



# Before And After

Inspiration and design thinking activity developed by CatalyticAction

Before and After is an exercise in which participants look at case studies of spatial interventions and discuss the impact of design on people's experiences and environments. The selection of case studies is a process of design thinking that the facilitator conducts to present examples and concepts that are relevant to the nature of the intervention, and can bring to the conversation the values and ideas that are essential for good quality spatial design for children.

## Preparation:

- Print out image of site of intervention.
- Research and print case studies of spatial interventions. Make sure the examples you choose are:
  - Relevant to the project. For example, if the project is to design a school courtyard, collect different examples of school courtyards that reflect important design values for the project, showing pictures and explaining the key impact of the school courtyard designs: group seatings, educational murals, etc.
  - Diverse and illustrating both negative and positive impact on the space.

Tip: Avoid images of interventions that associate with war and violent destruction.



### Purpose:

To think about spatial design as a decision making process that can change according to their needs, and can inspire them to think of how their environments can change.



### Duration:

15 minutes



### Group size:

Variable



### Suggested Age:

6+



### Materials:

Image of site of intervention (e.g. the parking you want to transform into a playground), print-outs of spatial interventions, showing the space before and after. Examples from Catalytic Action are provided, but we encourage you to research examples that speak to your project.



### Space:

Classroom or open calm space.

# Step by Step

- Introduce and discuss the concept of Design, the different ways it is applied in the world and how the choice of design can impact people's experiences.
- Explain that design can have a positive and negative impact on a person, and this experience is relative.
- Ask if anyone can think of an example of design and how it has impacted their lives. You may begin by offering a simple example of design from the room or space you are in.
- Show the first case study you have prepared and ask participants to quietly observe it for a couple of minutes .
- Then start the discussion by asking, What do you notice?... What else do you notice? Try to bring back the discussion to noticings, as this guides participants to share observations as a group before jumping to conclusions or analysis.
- Move to interpretations, by asking, What does each image make you feel? And ask them to elaborate on the elements that bring out such feelings.
- Go through the rest of the images then wrap up by showing them the image of the site of intervention. Talk about the project, that you will be working on a design intervention together to transform the space.
- Discuss what inspired them in these case studies asking them 'What would work in the site of intervention?'



- Ask the participants 'What would you like the space to make you feel?' and take note of their answers on a white board or flipchart.
- Thank everyone for participating in the activity and conclude with the key themes of the discussion around design, their likes and dislikes, enhance the importance of design with an emphasis on the capability of everyone to design in order to increase their confidence in taking part of the design process.

Tip: Talking about emotions can be triggering to children who have faced trauma. Be sensitive to the words you choose in the discussion and acknowledge any emotions participants express, letting them know they are heard, allowing them to let their emotions out in a safe and understanding space.

