



Aga Khan Award for Architecture

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W I N N I N G P R O J E C T S

Public Spaces Development Programme

Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation

Patron: Rustam Minnikhanov, President of the Republic of Tatarstan

Conception: Natalia Fishman-Bekmambetova, curator, Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Tatarstan, Ministry of Construction, Architecture, Housing and Utilities of the Republic of Tatarstan

Project description

Tatarstan's Soviet period, beginning in 1920's, saw much modernist construction and hierarchical centralised planning, with diverse urban locations made to look alike. Many mosques and churches were destroyed, leaving their associated public spaces functionless. The post-Soviet era, since the Republic of Tatarstan's foundation in 1992, brought freedom of movement and an exodus from rural towns. Also, a return to private real-estate ownership enabled wealthy individuals and businesses to buy up large swathes of land, notably in scenic lakeside and forest areas, thus limiting the population's recreation options in most post-soviet countries.

The ambitious Public Spaces Development Programme seeks to counter these trends and to offer an equal quality of environment to all Tatar citizens, regardless of settlement size – as well as reinstating a sense of individual place in each. From its inception by the President of Tatarstan in 2015 until the end of 2018, it had transformed 328 spaces across each of the Republic's 45 municipal districts, covering 33 villages, 42 towns and two major cities, and embracing both Soviet and longer-standing historical settings.

There are ten different project types: water bodies; ponds; embankments; beaches; parks; public gardens; boulevards; squares; streets; and walkways. Most include infrastructure for cultural activities. Unified way-finding signage, furniture and ornamental features reflect aspects of each place's culture or history, and are produced locally to a high standard, incentivising small businesses. The spaces are conceived for year-round enjoyment, including during dark winters and heavy snowfall, through eye-catching lighting and sometimes winter sports facilities. The snowfall offered a further challenge of limiting construction to the period from May to November.

Some projects are initiated by members of the community, others by the state. In all cases the design and implementation process is highly participatory, based on strong engagement with local citizens and extensive consultation of economists, anthropologists, dendrologists and others. An architectural bureau initiated by the Programme's curator has become a magnet for young local and national talent, with many



of its recruits going on to set up their own practices to oversee one of the larger projects. The positive changes seen are social, economic, cultural and ecological as well as physical. The success of this initiative has led to the introduction in 2017a similar programme at a federal level.

Jury Citation

Impressive in its ambition to improve the quality of public space throughout the Republic of Tatarstan, the Programme's success lies in its inclusive approach to the implementation process. The projects, which are purposefully located in many communities, attempt to elevate the importance of communal space.

It is important to understand the role of the public in such projects – in reinforcing the sense of community, the identity of the villages, towns and cities, and the role it plays in the development of civil society and the quality of life.

The Programme is also designed to compensate for the badly conceived and often inappropriately scaled spaces wrought by central planning during the Soviet period. The initiative also promotes the importance of nature, even in locations defined by their industrial character, while working to protect the public good from the tendencies and interests of private ownership.

The scale and diversity of the 185 projects completed by the end of 2017 have required different types of responses and ideas. It is evident that the long-term success and sustainability of the project lies not only in its larger vision and political leadership, but also in the realisation process, which has emphasised engagement and dialogue, the involvement and encouragement of young architects and designers, and the participation of users and the community.

Project data

Patron

Rustam Minnikhanov, *President of the Republic of Tatarstan*

Conception

Natalia Fishman-Bekmambetova, *curator*

Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Tatarstan



Alexey Pesoshin, *Prime Minister*

Ildar Khalikov, *former Prime Minister*

Ministry of Construction, Architecture, Housing and Utilities of the Republic of Tatarstan

Irek Faizullin, *Minister*

Alexey Frolov, *Deputy Minister*

Implementation of the Programme

Institute for Urban Development of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan, Russian Federation

Ksenia Rassman, *director*

Roman Karachev, *senior assistant director*

Ainaz Yarmiev, *head of Architectural Projects Department*

Denis Dmitrienko, *art-director and head of Visual Communications Department*

Maria Gorozhaninova, *head of External Communications Department*

Radmila Khakova, *former head of External Communications Department*

'Main Investment and Construction Administration of the Republic of Tatarstan' State Budget Institution

Marat Aizatullin, *Director*

Project Group 8 LLC, Kazan, Russian Federation

Nadezhda Snigireva, *co-founder and partner*

Dmitry Smirnov, *general director*

Directorate of Parks and Squares, Kazan, Russian Federation

Marat Zakirov, *director*

Executive Committee of Kazan

Daria Tolovenkova, *deputy chief architect of Kazan, first head of Architecturny Desant LLC*

MOST Architectural Bureau, Kazan, Russian Federation

Liliya Gizzyatova, *architect*

Project Data

Site area: 68,000 km²

Cost: 173,500,000 USD

Commission: 2015

Design: February 2015 – ongoing

Construction: May 2015 – ongoing

185 of the total of 328 projects have been completed by the end of 2017 and therefore considered eligible



for the 2019 Award Cycle.

Institute for Urban Development of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kazan, Russian Federation

The Institute for Urban Development of the Republic of Tatarstan implements the Public Spaces Development Programme. Within the framework of the Programme, 328 parks, squares, streets and embankments have been landscaped in Tatarstan by end 2018

It includes the training of local specialists and officials, aiding the formation of a professional architectural community; participatory design, during which each project is discussed and coordinated with urban communities and other interested parties at all stages of its implementation; the development of local industries and the local economy is an integral part of the project.

For construction work on the sites, local manufacturers are involved, which gives them the opportunity to develop their businesses and gain new competencies. At the design stage of the facility, an infrastructure for business is created, which later opens allows the opening of a cafés, rental points, etc. After a project is completed, its well-appointed facilities are filled with activities such as festivals, concerts, and sporting events.

Website

<http://park.tatar>