

**International House NY**  
**Isadora M. Amaral**  
*Adopt a Park*  
**Brasília, Brazil**

I would like to submit a request for a project that will contribute to a safer community environment in Brasília, Brazil, through the construction of a Behavioral-changing Parklet.

The specific problem this proposal intends to tackle is urban violence that makes women and girls feel unsafe in their own neighborhoods.

Violence is a pervasive problem in metropolitan areas of Brazil. In Brasilia, data shows that about 8,000 people per year experience acts of violence against them (robbery, intimidation, harassment)<sup>1</sup>. In addition, about 350 women and children are raped<sup>2</sup> every year in the city. Women are specifically targeted and disproportionately suffer the most from the effects of the violence in the streets.

Even though Brasília is a rich city - Brazil's highest GDP per capita -, it is also the most unequal of Brazil with the highest GINI index of the country<sup>3</sup>. This inequality naturally ripples on the most vulnerable. There are several root-causes for this complex problem, such as the permissive culture of violence against women, and the negligence of authorities in providing better community policing in low-income areas.

Multiple factors contribute to the generation of toxic and violent environments. One of the most effective practices to prevent violence is the theory of the "eyes on the street." People are dissuaded from committing violent acts against others through exposure, social pressure, and social control perception.

The proposed solution aims to take this angle of improving community spaces: once a given community space becomes widely used by its members, generating a spontaneous flow of people and movement, this represents an increase of "eyes on the street". Once the community occupies such spaces, it automatically engages in a process of self-surveillance of violent acts.

Such an environment, in order to have this effect, should have strategic placement, and a value to add to this community. Once this takes place, it should become attractive and protective of women, the most vulnerable in this urban violence context.

We want, thus, to create this space. A park that adds value to the community, and invites people to occupy it. In order to ensure that the risk factor - consisting of an abandoned public space - becomes instead a protective factor, we must work together with the community.

In this proposal, there are two organizations involved: Coletivo M.O.B. (Collective Movement Occupy your Neighborhood), and Evidence-based Behavioral Interventions - EBBI. The M.O.B. Collective will be in charge of the articulation with the community and local actors, as well as designing the user-centered Parklet, applying their participatory urbanization expertise, and hiring a local contractor to build it.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.ssp.df.gov.br/wp-conteudo/uploads/2017/11/01\\_BRASILIA-25.pdf](http://www.ssp.df.gov.br/wp-conteudo/uploads/2017/11/01_BRASILIA-25.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.correiobraziliense.com.br/cidades-df/2020/09/4873860-alerta-para-evitar-estupros.html>

<sup>3</sup> [http://infodf.codeplan.df.gov.br/?page\\_id=23](http://infodf.codeplan.df.gov.br/?page_id=23)

EBBI, in turn, will apply Behavioral Change Techniques (BCTs) based on the park's user journey to

ensure that it is designed to increase people's engagement in activities that reduce crime and violence, such as filing complaints or calling the police when necessary, and ultimately contribute to the reduction of gender-based violence.

#### *Proposed activities*

- Articulating with community leaders and local authorities to determine the most strategic placing for the Parklet.
- Conducting an exploratory process: a community workshop and in-depth interviews for better understanding the community's needs and the specific outcomes to be achieved, as well as the gender-related behaviours associated with that outcome.<sup>4</sup>
- Conducting internal workshops to explore the determinants (barriers and facilitators) of the behaviours chosen and selecting the relevant Behaviour Change Techniques (BCTs) to address the barriers and leverage facilitators.
- Designing the Parklet and its components.
- Contracting and overseeing the construction of the proposed interventions.
- Elaborating and conducting a short community survey to assess the relevant outcomes.

#### *Results*

Short-term goals:

- Spontaneous occupation of the created space.
- Local vendors use and take care of the park.
- Increasing women's perception of safety in the area.

Long-term goals:

- Reducing gender-based urban violence in the area.
- Increasing the community's perceived safety in the area.

Sustainability:

- Coletivo M.O.B will work with the community to engage them in the care and maintenance of the parklet. Additionally, if the project is successful, Coletivo M.O.B. could bring new perspectives on gender-based violence to follow-up projects.

#### *Indicators of success*

- Parklet finished and ready to use.
- Local vendors' perceptions about the utility and utilization of the parklet, assessed by a digital survey.
- Change in Community perception of violence index, assessed by a survey conducted prior to the construction of the parklet, and right after the construction is finished.

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<sup>4</sup> This process will be conducted remotely if the COVID-19 pandemic still represents a public health concern by then.