

Francisca Benítez B.

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Urbanist and designer, passionate about community development, placemaking, and culture. International experience working with non-profits and city governments using design methods to find innovative solutions to urban challenges.

Work

April 2022 - April 2024 | Madrid, Spain

Program Manager, Global Designing Cities Initiative

Led technical assistance for Streets for Kids Program in Cerrillos, Chile; Cuenca, Ecuador; Solo, Indonesia; and Abuja, Nigeria.

Directed the creation of "How to Engage Kids in Street Design" publication, including content, graphics, and nine engagement tools for June 2024 release.

Managed Urban 95 Academy Technical Assistance, including public presentations and design workshops.

Supervised a Program Associate and an external consultant to ensure team efficiency.

Supported program management and development for global outreach of the Streets for Kids initiative.

Conducted public sessions and traveled to promote the Streets for Kids program internationally.

June 2021 - April 2022 (Program Associate) | Oct 2019 - Aug 2020 (Consultant) | New York, NY

Program Associate, Global Designing Cities Initiative

Designing and overseeing the development of 11 play streets within an Early Childhood Development (ECD) project in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Promoting the Streets for Kids program (SfK), including implementing 3 projects and 8 trainings in cities worldwide.

Providing programmatic and functional support to the Bloomberg Initiative for Global Road Safety (BIGRS) work.

Conducting research and producing tools for kids engagement in street design.

Aug 2020 - May 2021 | Los Angeles, CA

Planning Associate, Kounkuey Design Initiative

Led and developed of community engagement tools and workshops for virtual and safe in-person settings.

Managed the application process for Prop 68 funding in three sites and supported four others, conducting outreach, serving as a city, partner organizations, and community liaison.

Prepared park concept plans, cost estimates and performed application writing.

Guided development efforts and engaged business owners in an industrial site in Los Angeles, California.

Mar 2019 - Ongoing | New York, NY

Start-Up Team, PlacemakingX

Managed a community of over 1000 leaders and advocates in more than 70 countries.

Curated, organized and coordinated live panel sessions.

Created content for social media, workshops, presentations, and more.

Oct 2019 - Dec 2020 | Mar 2016 - Feb 2019 (Full-time Consultant) | New York, NY

Consultant, What Works Cities

Created an online training curriculum for city governments to embed practices and projects beyond one administration through culture change and human-centered design.

Implemented and created coaching strategies helping city leadership better talk about data externally and internally.

Designed knowledge management systems to implement technical assistance in over 100 US cities.

Produced workshops and systems for city governments to repurpose funds from programs that are not working.

Languages:

Spanish (native), English (fluent)

IRB Certified Researcher

Software Skills:

Adobe Photoshop

Adobe Illustrator

Adobe InDesign

Adobe After Effects

GIS

AutoCAD

Sketch Up

Microsoft Excel

Microsoft Word

Microsoft Power Point

Squarespace

G Suite

SPSS

Work

Feb 2020 - Apr 2020 | State of New Jersey

Researcher, NJ Office of Innovation

Conducted a two-month discovery sprint to inform the next steps for the New Jersey Career Network (NJCN), one of the nation's first digital coaching and support platforms to help residents find meaningful, gainful employment.

Gained a holistic understanding of the journey towards employment from the perspective of active job seekers through interviews, site visits, and participatory design activities.

Developed and validated hypotheses from a breadth of experiences and backgrounds.

Identified key insights and components relevant to COVID-19.

Mar 2019 - Feb 2020 | New York, NY

Consultant, The Placemaking Fund

Led the development of a public space consultancy project in Saudi Arabia.

Coordinated efforts to create and publish "The Social Life Project" online publication.

Aug 2016 - May 2017 | Dhanbad, India

Project Associate, World Bank Group

NYU Advanced Project in International Development

Conducted research on the impacts of urban infrastructure development projects.

Performed a series of visits to all sites involved in Phase 1 of Dhanbad Roads Project.

Produced recommendations based on urban policy, sustainability and human-centered design.

Mar 2013 - Jun 2015 | Santiago, Chile

Consultant, Center for Territorial Intelligence

Supported the development of urban studies in Chile including a Central Bank Confidential project, Socioeconomic Impacts in a Copper Mining City in Chile, Residential Segregation in Santiago and Crime Recidivism.

Education

Aug 2015 - May 2017

Master of Urban Planning, New York University

Aug 2009 - May 2014

Strategic Design, School of Design, Architecture and Urban Planning, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile

Aug 2009 - May 2014

Visiting Student, Universidade do Porto

Mar 2008 - Jul 2009

Business Engineering, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile