

Building Child-Friendly Cities

1 Let's Warm Up with Some Lead-in Activities!

Lead-in activities:

- 1 Group activity: Divide the students into small groups and ask them to brainstorm ideas on how to make their city more child-friendly. They can discuss things like parks, playgrounds, safe transportation, and educational facilities. After a few minutes, have each group share their ideas with the class. Encourage them to use English to express their opinions and justify their choices.
- 2 Individual activity: Ask each student to imagine they are the mayor of their city and they have the power to make one change to create a better environment for children. Instruct them to write a short paragraph describing the change they would make and why they think it is important. After they have finished writing, ask a few students to share their ideas with the class.
- 3 Group activity: Divide the students into pairs or small groups and assign each group a specific aspect of the city mentioned in the text, such as public spaces, transportation, or education. Instruct them to discuss the positive changes made in that aspect and the impact it has on the city and its residents, especially children. After a few minutes, have each group present their findings to the class, using English to describe their findings and opinions.

2 Let's Answer the Following Questions!

- 1 According to Enrique Penalosa, what is the relationship between a successful city for children and a perfect city for all citizens?


- 2 How did Bogota transform from a chaotic city into one that is better for children?


- 3 What were some of the steps taken by Penalosa's administration to improve the city?


- 4 Why was it important to clear the large slum in the center of Bogota?


- 5 What measures were implemented to address congestion and provide facilities for pedestrians and cyclists?


6 How did the government fund the improvements in transportation infrastructure?

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7 Besides improving infrastructure, what other area did Penalosa's administration invest in?

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3 Can You Fill in the Blanks?

in, expropriated, restrictions, escape, large-scale, increase, money, congestion, imposed, poured, zone, enrolment, large, criticism, land, reforms, into, clear, slum, created, tackle, a (2), the, barrier, no-go

BOGOTA

The ex-mayor of Bogota, Enrique Penalosa, has argued that if we ever achieve a successful city for children, we will have built the perfect city for all citizens. In Bogota, the capital of Colombia, they have tried to fulfil this ideal by transforming what was once a chaotic city – badly affected by congestion and gripped by fear of crime – into one far better for children. Penalosa is largely credited with this transformation through the ____(1) ____(2) he initiated at the turn of the century. However, if other mayors hadn't secured the city's finances before him and developed his reforms afterwards, the changes wouldn't have been so successful.

One of the first steps he took was to ____(3) ____(4) ____(5) ____(6)

that dominated the centre of Bogota and replace it with a large public space. The slum had been a ____(7) ____(8) for police and had effectively ____(9) ____(10) ____(11) between the affluent north and the more deprived south of the city. By demolishing it, the city was immediately brought closer together. Having cleared one space, Penalosa's administration then ____(12) ____(13) ____(14) of a private country club in the north of the city. Its golf course and polo fields were converted into a free park with sports facilities for all.

They then started to ____(15) ____(16) and the lack of facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Wide pavements were built and cars were prevented from parking on them – a move that led to huge protests. The government built miles and miles of cycle lanes and set up a huge network of buses, again using separate lanes. They also ____(17) ____(18) on car use and increased taxes on petrol, the proceeds from which went back into the new transport system.

Finally, they ____(19) ____(20) ____(21) education – building new schools and a network of libraries, several in the most deprived neighbourhoods. The schools were also given thousands of computers connected to both the Internet and the libraries. The programme resulted in a huge ____(22) ____(23) ____(24) and school attendance.

During his time in office, Penalosa did not ____(25) ____(26) and after his three-year term in office, he failed to be re-elected in subsequent attempts. Some critics hate aspects of the road laws; others complain new housing is

lar from their original home in the city centre.

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Let's Discuss These Interesting Questions!

- 1 How have large-scale reforms impacted the process of gentrification in cities?
- 2 What measures can be taken to tackle the issue of slums in urban areas?
- 3 In what ways do no-go zones act as a barrier for gentrification efforts?
- 4 Can you give an example of a city where land has been expropriated for gentrification purposes?
- 5 How does the influx of money into a neighborhood contribute to its gentrification?
- 6 What restrictions are typically imposed on developers during the gentrification process?
- 7 How has the increase in enrolment at universities affected the demand for housing in gentrified neighborhoods?
- 8 Do you think gentrification is a viable solution to addressing congestion in cities? Why or why not?
- 9 How do governments justify their actions of pouring money into gentrification projects despite facing criticism from local residents?
- 10 Is it possible for low-income residents to escape the effects of gentrification, or will they always be negatively impacted by these changes?



Correct Answers

2 Correct Answers:

- 1 According to Enrique Penalosa, if a city is successful for children, it will also be the perfect city for all citizens.
- 2 Bogota transformed through large-scale reforms initiated by Enrique Penalosa, which addressed issues such as congestion, crime, and lack of facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 3 Some of the steps taken by Penalosa's administration included clearing a large slum in the city center, expropriating land for public spaces, building wide pavements, creating miles of cycle lanes, setting up a network of buses, and investing in education.
- 4 It was important to clear the large slum because it had created a barrier between the affluent north and the more deprived south of the city and was a no-go zone for police.
- 5 Measures implemented to address congestion and provide facilities for pedestrians and cyclists included building wide pavements, preventing cars from parking on them, constructing miles of cycle lanes, and establishing a separate lane system for buses.
- 6 The improvements in transportation infrastructure were funded through increased taxes on petrol, with the proceeds being reinvested into the new transport system.
- 7 Besides improving infrastructure, Penalosa's administration also invested in education by building new schools, establishing a network of libraries, and providing computers connected to the internet for schools.

3 Correct Answers:

1 large-scale 2 reforms 3 clear 4 a 5 large 6 slum
7 no-go 8 zone 9 created 10 a 11 barrier
12 expropriated 13 the 14 land 15 tackle 16 congestion
17 imposed 18 restrictions 19 poured 20 money 21 into
22 increase 23 in 24 enrolment 25 escape 26 criticism