Direct support in this form is often used in large projects to assist the various design teams with the development of specific design proposals. For example, in the early 2000s, one of the largest urban upgrading projects in the country took place in Alexandra, a former black township close to Sandton, one of the richest neighbourhoods and economic hubs in the City of Johannesburg. The different design teams working in the various precincts were advised by a team of CPTED experts from the CSIR, who were supported by the project financing to review the proposals to ensure greater safety in a crime-ridden area. Similarly, the design teams and local municipal officials working on the urban regeneration project in Warwick Junction, one of the largest and busiest model interchanges in Durban, were also supported by the project to engage with the CPTED team to transform knowledge and advice regarding planning and designing for safety.

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[82] Carmona, *M. op. cit.*

3.7. Exploring the needs of and working with communities

The quality of the built environment is ultimately aimed at improving the quality of its users. Therefore, involving the users in the production and management processes is critical. Explorational tools allow the users to engage directly in the design process through mechanisms that instigate, test and involve community design processes. This can typically include the direct participation of communities in the design guidance or in processes such as design charrettes.[83]

In 2019, a group of concerned residents, including architects and landscape architects, met at a local park to discuss the state of an undeveloped open space located at the top of a hill in the Groenkloof neighbourhood under the Telkom Tower. They were concerned with the state of the space and the impact thereof on the users and the rest of the neighbourhood. As such, they developed criteria for the design of the park, and started mobilising to obtain donations for different materials to build benches, pathways and plant vegetation. These were donated by various community members, companies manufacturing construction materials, and the lights by the Council. Some of the building architects and the landscape architect volunteered their services to design the park and assist with its construction, while various community members produced small clay tiles that were incorporated in the bench and some other individuals and organisations also donated plants. The outcome of this initiative is a vibrant and high-quality space that is used actively by people passing it by daily on their way to work, as well as the local community that organise picnics, film screenings and other events there. The landscape architect regularly assists with the maintenance of the park. This is an excellent example of a community that saw a need, took the imitative and transformed an unsafe space into a high-quality place (Figure 7). This initiate is also demonstrative of an active community—there are three community groups active in the large Muckleneuk area. Having more resources and higher technical abilities, the residents established a group targeting safety, one that is focused on the well-being of the community, including quality spaces, and a third focusing on the conservation of natural resources, especially the Kruinpark Nature Reserve. These groups not only contribute to the improvement of the built environment, but also to greater integration and cohesion between its residents.

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[83] Urban Maestro. 2019. Towards a European Typology of Tools for Urban Design Governance, www.urbanmaestro.org

Figure 7: Groenkloof Park in the City of Tshwane.

In 2017, the City of Tshwane and the KfW Development Bank partnered to launch the Safety Promotion through Urban Upgrading (SPUU) project in Mamelodi. This is a typical former black township area that is characterised by unemployment, poverty and growing backyard shacks and informal settlements. The SPUU aimed to understand the crime situation and identify key interventions to address safety through urban upgrading. Due to limited available information, the analysis included a community survey, as well as a physical assessment of crime hotspot areas to identify the key problems. One of the crime hotspots, the Pienaarspoort Park (see Figure 1) and Station was identified as a key intervention area. The first part of the process included a three-day workshop to understand the nature of the problem and identify possible solutions. This workshop allowed interested parties, including several members of the immediate surrounding community and other relevant stakeholders, such as members of the police, the local Crime Prevention Forum (CPF)[84] and local authority officials, to have an input. The workshop started with an introduction of the project, a walk through the park and adjacent station to understand the nature of the situation, a discussion to analyse and map the challenges (Figure 8), a design charrette to develop various design responses through diagrams and models, and finally, the development of possible management plans. Not only did the workshop allow the needs of the community to be communicated, but it also assisted with raising awareness of the scope of the planning and design, as well as the role

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[84] Community Police Forums in South Africa refer to a community organisation to enable improved community-police relations and facilitate communication between the police and the community. It is a legal structure established in terms of the South African Police Service Act and members are elected through formal election processes (Community Safety Forums Policy).

that the community can play in the ongoing management and maintenance of the park.

Figure 8: The workshop in Mamelodi included an analysis of the challenges and a design charrette to obtain the inputs of the community and other key stakeholders

In the Oulandsloop Park in Tshwane, the community was extensively involved in the reimagining of the park. The chairperson of the Wilgers Residents' Association and Friends of Oulandsloop represented the community on the municipal planning and supervising committee, having been appointed by the municipality as the community liaison officer (CLO) for the erosion control project, a position that still plays a large role today. The park is publicly owned, yet co-managed by the community. The Parks and Horticulture Department of Region 6 is responsible for the park and utilises two contractors to perform maintenance services, and the contractors use their labour force. The Department recognises the Friends of Oulandsloop as stakeholders in the park, which is a 'veldpark' (field park) and maintained as such, meaning that the natural Highveld grass is cut only when it becomes a safety hazard. According to the CLO, there are some challenges with maintenance, such as budget constraints and absent contractors, but in general, the community and municipality work well together.

Through co-management and co-production processes, the City of Johannesburg is working with the local community and a local NGO to provide safe, clean sanitation services in the End Street North Park. This offers dignity to the users of the park and the pedestrian bridge. An extraordinary example of working with the community is

evident in the Thokoza Park in Johannesburg, located in Soweto, where there is a great involvement of the community in the maintenance and care of the park with the inclusion of numerous stakeholders and different bodies, such as the Friends of Thokoza Park (FOTP), the Thokoza Park User Committee, the Thokoza Park Safety Committee and the Ukamba Development Project. The FOTP is working with the community to ensure 'ownership' and the sustainable use of the park. According to the chairperson, the FOTP are "the watchdogs and eyes and ears of the park." It is not a formal organisation and is open to any user of the park. As a non-profit organisation, it cannot receive funding. The Thokoza Park User Committee was established to create a tidy, pleasant, safe and crime-free space for all. It is more of an advisory committee and includes the JPCZ, the JMPD, the South African Police Service (SAPS), park rangers, ward committee members and the councillor, residents of Soweto, the FOTP and the CLO, who meet every month. In response to numerous safety concerns, the Thokoza Park Safety Committee deals with safety issues and the prevention of vandalism. This committee is comprised of the members of SAPS, the JMPD, park patrollers, security guards, community members and the Community Policing Forum (CPF), and is led by the JMPD. The safety meetings are held at the Moroka SAPS station monthly, and the JMPD is responsible for the enforcement of by-laws and traffic management in the park, and members are always present. Finally, the Ukamba Development Project, also a non-profit organisation, assists the JPCZ by presenting educational programmes in the park that target the youth from the surrounding areas and aims to educate them on the protection and conservation of the environment.

4. LESSONS AND INGREDIENTS OF SUCCESS

The use of soft-power tools in South Africa has contributed to higher quality environments, which has been due to several ingredients to success such as: 1) the presence of dedicated organisations or groups, 2) a committed champion driving the initiative, 3) fruitful partnerships, 4) working together with formal power-tools and 5) the ability to demonstrate the benefits of changing environments. Many of the examples discussed in this paper reflect the efforts of dedicated organisations or groups who have been committed to improving the quality of the built environment and through that, the quality of life of the people using it. This is especially true of some pseudo-governmental organisations and NGOs such as the SACN, DAG and the Isandla Institute that work tirelessly to carry out research and audits, develop practice guides, campaign and advocate for better environments and work in partnership with the government whilst involving communities. In some cases,

success was also enhanced through the involvement of a strong champion, for example in the case of the CJPZ, where the local authority official is highly committed and engaged with a large variety of stakeholders from inside and outside the organisation to improve the quality of public space in the city. In other cases, the involvement of a champion or key group, as in the case of Groenkloof Park, also contributed to the success. Thirdly, public-private partnerships were also a major ingredient to success that facilitated the production and management of higher quality environments. In both the Alkantrant and the Groenkloof Parks, the land and parks are still owned by the state (local council), but the parks were developed and are maintained by the private sector through the developers in one case and the local community in the other. Through successful partnerships with NGOs, the public sector has also been able to develop higher-quality housing environments; yet, soft power-tools have often worked together with the hard power-tools—for example in Alkantrant Park, where incentive tools also played a role, or in the case of the Point Development in Durban, where a detailed precinct plan with design codes was developed by the urban design team to guide the individual consultants developing proposals for the specific sites within the precinct. The last ingredient to success was the value of the ideal examples provided by the projects which acted as inspiration for built environment professionals and motivation for officials from various spheres of government of what it is possible to achieve in South Africa, despite all the challenges.

The lessons are primarily related to interactions and context, as it is important to acknowledge and allow for new types of relationships and social networks to develop and emerge in South Africa that can deal with the changing socio-economic environment and the political challenges surrounding state capture and corruption. The new types of relationships and social networks enabled by the use of soft urban design governance can contribute to more innovative means and practices of designing the built environment to influence both the processes and products towards a higher quality standard. Yet, for urban design governance to have the greatest effect, it has to be considered a Complex Adaptive System (CAS). Such a system is characterised by agents and the networks through which they interact. These networks provide the means for flows or the transfer of resources. In CAS neither the flows nor the networks are fixed in time and therefore continues to evolve in terms of behaviour and structure. This occurs through emergence and self-organisation, while the adaptive behaviour of agents leads to the adaptation of the flows and structures. This adaptation both gives rise to and is made possible by the level of diversity in CAS.[85]

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[85] Nel, D., du Plessis, C. & Landman, K. 2018. Planning for dynamic cities: introducing a framework to understand the urban change from a complex adaptive systems approach, International Planning Studies, 23 (3):250-263.

In terms of urban design governance, the specific situation or problem determines the agents and networks that will be involved. However, this is not fixed in time, but is dynamic rather. Therefore, the agents and networks can change depending on the agenda, the negotiations that take place and the decisions that are made. This is where the soft-power or informal tools can play a crucial role in influencing various parts of the process, working together with the formal tools and allowing for emergence and self-organisation to occur when the behaviour of agents or structures of the networks change, for example through training, campaigns, advocacy or the involvement of partnerships. The participation of communities can make a huge difference in the process at various stages to explore various possibilities based on needs and priorities. The diversity of tools therefore assists coping with various parts of the process and the requirements necessary in seeking a higher quality product. This is crucial as the context can differ extensively, not only across the world but even within South African cities. Therefore, the value of the informal tools is that they offer mechanisms that can be applied in different contexts, and which can be adapted and evolve as circumstances change. South Africa can be strengthened with the numerous good policies that acknowledge the role of high-quality environments and the importance of public space. However, the challenge is that implementation is very slow and often restricted by budget and political constraints. Soft power-tools can assist the process of moving towards a higher quality product and then to reconsider and refine the product if necessary. Thinking of urban design governance as a CAS, through an evolving process of setting the agenda, negotiating resources and political power and shaping decision-making, allows a range of stakeholders to connect and constantly restructure the planning, design and management of the built environment to improve its quality (Figure 9).

The discussion indicated that the soft-tools in South Africa have contributed to higher quality environments. However, this has occurred in selective places and has often been linked to the major flagship and urban upgrading projects driven by the public sector, or to significant private sector developments. Yet, many areas still reflect a very low quality. Given this, the challenge is how to take the successes further and mainstream the use of soft-power tools without excluding certain areas and people in the process. As mentioned previously, tensions remain between the need for safety and survival in public spaces. Many public spaces are also used by homeless people and for informal trading, yet, the government has often reacted, in the name of safety, through strong regulatory and control measures to prohibit the unlawful use of public space. This has led to growing tensions between different groups. Involving the informal traders and homeless in the process through the use of soft-tools can open doors to more inclusive solutions.
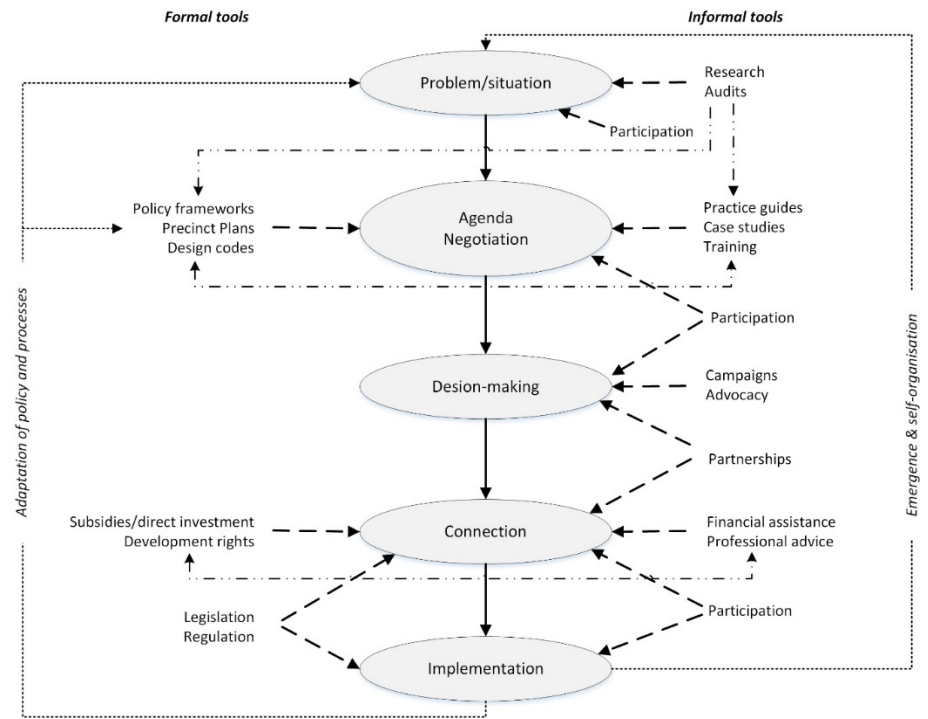
Figure 9: New types of relationships and social networks related to soft urban governance in South Africa

5. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has indicated that soft power-tools have been used in South Africa as a form of urban design governance to enable higher quality environments. In particular, there have been examples of all six tools, including the quality-cultural tools such as tools of analysis, information and persuasion, as well as the quality delivery tools, namely rating, support and exploration tools. It appears that there are more examples of analysis and information tools in the country, with a large amount of research being carried out and numerous practice guides being developed. While awards and campaigns seem to be less prevalent, the utilisation of partnerships between government and agencies or between government and the private sector has become more widespread. Rating tools also seem to be underused, however, the use of exploration tools and community involvement seems to be growing. It is worth noting that these are tentative conclusions and will have to be confirmed through a more detailed survey of the situation in the country. Only in such a case will one be able to compare the use of soft power tools in urban design governance in Europe and South Africa—this will also allow for knowledge production in the global south as well as to serve as a platform for knowledge exchange between the global north and south.

It is undoubtable that soft tools have been used successfully in numerous cases to improve the quality of the built environment. However, this has been selective and often contributed to rising tensions and conflict between the need for safety and survival, as well as between competing needs such as housing and service delivery vs. well-developed streets, parks and other open spaces. This raises a number of questions surrounding people's priorities and the purpose of public open space. For many people and municipalities, urban design is considered a luxury and urban design governance just a vague idea that sounds nice on paper. However, once they realise the value of high-quality spaces, for example in the North End and Tokoza Parks in Johannesburg, government and other organisations become more amenable to the use of soft-power tools and can link these to existing best practices in the country. In this way, their interest and uptake may increase dramatically. For example, there has been a long tradition of community involvement in planning and fieldwork to gather information in South Africa. Given this, it is important to transform the image of urban design in the country from one that is only related to the creation of aesthetically pleasing environments to an important process wherein soft-power tools can play a critical role in moving from the right words in policy documents to higher quality places in practice. Only by combining soft and hard power tools, of which the last mentioned is regularly used in the country, can we move from quality environments for a selective few to a more widespread availability of quality environments for all.

URBAN MAESTRO

DISCLAIMER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS