



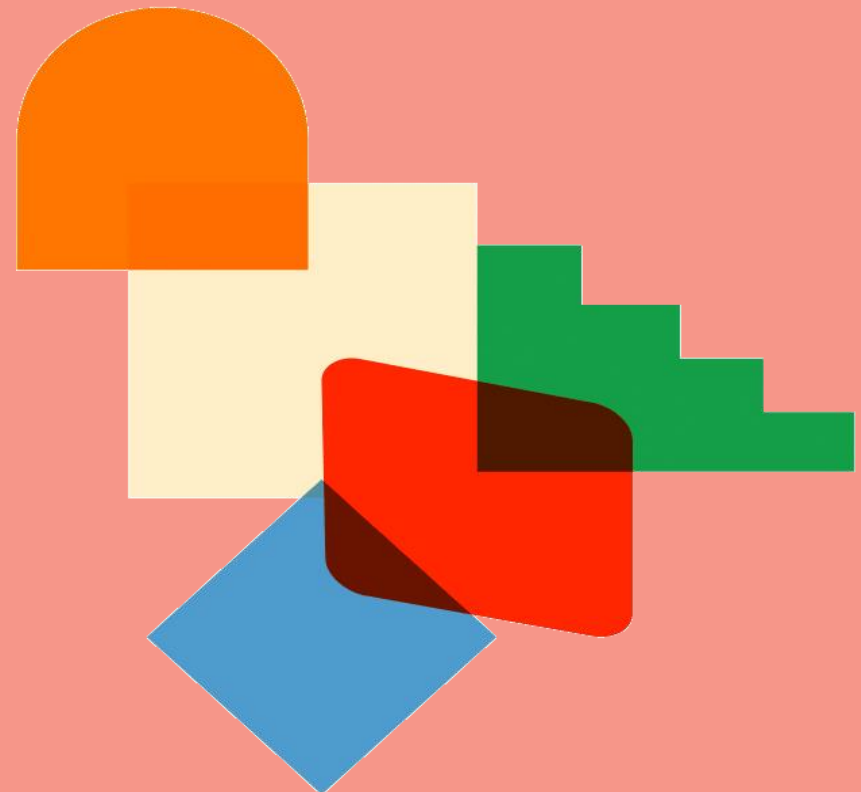
# THE INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPATORY CHARTER

for Urban & Territorial Development  
to Deliver the New Urban Agenda

Habitat Professionals Forum  
World Urban Forum 2024  
Cairo, Egypt

## 10 CASE STUDIES

to illustrate the ten  
Participatory Principles of the  
International Participatory Charter





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## Case Studies illustrating the 10 Participatory Principles

### *Case Study 1*

Inclusive Spatial Planning from Canada: City of Lethbridge Municipal Development Plan

**Principle 1:** Human rights with dignity. People's participation in shaping the future of their communities flows from the inviolable right of all humans to be treated with dignity.

### *Case Study 2*

Dealing with our Own Situation - Iluka Sewerage Strategy & Scheme, New South Wales, Australia

**Principle 2:** Ecological respect. Democratic processes that engage diverse interests align with the goal of ensuring harmony, sustainability, and resilience between natural and human environments.

### *Case Study 3*

Processes that bind to places & citizenship: reflections from Morocco

**Principle 3:** Open processes. Participatory democracy depends on people's voices being heard and participating in processes that are accessible, inclusive, meaningful, and transparent.

### *Case Study 4*

Actionable rights to participation: a 'Partial Urban Improvement Program' in Ensenada, México



**Principle 4:** Delivery on rights to engage. Participation needs to be embedded throughout plan and project lifecycles (design, implementation, evaluation, iteration) that occur at varying scales and in diverse forms).

### *Case Study 5*

Tactical Urbanism: post-disaster urban recovery following Beirut Port blast

**Principle 5:** Priority actions for recovery. Participatory action should be targeted at those places where there is greatest and immediate need.

### *Case Study 6*

Catalysing change in an urban river catchment: Wealdstone Brook, London

**Principle 6:** Transformative change. Participatory planning can drive long-term change and be part of transformed behaviours and beneficial outcomes.

### *Case Study 7*

Community engagement and diversity of professional practices in Europe

**Principle 7:** Diverse statutory & non-statutory processes must be used to reduce the complexity and potential barriers to community and stakeholder engagement. This is in addition to statutory administrative mechanisms and supported by diverse professionals.

### *Case Study 8*

Co-designing public makerspace with communities in Shanghai, China



**Principle 8:** Multiple intersecting identities which shape how people interact with urban processes and issues such as race, gender and poverty, and thus lived experiences matter. This requires respect for the plurality of stakeholders – there are no homogenous communities that can be represented within participatory democracy, and the range of lived experiences should be embraced and accounted for, including other forms of expertise and lived experience that have historically been marginalised.

### **Case Study 9**

**Creating Space for Participation in City Master Planning in Delhi**

**Principle 9:** Consideration of structural and institutional difference in the level of available resources, information, and organisations of governance and their vulnerabilities must be built

into determining and implementing participatory arrangements. This is particularly important regarding the distinct procedural and resourcing implications for engagement between formal / informal settlements.

### **Case Study 10**

**Understanding wind farms together: citizen voices in UK regulatory processes**

**Principle 10:** Promoting the sharing of knowledge demands shared and equal access to knowledge, including harnessing the potential of digital technologies through: spatial databases linked to data observatories and agreed standards including forecasting, modelling, and monitoring; and an integrated open data framework and linked digital tools with public consultation functions.



## Case Study 1

### Inclusive Spatial Planning From Canada: City Of Lethbridge Municipal Development Plan

**Perry Stein**, MA, RPP, Member, Canadian Institute of Planners, Research Affiliate, Prentice Institute for Global Population and Economy, University of Lethbridge

#### Summary

In settler colonial countries such as Canada, there has been increasing pressure to transform the nature of relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Despite narratives framing Indigenous “issues” as synonymous with rural, remote, or “Northern” geographies, as of 2021, approximately 60% of all self-identifying Indigenous peoples in Canada live in urban areas (Statistics Canada, 2024); with few exceptions, these cities are concentrated near the country’s southern border with the United States. Cities are thus fast becoming spaces of constructive, if not at times messy, dialogue around what truth and reconciliation means, and

our individual and collective responsibilities. For urban habitat professionals, these conversations often center on land use, governance, culture, and heritage, and manifest through policy and practice. Participatory Democracy can be a useful framework through which to understand, give language to and even critique this new type of collaborative planning and policy work.

In Lethbridge, a mid-sized Canadian city, new approaches to working alongside Indigenous Nations, peoples and knowledges, are emerging. While by no means unique to Lethbridge, or even the planning profession, work in this city nonetheless sheds light on what truth and reconciliation looks like in practice. This work is additionally relevant given the legacy of urban planning in Canada and other settler colonial geographies. Recent updates to the City of Lethbridge’s Municipal Development Plan (City of Lethbridge, 2021) – the main statutory planning instrument that guides long-range, community-wide growth and development – demonstrates a shift towards more effective representation of Indigenous peoples through 1)



engagement design, 2) language, culture, and context, and 3) policy architecture.

This case study can be useful to spatial planners and other professionals seeking pathways to begin the deconstruction, decolonization and democratization of planning and policy-making both within Indigenous reconciliatory, and other equity contexts more generally.

### **Broad Context**

Every Canadian city exists within an Indigenous Territory(ies). In fact, most Canadian cities are located where they are, precisely because of the settlement, travel, and trade patterns of Indigenous peoples which predate the arrival of Europeans. Thus, in many senses, all communities in Canada are Indigenous either based on the composition of current or historical populations, or the legacy of tangible or intangible cultural heritage still present in those areas. While all Canadians are impacted by colonization (hence the common refrain, “we are all Treaty people”), Indigenous peoples experience the most acute impacts, including across all facets of health, social, economic, environmental, and political life – and indeed the very physicality of the places where they live.

From a planning perspective, not only have Indigenous peoples been forcibly removed from their millennial territories (or at the very least severely constrained through the introduction of the Reserve system in Canada) they have also been removed from urban life. Whether that be removal from the **public realm** (e.g., erasure of tangible heritage sites); **public policy** (e.g., absence from engagement plans); **public spaces** (e.g., physical removal from parks and other public places), and **public memory** (e.g., removal from historical timelines used to contextualize projects).

One of the ways this is understood is through the Doctrine of Discovery, a “legal and religious concept that has been used for centuries to justify Christian colonial conquests” (Canadian Museum of Human Rights, 2024).

One very visceral example of the Doctrine is the Indian Residential School system (IRS). Starting in the 1800s, the IRS lasted for more than 150 years and systematically removed more than 150,000 Indigenous children from their families and communities. While attending, children were prohibited from practicing their cultures, speaking their languages, and were often subject to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. In 2015 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, 2015) released its Final Report detailing the legacy of the IRS, including its ongoing implications on individuals and families (i.e., intergenerational trauma) and on society (i.e., inequitable social, economic, and other realities). The



TRC also released a companion Calls to Action document that outlined steps to be taken across society to address inequalities, including the child welfare system, education, language and culture, health, and justice.

In the less than 10 years since the TRC reports entered popular discourse, conversations around truth and reconciliation have now become commonplace, and cities and planners have become important actors. This is perhaps in part due to the direct relationship that local governments and planners have to citizens, and the connection between cities and planners with topics like land use, heritage, culture, identity, and well-being.

From a governance perspective, truth and reconciliation has shifted the way many Canadian cities design and deliver planning and policy, including the establishment of Indigenous relations offices and advisory committees as mechanisms to develop relationships and procedural approaches to engage Indigenous peoples. From a professional perspective, professional bodies such as the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) have embedded reconciliation within their core mandate and professional competencies (CIP, 2019).

### **Local Context**

Lethbridge, or Sikóóhkotok, as it is known by the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot Peoples), is a City of 120,000 people located in the Canadian province of Alberta. Sikóóhkotok has been a gathering place for families and Nations of the Siksikaititapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) for thousands of years. This includes use of the area for the harvesting of plant and animal species, for ceremonial purposes, and as a winter camp (City of Lethbridge, 2017).

European settlement in the area largely followed the construction of an American trading fort in 1870. With the discovery of coal, the Town (later City) of Lethbridge was founded in 1882. Lethbridge's early years saw rapid population growth through immigration, attracting labour to support emerging industrial activity (namely coal mining and rail).

While countries of origin have changed, Lethbridge continues to rely on immigration to support its main industries which today include health care, social services, retail and manufacturing. The 2021 federal census data shows recent immigrants are twice as likely to come from Africa or the Americas (not including the United States) than there are to come from Europe (the main historical source of immigration), and 4.5 times more likely to come from Asia. Even with strong population growth through immigration, the population growth rate of Indigenous peoples continues to outpace that of the non-Indigenous population (by 1.3 times between 2016 and 2021).





Lethbridge, like many other settler colonial cities has also struggled with racism and discrimination towards Indigenous and other diverse racialized peoples, impacting their ability to find adequate work, housing, and services.

### **Municipal Development Plan Context**

Against the backdrop of truth and reconciliation, one of the main sources of local innovation in recent years has been a shift in the way planning and policy projects are delivered, including approaches to engaging Indigenous peoples. Significant changes have been seen in the 1) design of engagement processes, 2) reflection of language, culture, and context in plans and policy, and 3) policy architecture. The most significant among them being the 2021 Municipal Development Plan (MDP).

In the Canadian province of Alberta, where Lethbridge is located, MDPs are the main statutory planning instruments used to guide long-range, community-wide growth. MDPs establish a community's values and vision, informing a regulatory framework that takes shape through increasingly localized plans. They also often tell a community's "origin story," contextualizing policy guidance across economic development, culture, land use, and other topic areas. As such, representation within an MDP matters from both *contextual* and *policy* standpoints.

Contextually, Lethbridge's previous MDP of 2010 made only cursory reference to Indigenous Peoples', summarized in a 280 word section entitled "Past." It relied on a timeline starting in 1869 with the arrival of Europeans to the area and made no reference to the preceding millennia that Indigenous peoples were present in the region, nor their place today and in the future. In terms of policy, only two in the MDP made direct reference to Indigenous peoples: One policy focused on respecting and celebrating history; and another focused on creating a welcoming and diverse city.

The constrained representation limits our understanding of Indigenous peoples' connection to place (by starting with the arrival of Europeans). It relegates Indigenous peoples' cultural production to one of the past (suggesting their relevance was "then," not "now"). Finally, it fails to recognize the relevance of Indigenous peoples and perspectives across multiple topics areas.

### **2021 MDP**

The 2021 MDP took a fundamentally different approach, in three important ways:

The 2021 MDP established a new approach to engagement. Before commencing the 2021 MDP project, an Indigenous Engagement and Communications Plan (IECPs) was co-developed through multiple



rounds of engagement with Indigenous Nations and urban Indigenous peoples (through the City’s Reconciliation Lethbridge Advisory Committee [RLAC]). Initial meetings were structured as open-ended conversations, seeking Indigenous partners’ input on everything from their interest in participating in the project, resource needs, and preferred structures for project engagement and communications.

Feedback allowed City staff to reflect the unique needs and interests of each partner. For example, one Nation indicated that it was interested in focusing on cultural resources management and deferred “urban” topics like housing and services to RLAC. Once completed, modest funding was provided to each Nation enabling Elders and technicians to be compensated for their time and knowledge.

While the City considered the MDP project to be a high priority, it was necessary to ensure Indigenous partners could evaluate it against every other industry or government project they were being asked to consult on (which have grown since the TRC report). This starting point provided a strong foundation of respect from which to explore the various MDP policy areas. It also allowed for a “distinction-based” approach to engagement to be developed, recognizing that the needs of Indigenous peoples, organizations and Nations are not necessarily homogenous and that variation in approach may be necessary. This co-design approach has since

been replicated across multiple City planning and policy projects, including in heritage and transportation planning. And indeed, other municipalities across Western Canada have gone on to learn from and apply this approach to their work as well.

The 2021 MDP sought to reflect language, culture and context. The lack of contextual representation within the previous MDP provided a unique opportunity for engagement. The approach taken was to turn the *pen* over to Indigenous Elders and technicians, allowing the “story of place” to represent their voices and their relationship to the area: accurately and authentically. This was aided by drawing from analyses (and relational trust) gained through preceding technical reports prepared by Nations wherein their acted as heritage consultants to the City.

The first major example of that approach took place in 2017 when the City hired the Consultation Offices of the Siksikaitapi Nations to prepare the Traditional Knowledge and Use Assessment. The TKUA was a historic overview of all public lands in the City, resulting in a baseline understanding of historic (and current) resources and land use activities that could be used to inform future planning projects. In contrast to previous historic resources assessment projects, rather than the City hiring a third-party heritage consultant (likely coming to Lethbridge from a different City) who would then go on to engage with the Nations as part of primary data collection, the City contracted directly with the Nations. This



ensured more equitable compensation, more direct sharing of data, that the Nations could design a methodology that met their cultural and procedural needs, enhanced protection of intellectual property, and that the Nations would lead data collection and reporting rather than a final product being interpreted and mitigated through non-Nation heritage professionals.

This new approach to shifting the power balance towards Nations and away from urban habitat professionals as “sources of truth” has resulted in a transformation in representation. For the MDP, it resulted in a shift from the previous version articulating Indigenous peoples’ history beginning with the arrival of Europeans, to the updated version incorporating an extensive description exploring thousands of years of connection through culture and storytelling. And indeed, that description in the updated MDP was informed both by the TKUA project and by direct collaboration between City planners with Nation Elders who participated in the writing and editing process. The addition of relevant demographic, social and economic data also helped to situate Indigenous peoples within contemporary and future-focused conversations.

This more holistic description (and data) built a foundation for subsequent policy sections by articulating Indigenous perspectives on policies relating to economic development, culture and heritage, community wellbeing, housing, urban design, transportation, utilities and servicing, environment, and regional relationships.

### Case Study 1 Inclusive Spatial Planning from Canada: City of Lethbridge Municipal Development Plan

The other major representative components of the document include the use of the Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) language throughout, and the inclusion of “forward” written by a Kainai Elder.

The 2021 MDP changed its policy architecture. The other main deficit of the 2010 MDP was within the policies themselves. This was top of mind when planners began engagement with Indigenous Nations and community members, asking the question: *how do you want policies to represent you?*

RLAC pushed for a significant change from previous models, partly in response to what its members had witnessed in other projects they were engaged on since the TRC. In those projects Indigenous peoples were increasingly considered through special, stand-alone sections. RLAC members sought to get away from what they saw as continued Indigenous othering and “reconciliation tokenization,” towards something more affirming of their multi-dimensional, integrated presence in society.

RLAC advocated for representation in all facets of the MDP, and for active involvement in formulating and reviewing policies which considered their interests. The result is that Indigenous peoples appear within all policy sections: from housing, homelessness, economic development, and arts and culture to intergovernmental relations and the environment. This had the benefit of ensuring a strength-based approach was used (seeking opportunities), rather

than the typical deficit model which has historically positioned Indigenous peoples as *issues* to be solved (and namely in the areas of poverty, health care and housing).

This change in policy architecture, and the deep engagement that took place to arrive at policy language and direction was driven by the perspectives of those who are most significantly impacted. This new approach (now seen as standard practice in many Canadian cities) reflects a transition in the role of urban habitat professionals: from established expert and policy author, to learner and convenor.

### **Participatory Democracy and Human Dignity**

Participatory Democracy as a concept articulates that each of us has the right to be directly engaged in the decisions that our governments take. The Lethbridge example highlights that to reflect human dignity, a distinction-based approach is necessary. Such an approach acknowledges that within a community, the distribution of the resources required to participate in planning and policy projects (be it social, economic, political, or otherwise) is uneven. Levelling the playing field such that all parties can participate in shaping decisions requires an awareness of the current realities and inequities facing equity-deserving groups so that responsive

participatory approaches can be (co)designed accordingly. (At the risk of oversimplifying, this is generally a shift from participatory processes designed through an **equality lens**, to those designed through an **equity lens**.) Importantly, it also requires an awareness of the historical context of those same groups, including in many cases the role that urban habitat professionals have had in creating those same harms and inequities still experienced today.

Fundamentally, human dignity as manifest within participatory projects is about respect. Respect emerges not just in the way groups are engaged, but in the degree of agency they express in the design and delivery of engagement, and the architecture of how their input is integrated into planning and policy outputs. Respect also emerges through representation in the language and focus of policy, but also in the way a policy narrates a place's story and values. Representation in those contextual elements ensures equity-deserving groups are dignified and can (re)claim space within public memory and discourse because their identity is inseparable from the community's.



## **TAKE AWAYS** Inclusive Spatial Planning from Canada: City of Lethbridge Municipal Development Plan (Stein, 2024)

### **Historical and contemporary context as pathways to a dignified future**

It is crucial to acknowledge the role that planning and other urban habitat professions have played in creating and perpetuating harm, whether that be the role of zoning as a tool to segregate communities by race and income, or the physical removal of Indigenous and diverse racialized peoples from their communities (e.g., examples include the Reserve system in much of Canada, and the legacy of places like Africville the province of Nova Scotia). Those harms, while often situated within purely historical contexts, nonetheless continue to manifest today through uneven social, economic, and environmental outcomes and vulnerabilities. To be an ally for human dignity, urban habitat professionals need to do their homework, and be ready to spend the necessary time to establish new relationships based on trust. Before processes can be designed to more meaningfully engage equity-deserving groups about “the future,” we must first arrive at a shared understanding of the past and present.

### **From co-design to agency over design**

The shift to co-design and co-produced models of planning and policy making is a definite improvement to building trust and more equitable outcomes. Urban habitat professionals should however see that as an interim step; within the space of engagement of Indigenous peoples I would argue that this can be described as the incremental shift from colonization to anti-colonialism to post-colonialism. Urban habitat professionals should actively challenge themselves to identify those spaces, both intangible (i.e., policy) and tangible (i.e., built form) where equity-deserving groups can assume agency over design and knowledge production. The incremental transition in the roles of professionals vis-à-vis citizens, will not only improve the sustainability of habitat outcomes (through added buy-in), but also has their potential to address the fact that in many parts of the world (including much of Canada), the people working within urban habitat professions do not represent the diversity of the communities they serve.

## Case Study 2

### Dealing with our Own Situation - Iluka Sewerage Strategy & Scheme, New South Wales, Australia

#### Open Processes through Whole-of-Project with Ecological Respect as a Key Foundation

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## Summary

The Iluka Sewerage Scheme project was awarded a Grand Honour Award in the Planning Category at the 2014 International Water Association (IWA) Global Project Innovations Awards, recognised for the successful collaborative planning and development approach.

This case study has valuable lessons for participatory democracy now and in the future. Similar infrastructure projects are being carried out using the model and experience of the Iluka project. The DWOOS process has

since been applied to a wide range of spatial and project planning, design, and management briefs. This includes river and coastal management plans, local and regional plan-making, and major citizen science-based research projects.

Iluka, on Yaegl customary aboriginal lands, in the state of New South Wales (NSW), Australia was the state's largest unsewered coastal town. It relied on individual onsite tank and gravel-based septic systems for residences and businesses. Whilst inexpensive to maintain, many were deemed to not be working effectively and polluting groundwater. Located at the mouth of the majestic free flowing Clarence River Iluka is surrounded by Bundjalung National Park, including the World Heritage Iluka Rainforest unique due to growing on infertile coastal sands. The town has many mature native coastal trees and shrubs in the streetscape that are valued as they reflect its link to the coastal environment and adjacent Pacific Ocean.

For some years, a conventional project planning process (decisions being made by authorities with basic stakeholder consultation) was being applied to shift towards a new sewerage system. It was not working. The community was divided over moving to a reticulated centralised system or remaining with septic systems. They also voiced concerns over impacts to river and groundwater, rainforest and mature street trees and myriad of terrestrial and aquatic wildlife. These more cohesive views would become a foundational element in working together. Trust and confidence were low, and the authorities stuck on how to move forward. Shared understandings that could enable innovative and well supported solutions were needed. Those would not come from a top-down or bottom-up approach. The collective and co-created outcome required an open and accountable process.

A collaborative planning process was proposed and implemented, called **DWOOS (Dealing With Our Own Situation)** with independently facilitated work on:

- **3 main elements of engagement:** (i) a relevant planning & design framework, (ii) effective communication processes, and (iii) upskilling and sharing information;
- **3 key phases of working together:** (i) initiating engagement, (ii) creating shared understanding, and (iii) planning inclusive action leading to sustainable solutions
- **4 participatory principles:** (i) provide for full participation of stakeholders in a safe, supportive and resourced process, (ii) support shared rights and responsibility in developing the approach and results and a respect for the process, (iii) create a ‘learning group’ so as to harness and weave together skills, views, ideas and experience, (iv) build mutual trust, shared understanding, cooperation and alignment to move from common ground towards agreements.

A broad stakeholder representative Project Working Group (PWG) was established for the concept planning phase. They were so successful they remained for the whole life of the project. i.e. across 8 phases of work from



design concept to development approval, construction, completion and operation. All stakeholder interests remained around the table working together. The PWG achieved its aims and objectives, protecting ecological values and public health with the project meeting all legal and governance requirements, within the agreed budget and timeframe.

### **Background**

In New South Wales (NSW), Australia, sewage management is generally the responsibility of local authorities ('Councils' that form the third level of government). Operating and environmental approvals are required from the regional level ('State Government' at the second level). The State Government also provides funding to assist in the project development and construction, and its agencies such as departments of finance, public infrastructure, conservation provide support and have influence. Some environmental approvals may also be required from the national (Federal) Government in respect of endangered ecosystems and species.

The town of Iluka, on traditional Yaegl country, on the far north coast of NSW was the largest unsewered town in NSW. In 1999, Clarence Valley Council, with support from the NSW government, proposed a conventional deep sewerage scheme which relied on

gravity-fed and pumped effluent being sent from houses and businesses to a nearby treatment plant, and then disposal of tertiary treated effluent into an estuarine area or on land adjacent to the town. Re-use of treated effluent was also part of the investigations, most likely to be directed to the Iluka public golf course.

A Project Management Committee made up of Council and relevant State government agency technical representatives managed the planning, with only conventional community consultation. People were given information and asked for feedback on outcomes and issues, and Councillors got reports on progress. This did not embody the principles of participatory democracy.

The reticulated sewerage planning faced the challenge of a community polarised about whether centralised sewerage should be provided or not, and if so what type of scheme would best suit the environmentally sensitive location. This was a key issue given a very sensitive receiving environment that included a World Heritage listed coastal rainforest area, for any effluent or recycled water from the scheme. The proposed construction approach was going to be disruptive for a long period of time and required grid-like patterns of pipes in streets and properties which local people knew would result in loss of many mature native trees.



Residents, landowners and businesses were also concerned about possible impacts on adjacent river and estuarine areas that people used for passive and active recreation. The environmental features of this coastal area are a draw for visitors and therefore also important for the local economy. Furthermore, the demographics of the town featured a high proportion of older people and young families who may be impacted by a new sewer rate set by Council to cover capital and operating costs over time. A complex challenge was providing an affordable scheme that addressed community polarisation and shared major concerns, while acknowledging and meeting stringent environmental requirements.

There was a stalemate that was costing time, money, and resources. The State Government had infrastructure priorities in other areas of NSW and was not going to contribute funds and resources until clear consensus existed about the scheme. Council understood this, and the need for more effective in-depth engagement with the local community. This would be required firstly to develop an agreed sewerage strategy which would identify a way forward, and lead to a preferred scheme option. It was at this point that Council proposed a more comprehensive form of community engagement. This approach was supported by the State agencies.

It was expected that Council would then employ consultants for the concept and then detailed design of the proposed sewerage, and assist with development applications and approvals, and Council

would call for tenders from construction companies and choose the preferred tenderer. This was all to be managed by the Project Management Committee. However, this did not occur, and what follows tells the tale.

Council called on the services of sustainability planning, design and education organisation, *Sustainable Futures Australia (SFA)* to assist in designing and implementing a collaborative planning process that representatively engaged the whole-of-community rather than just consulted them. SFA had developed a collaborative planning and decision-making process called *Dealing-With-Our-Own-Situation (DWOOS)* in conjunction with state and local government authorities for use in the process of developing and implementing infrastructure and resource management strategies including development of sewerage strategies and concepts. The process had been successfully applied in other infrastructure projects in the region including major water supply and sewerage schemes.

### **The DWOOS Framework**

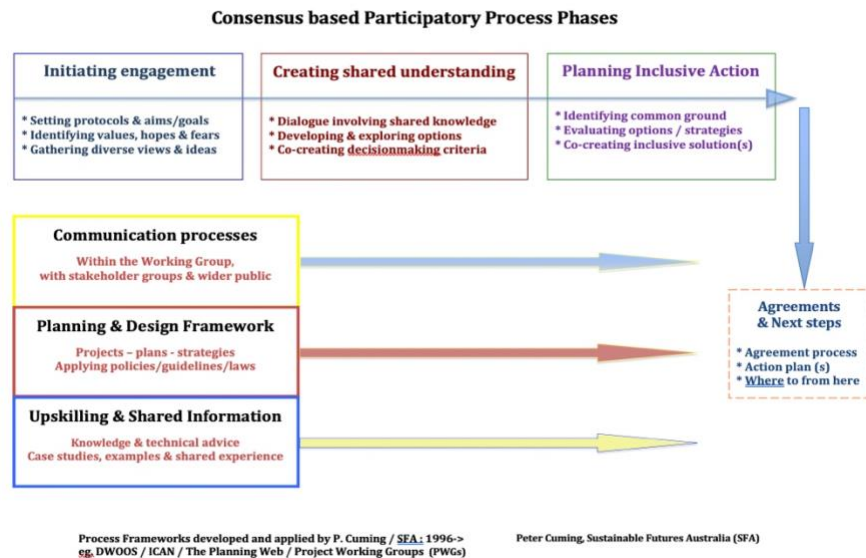
The diagram next page graphically sets out the integrated aspects of the DWOOS process in relation to (i) the intent of participatory engagement through initiation to inclusive action phases; and (ii) the key elements of, project planning and design, communication, and shared learning, applied in collaboration and decision-making.

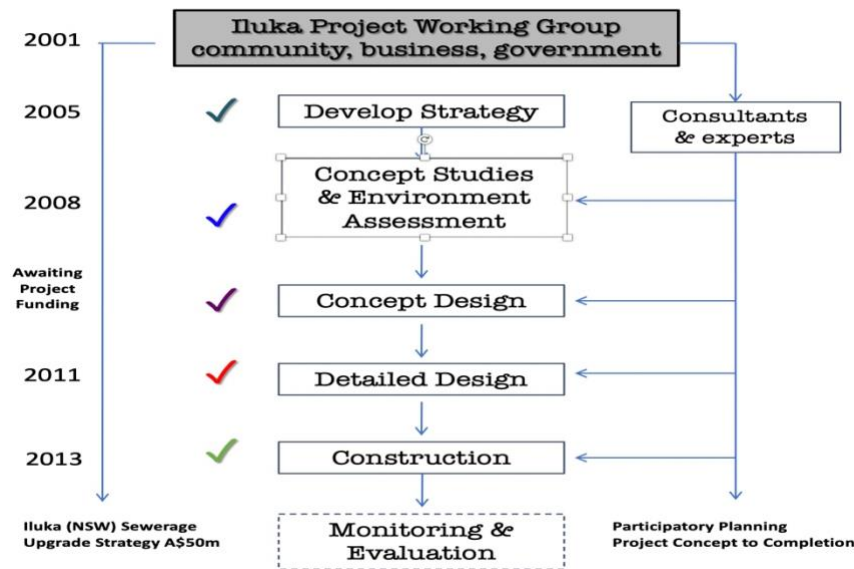
The focus is to embrace and utilise the broad views and interests of a community in regard to place in relation to deciding on the form of proposed development. In this case a major infrastructure project proposed in a sensitive coastal environment and low-key urban settlement. Important processes and outcomes of DWOOS include active listening and social interaction, developing mutual respect and trust, finding alignment and common ground, shared learning and understanding leading to inclusive solutions and agreements that broadly reflect and embody the agreed community core values, and meet their criteria for success.

### Applying DWOOS to the Iluka Project

In this case the DWOOS process involved the establishment of an independently facilitated Community Consultative Project Working Group (PWG), that met regularly and had strong links with the wider community both through its individual members (representing community groups and interests) and through a Communication Strategy developed and implemented by the Working Group. The PWG was established as a formal consultative committee of Council to give it more gravitas and influence when making recommendations.

What commenced as a formal way to collaboratively work towards and establish an agreed sewerage strategy with a preferred option to move forward; continued as an effective process to review development of and endorse the final concept for the sewerage scheme. The DWOOS model was refined to enable full community input during the detailed design phase. It was further refined for continued use through the scheme's construction stage, and then based on this success was further adapted to continue into the monitoring stage. The PWG became a Project Reference Group (PRG) with the DWOOS process maintained to assist in assessing the detailed scheme design through legal approvals and funding stages, to construction and operation. The development was being tracked to ensure it met agreed core values and ecologically sustainable criteria established and applied in the ongoing process.





The DWOOS Working Group operated through 8 main project stages over a 10-year period (which included a hiatus of 2 years awaiting state government funding) with all stakeholder interests retained, and only minimal change in the representatives around the table. This was assisted by the establishing that each stakeholder interest had an alternative representative who could attend meetings. The Working Group was also influential in making effective whole-of-community representations to ensure funding was provided by the State Government to carry out the chosen scheme in a fiscally challenging period related to infrastructure budgeting (see Mashiah, Cuming, Bragg, & Gorton, 2013).

As shown in the diagram left the stages of the sewerage project from strategy to implementation are: (1) establishing the consultative planning process; (2) strategy development including exploring options; (3) identifying and choosing a preferred sewerage option; (4) major environmental impact studies (EIS) and development approval; (5) detailed project design; (6) project inception including choosing contractors; (7) project construction and completion; (8) project evaluation and initial monitoring.

#### Stages 1-4: Strategy Development

#### Learning to Work Together with Common Purpose

**The Project Management Committee:** To move forward from the project stalemate, the existing Committee was expanded to include an experienced DWOOS Process representative from SFA (initially included only Council and relevant State Government public works and financing agencies). This enabled the integration and application of the DWOOS into the strategy development stage. The Committee endorsed the framework and helped set up the Project Working Group (PWG). The SFA representative chaired the PWG to impartially facilitate and manage the DWOOS process. SFA also provided community engagement and communication support.

Council provided organisational and administrative support services. The Management Committee linked the work and outcomes of the PRG into the statutory systems, assisted preparing

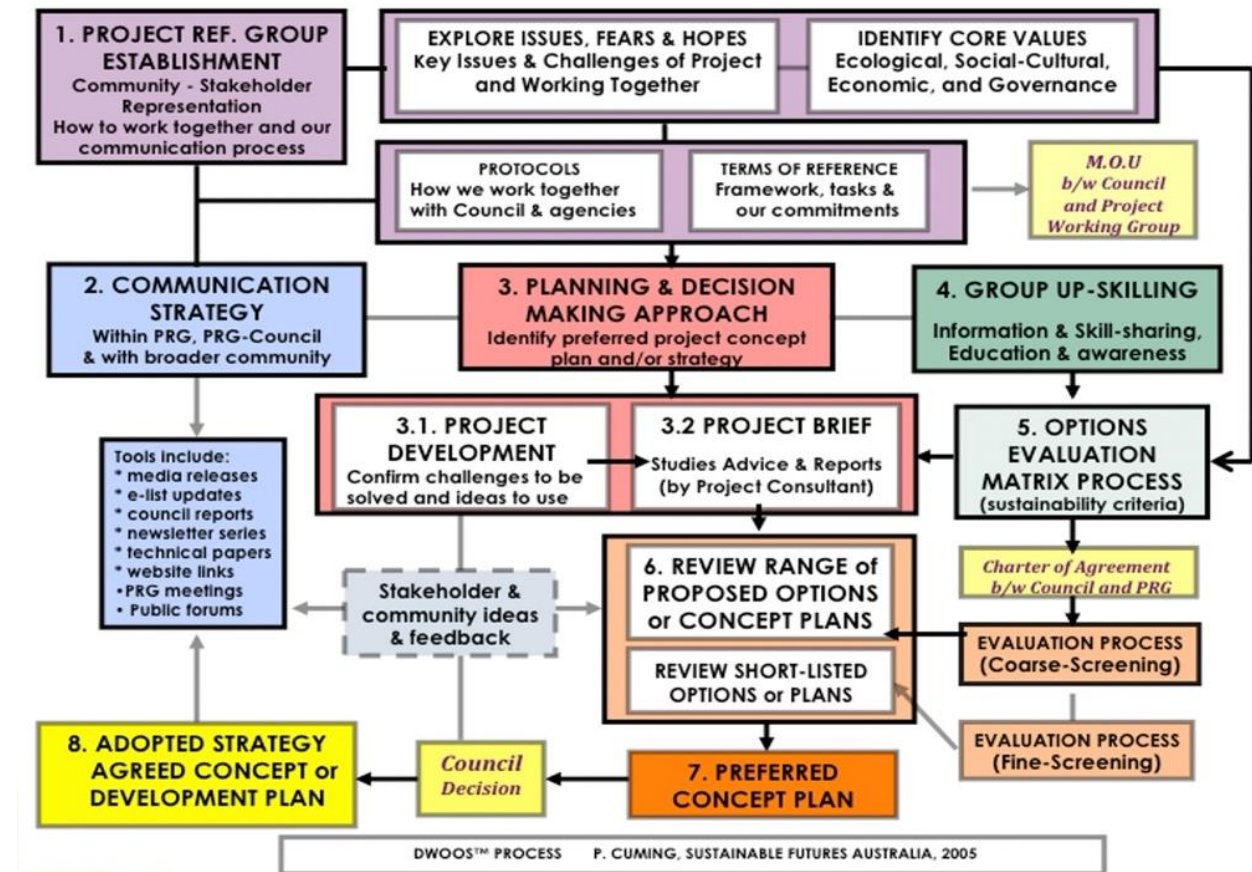
for PRG meetings, supported technical upskilling of PRG members and wider community, and promoted action along the Project timeline. All this aligned with the project goals and objectives, ensured mutual benefits; and ongoing resource allocation to support the collaborative process.

### The Project Working Group:

The PWG had direct input into establishing its terms of reference and its relationship and partnership with Council and other agencies involved in developing, approving and implementing the project. This included how it sought to operate as a group in terms of working together exploring issues and ideas, identifying and assessing solutions, and recommending the ways forward. This enabled the PWG to establish a Memorandum of Understanding with Council which was important in developing respect and trust within the process.

All DWOOS Committee meetings were open. The public was invited to attend as observers and the Committee's 'community chair' enabled members of the public to formally questions through at any point. Regular public observers attended throughout the process and gave valued input, observations and

feedback on it this for the strategy development stage. The diagram below represents DWOOS elements established and used for the critical Strategy Development Stage which identified an agreed concept, and range of policies and actions to take forward in the statutory design and approval process.



**Project Working Group Establishment:** The PWG of 20 people represented 6 Council technical staff and elected Councillors 3 State agencies, and 11 community stakeholder views and interests being Aboriginal land council, 2 x conservation groups, 2 x recreational and professional fishers, 3 x resident associations, chamber of commerce, and golf club. The process of establishing the PRG as a representative working body, knowing what its rights, responsibilities and tasks were took up considerable time and effort initially. And so it should – to not do so would have jeopardized the collaborative process from the outset. The stakeholders had to acknowledge and reflect on the situation and be part of working out a way forward. The group work of getting to know each other, community views and concerns, ideas and values, and skills and relevant experience ‘around the table’ was so valuable.

It helped identify the PWG’s key tasks, their collective role, and their protocols for working together, communicating within the PRG, with Council and wider community. Also, what technical upskilling and local knowledge was needed to help form an understanding to make good decisions together. Importantly, identifying core values, exploring issues fears and hopes established the basis for developing sustainability criteria to use to identify, assess sewerage scheme options and choose one. The PWG identified its main tasks in relation to developing a strategy were to:

- protect biological diversity and maintain essential ecological processes and life support systems.
- enhance Iluka’s lifestyle & Ecologically Sustainable Development
- promote Iluka’s position and integrity as a coastal town, and
- enhance individual and community wellbeing and the welfare of current and future generations and provide for equity within and between generations.

**Communication Strategy:** The PRG was required to develop a strategy which addressed both internal communication between its members and external communication with agencies, the wider community and the media. DWOOS places great emphasis on the quality and consistency of the PRG’s communication. All PRG Members developed a series of communication ‘webs’, which graphically described the links they have with different groups of people in the community, and when and how they communicated with them. Members were responsible for maintaining these links and ensuring a two-way flow of information, being required to report back to their stakeholders and update the working group with their views on matters. The webs also enable identification of sector(s) of the community not as well represented and covered by the PRG, which allows consideration how these ‘gaps’ should be addressed. To assist PRG stakeholders project folders were provided so that agendas and minutes, terms of reference and protocols,



technical information, reports and diagrams could be maintained and updated ensuring everyone had good access and management.

The Iluka DWOOS adopted a multi-faceted communication approach with the wider community comprising regular popular newsletters produced by the PRG members, Council technical newsletters, project displays, media releases and a Council website provided information. Timely public update meetings were held, including catering to support late afternoon/early evening attendance. A public comments box and project noticeboard were provided at the Iluka post office. PRG meeting minutes and reports were available at Council's libraries.

**Project Planning and Decision-making:** The PRG's focus was to develop a comprehensive sewerage strategy including identifying a preferred concept for the scheme. The multi-stakeholder approach influenced project development, and identified challenges to solve including protecting the environment and public health.

Through creative brainstorming and planning sessions the PRG developed ideas and concepts to be considered. The identified challenges and ideas were written into the main project brief which was put out to tender for consultants. A key aspect of the project brief was that the consultant would be working with and reporting to the PRG, not the Project Committee. The PRG assisted in reviewing the tender submissions and choosing the preferred

consultant. This ensured a good working relationship and encouraged the consultant to explore options, provide advice, and prepare reports directly relevant to the Iluka community's needs and aspirations. This was to be the basis for evaluating options and identifying a preferred option.

**Group Upskilling:** To help community members understand technical issues, they were 'skilled' through presentations and site visits with technical advisors, outside agencies and consultants with specialist expertise. Likewise, the skills, knowledge and experience of community members and stakeholder groups around the table become available to the project team and relevant agencies. At one stage a PRG member remarked about the hundreds of years of accumulated knowledge and hopefully wisdom which was roundly endorsed! This 'skilling' process supports systems thinking enabling complex issues to be embraced and creates a 'learning group' with shared understanding. It strengthened informed decision-making, and continued through all project stages.

**Options Evaluation and Shortlisting:** The PWG investigated and evaluated the range of management options with the assistance of specialist technical consultants. The PRG developed and used an evaluation kit and decision-making process based on 5 key aspects of sustainability – ecological, social/cultural, economic, legal and technical with 5 evaluation criteria for each aspect. These criteria were in the form of 5 strategic questions based on the core values,

challenges and issues the PRG had identified. Thus, there were 25 key questions to ask about each option.

There were 2 phases of options evaluation. The first phase involved reviewing a wide range of possible options, so the strategic questions were relatively broad (e.g. under ecological - to what degree does the scheme option protect water quality?). This was called 'coarse screening' and the PRG chose a shortlist of options for further review to identify a preferred option or concept to adopt in a strategy and recommend to Council. In the second round of review the process involved 'fine-screening' where the PRG converted the criteria questions to more specific parameters (e.g. under ecological - to what degree does the scheme option protect water quality in terms of dissolved oxygen, nutrient level such as phosphorous, nitrogen, and pathogens?).

**Concept Plan and Adopted Strategy:** The PRG option evaluation workshops identified a preferred option based on combination of shortlisted options. This included using pressure pumps at individual property level for the reticulation and effluent transfer systems. This enabled laying of smaller pipes that could avoid mature trees in the town. A state-of-the-art package treatment plant was chosen at a cleared site near the industrial estate to avoid ecological impacts; and a proposed innovative aquifer injection system into coastal dunes for tertiary treated effluent (recycled

water) that couldn't be reused which was mainly in the wetter summer/autumn months of the year.

A back up option for the disposal of the recycled water that couldn't be reused was an ebb-tide release process at the river mouth where there is a strong tidal current into the ocean twice as day. The risk management approach of the PRG for the disposal was based on its key focus on ecological respect. The PRG required additional research be done on the aquifer injection option due to its lingering concerns. The PRG also recommended the sewerage strategy include the option for properties to use approved composting toilets and grey water reuse systems. The value using the sustainability criteria developed by the PRG was acknowledged by project consultants.

### **Project Stages 5-8 Design to Construction and Operation**

**A Working Group with Shared Values and Expertise:** Once the strategy was confirmed and approved, there was strong interest by stakeholders, Council, and state agencies to continue the participatory journey through the stages of scheme concept design, formal environmental assessment and approval, and construction. This was new for major public infrastructure planning, design and development in NSW, and Australia.

The DWOOS model was adapted to maintain and encourage community engagement during the detailed design and

construction phase by: redefining DWOOS Committee's role to focus on design and construction matters; maintaining and adding to the communication strategy; and using the PRG to provide feedback to designers and construction contractors, including on where modifications to the concept strategy were required.

**Redefining Project Working Group's Role:** The role changed from an advisory group to a project reference group (PRG), i.e. an 'involve' level of participation on the *Public Participation Spectrum* (IAPP, 1999). Terms of Reference and Operating Protocols were reassessed, including membership review and new authority to co-opt other community representatives for adequate representation if required. PRG meetings continued to be independently facilitated, using consensus decision-making, and integrating creative group processes and conflict resolution methods.

During the construction phase the PRG was invited to nominate representatives to participate in monthly construction contract evaluation meetings. They facilitated a 'two-way' information flow between the PRG and the Construction Contractors, ensuring that Contractors adequately addressed community concerns.

**Optimising the Communication Strategy:** The PRG communication strategy was actively maintained including the multi-faceted communication approach. Further editions of *Beyond Thunderdome*, the PRG newsletter were issued. Council also issued

technical update newsletters. During the construction phase, a project information office staffed by construction contractors was opened. The location chosen by the PRG was a disused petrol station on the edge of Iluka's commercial area with high visibility and good accessibility. Copies of all project newsletters, approval documents and design plans were available for inspection at the Project Information Office.

**Detailed Design (and PRG modification to the Scheme):** To complement and benefit from PRG input, the detailed design stage was undertaken as a two-stage process using design consultants. The first stage involved preparing a detailed concept design where detailed investigation of the adopted strategy's elements was undertaken to determine feasibility, and initial consultation with government approval agencies was undertaken.

During this stage the concerns about possible impacts of the aquifer injection system on the local groundwater system, especially in the proximity of the World Heritage Rainforest were not resolved. A key aspect of the PRG role was to give feedback to both design consultants and approval authorities including any proposed changes. The PRG recommended necessary modifications to the adopted strategy, in this case removing the aquifer injection disposal system and using the ebb-tide release approach. Supplementary planning approval was required for elements of the scheme modified from the original concept strategy. As part of its



commitment to ongoing community engagement Council with PRG support, chose to publicly exhibit the planning documents, with the PRG raising awareness of its reasons for the change.

When Council had adopted and approved the detailed concept design, the second detailed design stage was undertaken. The PRG continued to provide a 'sounding board' for designers, providing useful input and feedback on how the design best 'bedded' into the local community and the natural environment. This was invaluable.

**Construction:** Iluka Sewerage Scheme construction was undertaken using three contract packages with contractors chosen for their skills and experience in: *Package 1* - Sewage Treatment Plant; *Package 2* - Reticulation and Transfer Systems; and *Package 3* - Ebb-tide river release of recycled treated water.

The PRG continued to have meaningful and beneficial input into the project scheme. The proposal to split the Iluka sewerage scheme into 3 contract packages was endorsed by the PRG and subsequently adopted by Council.

Eco-based tourism is a key industry in Iluka, and the PRG were concerned about potential adverse impacts that construction could have on this. To address this issue, following consultation with the PRG, the contract documentation for all packages included periods during major holidays where no construction work would be

permitted, and restrictions during school holidays on where construction could be undertaken.

The 3 contract packages were procured using the NSW Contract model (GC21), which provides for evaluation of the whole project team performance (i.e. not just the Contractor's performance) at monthly contract meetings. The PRG was invited to nominate representatives to participate in the three contract evaluation meetings. This was a 'first' for major project contracts.

**In regard to Package 1** the STP site was surrounded on three sides by National Park, and the PRG was concerned that environmental amelioration measures required in planning approvals should be correctly implemented. Having nominated PRG representatives participate in the contract evaluation meetings gave the PRG, and the wider community, confidence that the construction contractor was implementing the amelioration measures, and that the project management team was providing appropriate oversight.

**Package 2**, pressure sewerage reticulation, involved significant work within residential properties. Residents felt very comfortable approaching the PRG representatives to discuss any questions or issues they had with the Contractors. The confident relationship developed between PRG representatives and the Contractor enabled early resolution of potential issues.

**Package 3** involved marine work in the river and PRG representatives were provided with site visits to the ebbtide release location to understand the work being carried out so they could advise their stakeholder groups and wider community; The PRG was also able to provide the Contractor with advice regarding daily fishing vessel movements which greatly assisted with planning.

**Initial Monitoring and Project Review:** The project management committee prepared, at the request of the PRG, information on the STP and ebb-tide release monitoring programs so community stakeholders could understand and scrutinise the procedures and be confident their sustainability guiding principles and ecological and social well-being evaluation criteria were being applied. A number of presentations were provided, including initial monitoring data, and site visits were arranged for the PRG members to the operating STP, and ebbtide release locations.

Approximately a year after completion and commencement of the scheme operation, the PRG met for a final formal meeting to review its work and substantial and influential contribution over the stages of the project from strategy development to design, construction to operation. Data was presented from the STP and ebb-tide release system monitoring indicating that they were operating as required and better than expectations. Nutrient levels in the tertiary treated effluent, and reuse and release as recycled water were better than standard statutory environmental protection levels. There was no

leaking from the STP plant into surrounding lands and checks and balances were ensuring identified risks were monitored and managed. It was also reported that the final costs of the project including design and construction was within the budget estimate agreed and set by the funding partners Council and the NSW Government. All this was very pleasing for all PRG members and this information was distributed through the communication strategy to the wider community. It had been a long and challenging journey of working together and it had been worthwhile.

Council and the State agencies involved in the PRG acknowledged the immense value and contribution made by the stakeholders on behalf of the Iluka community. They indicated that the adopted strategy, the final concept plan, detailed design, and construction would not have been achieved without this whole-of-community input.

They indicated their community participation processes in major projects were being amended to include key elements of the DWOOS process. This included the state infrastructure agency indicating that it would include community representatives in all major construction contract evaluation meetings, and when relevant tender review committees. Feedback from Iluka residents was that they were pleased with the scheme and its operation, in particular that the natural environment was respected.

**Reflections** It's been a decade since operation of the scheme commenced. The application of the DWOOS process through the planning, design and project implementation lifecycle was a unique opportunity that engaged diverse interests to align with the goal of ensuring harmony, sustainability, and resilience between the natural and human environment. A wide range of voices were listened to, in an inclusive and meaningful approach, supported in non-statutory ways by the statutory framework, and achieved transformative outcomes which have been long lasting. In this regard the case study embodies a range of the Charter's Participatory Principles working together.

The pressure pump effluent collection system and sewerage treatment plant have been operating effectively. The release of recycled water on ebb tides has been meeting strict environmental standards with regular reporting to Council and State environmental protection agency. No adverse impact on terrestrial or aquatic environments has been noticed or detected to date.

Recycled water from the treatment plant has been used on the golf course and playing fields, especially in dry periods, reducing demand on drinking quality water, and ebb-tide release into the river. These have also benefitted from the policy on new housing and commercial buildings having water efficient toilets and faucets, with retrofitting of existing buildings.

Local stakeholder representatives dedication and commitment was based on their interest and belief in the process, which was transparent, empowering and effective for them and their groups and wider community. They have applied their experience in other proposed infrastructure and development projects, including requesting more effective engagement when it has been lacking. Friendships and better understanding in the community developed through and since the DWOOS period, including in the latter, the merging of the two 'opposing' resident and ratepayer associations.

The DWOOS process has been applied successfully in a range of projects since, in versions to suit the projects and planning time periods. This includes a new river-based water source for a regional city; a river catchment based multi-stakeholder water management planning process where environmental concerns, cultural values and water-users' needs (including over allocation causing ecological impacts) were the prime and competing challenges.

## **TAKE AWAYS** Dealing with our Own Situation - Iluka Sewerage Strategy & Scheme, New South Wales, Australia (Cuming, 2024)

### **Importance of an inclusive project framework and open process**

Establishing an agreed framework to work together through the project phases, and using open-process tools provides a transparent, achievable, and measurable roadmap to follow. With clear guides and processes that lead towards real outcomes this meets the practical needs of stakeholders, technicians, and decisionmakers. It is a journey together over time and through phases with milestones that are agreed to and understood. When they are achieved there is a strengthening of confidence for the participatory process. The application of consensus decision-making was invaluable to the collaborative planning and design approach. This was based on a commitment from all participants to align to the aim of working towards agreement, underpinned by, (i) the values and interests of all participants being intrinsically of equal worth, (ii) that differences are to be valued, and (iii) it is possible to work together co-operatively. All stakeholders had equal access to information and opportunities to participate effectively through the process. This resulted in a strong sense of shared rights and responsibilities, and commitment to the collaborative process and outcomes that emanated from it.

A key element in the project was forming a Project Working Group (WG) that includes many different voices representing whole-of-community, government agencies, technicians and advisors, and giving it a formal status in providing advice to ultimate decisionmakers (in this case Local Council and funding agencies). In this case the WG was constituted as a Committee of Council with elected representatives including the mayor. Creating an MoU with decisionmakers; and a Charter of Working Together between stakeholders reinforced the process. Providing adequate funding and resources for the framework and process is vital. In this case, representing a small fraction of the overall cost (less than 0.5% of project costs) yet reaping multiple benefits, including seeking best outcomes, avoiding unnecessary delays, meeting project budgets and timelines, with broad stakeholder support.

### **Ecological and cultural respect and sustainability values**

Protection of ecological values was identified by the Project Advisory Group as a foundational element of the aims and objectives of the project. Ecological Respect (called 'Caring for Country' by Australia's First Nations aboriginal people) became a major and underlying influence in project planning, design and decision-making.

There was a range of interest in protecting the environment. This includes ecosystem stewardship, lifestyle and recreational values, ecotourism and business, cultural and custodianship interests. The

latter is particularly important for the local Yaegl aboriginal people and their culture linked to coast and estuarine ecosystems.

This was interconnected with aims of maintaining and improving public health; achieving a scheme that ensured a high level of effluent reuse (including recycled water); and met all environmental standards, through innovative place-based design, carried out at affordable cost, and in a timely manner. The community expressed a strong link between a healthy and regenerative natural environment and human health, community well-being and socio-economic benefits. As the project progressed these elements became the Project Advisory Group's sustainability criteria to develop and review options and decide on the chosen concept. They were applied in the detailed concept design and to robustly review it prior to construction. Ecological respect, seeking to ensure a high degree of harmony with the natural environment and within the community, for now and future generations was, and remains a core principle of the operating sewerage scheme.

### **Rights and responsibilities of being involved in whole-of-project process**

A key aspect of providing strong representative rights and voice 'around the table' requires all participants to clearly state their case and contribute productively, as it becomes clear if they do not their influence may be diminished, and the collaborative process itself hindered and possibly put in jeopardy. The alternative consultation

process of decisions being made by a few is not as appealing or acceptable. Establishing protocols for engagement, identifying common values (such as ecological and cultural respect), being provided with opportunities to present and articulate views and ideas, and contribute to the aims and objectives of the project reinforced the responsibilities of being part of the 'project team' and seeking mutually acceptable outcomes. Whilst stakeholders were encouraged to retain representative independence and rights, an interdependent set of responsibilities to the process and project's success emerged and strengthened over time through project stages.

### **A divergent to convergent process developing a shared understanding**

When agreement isn't happening, the process, to be inclusive and open, needs to encourage and support gathering of the range of views, values and issues that are being expressed. At this point it is not beneficial to make or force decisions, but rather to encourage dialogue in a supportive way that leads to shared understanding. Tools encouraging this such as sharing hopes and fears, brainstorming ideas, gathering relevant information, and engaging experience and positions of stakeholders can be used to explore and shape the project concept. This process provides confidence for working together as a learning group, with common purpose and

alignment, which can lead to mutually supported outcomes and agreements.

### **The value and importance of independent facilitation and guidance**

The engagement of a respected and skilled professional facilitator, with a background in planning and multidisciplinary understanding relevant to the project is critical to ensuring success. This position guides and supports the collaborative engagement with purpose, helping to 'hold space' for participants, provide objective leadership, mediate the difficult times, and help meet timelines. This instils valuable necessary confidence and trust in the process. The facilitator's role in the project management steering group of project partners through project phases ensures stakeholders and the open process remain influential as the project moves forward.

### **A 360 degree view: benefits of including all stakeholder views in the process**

There was a spectrum of views based on different values, concerns, and experience. By enabling, encouraging and listening to all views, a broader understanding resulted of the project, and the environment and community it was going to be placed into. This shared insight was valuable in developing a broader shared perspective - like a 360degree view compared to one quadrant, or a 3D compared to 2D view. It helped people understand that other's views were relevant even if not agreed with and could be useful in

gaining a full understanding of the situation. Many different voices were involved and supported to find the courage and willingness to speak their minds and deal with difficult situations, share ideas and actively listen to other opinions. They had to effectively articulate their views, which improved the quality of discourse and debate, and therefore outcomes. Stakeholders felt heard which helped develop trust and confidence in the process. The combination of views and perspectives helped identify common ground to work from, rather than focusing only on differences. Combined values, concerns and hopes became part of the aims and objectives of the project. As the project progressed, they were applied in the assessment of options to develop the concept, and detailed design of the scheme. Views modified and perspectives changed through the course of the project based on sharing information and discussion. Views strengthened as well. The process supported and accommodated this. It was clear that strong support existed for protecting the estuary, groundwater, rainforest, and human health linked to the environment.

### **Setting shared protocols for working together**

It was necessary to take a step back from the entrenched positions and stalled consultation process. To, in a sense, 'start over' in a different way. All stakeholder interests agreed to participate together setting protocols for working together as a key first step. Everyone had a part in this, agreed on the final protocols and

requested the independent facilitator to manage meetings and engagement processes with them. Importantly, they agreed to the best of their ability, to abide by them in working together. The protocols included being respectful, staying focused on the tasks, all voices being equally heard, trying not to be critical of each other i.e. being easy on the person and hard on the issue. This step was vital for effective engagement, equitable and respectful discourse, and sharing a pathway forward.

### **Doing despair and empowerment work up-front**

A key aspect of 'getting out of the trenches' to work together came about through encouraging a safe and supportive space to express views and perspectives. The participatory process acknowledged and provided for this. The first key step after establishing protocols was not to look at concept designs or planning reports but rather to explore feelings and thoughts about the project. This included expressing fears and concerns, hopes, aspirations and ideas about the project; the values that people hold dear and changes they felt might occur to the local area. Through facilitated sessions these aspects were shared without judgement, and a series of 'mind-maps' created for and by the PWG to consider and use for discussion and planning. By taking a step back and re-engaging in this way stakeholders took two steps forward; developing trust, and identifying shared values and common ground, even when they disagreed about many things. The process used encouraged clear

expression, sharing, and active listening. It empowered the quiet voices to speak up.

From this collaborative work the PWG developed aims and objectives for the sewerage strategy expressing these values, hopes and fears in an aspirational way. They became the strategic questions to apply as assessment criteria in the sewerage scheme options screening process and of the final detailed project design. When construction was completed and the scheme operating the PWG revisited the original hopes, fears and values mind-maps and confirmed that most if not all had been successfully embraced. The deep value of that initial work was acknowledged.

### **Finding common ground and working from there on harder tasks**

The open divergent processes of exploring hopes and fears; challenges and ideas; and sharing values and perspectives; confirmed the differences and contrasting views amongst stakeholders, and the whole community. There was no hearsay. This is valuable and so was identifying aspects of common ground Perspectives which became the collective voice; alignment which would allow movement forward together, and agreements applied to the formation and refinement of the project concept and evaluation. These should not be overlooked, even if seemingly minor. They are an aspect of developing mutual interest, of forming a shared understanding and encouraged working together. They are key feature jigsaw pieces, the jigsaw corners or border that help



provide the basis for successfully completing the puzzle together. In the Iluka project, ecologically sustainable development (ESD) including respect for the local ecology, and interest in protecting it and community lifestyles linked to it was a key common ground feature.

### **Creating a learning group – ‘upskilling’ stakeholders and wider community**

The participatory process focused on establishing more than just a consultative advisory body of stakeholders. It supported the Community Working Group (WG) to be a ‘learning group’ that could draw from its own combined stakeholder skills and experience, and from being upskilled on relevant project information by experts and advisors. This included learning how to work together. The sum of knowledge and wisdom of stakeholders, as a whole, is greater than that of just the stakeholders individually, together. Many benefits of this were identified throughout the project.

Harnessing the skills, ideas, and experience of the WG members added valuable and timely information to the planning and design processes. This helped shape the sewerage strategy, assess the scheme options and final concept design choice. It provided project engineers and consultants with vital details of the local area, the community and environment. The role of experts around the table to advise and answer questions (rather than make decisions) increased the capacity and confidence of the WG to embrace

complex engineering, scientific, legal and governance matters. This included regular presentations and useful site visits, as well as stakeholders presenting their values, concerns and ideas for discussion. The WG through its community engagement approach with the wider community was able to communicate this complexity to the general public, who gained a greater understanding of, and confidence in the project as it progressed. Their support for the WG to represent them and keep them informed remained strong throughout all phases of the project.

### **Consultants and external experts as advisors not decisionmakers**

People need to participate in and ‘own’ the approaches and solutions to issues and challenges in their local area otherwise proposed solutions can be jeopardised and misunderstood. Likewise, whilst external experts bring key skills, experience and knowledge to assist, they are often involved for specific time periods and may not know much about the local area and community culture over time. Being advisors making recommendations rather than decisions, and providing information and answers to issues raised by the WG members was beneficial to the collaborative process. Whilst it required consultants and technicians such as engineers to be ‘on their game’ and communicate effectively, it also provided them with the opportunity to explore innovative solutions and speak openly and frankly. The WG provided input into the choice of major project



consulting firms through the project stages. This resulted in a good 'fit' and direct communication between technicians and community, enhancing the shared goals of all participants.

### **Value of effective and informative communication**

Communication was a core feature of the participatory planning framework. The intention was for effective communication within the WG, with stakeholder interests, and the wider community, as well as with the Council as the final decisionmakers. Creating a communication strategy together was critical, with agreements and guidelines on representatives and reporting on the project, and protocols for engaging in discussion at the working group meetings, including respectful discourse and debate. This was so valuable in ensuring common understanding, minimising uncertainty, building and maintaining trust and supporting the collaborative process. Each representative stakeholder group prepared a communication web and these integrated together to identify the breadth, overlaps and gaps in community representation and connection. These were then addressed in the WG approach to gaining input and feedback as well as sharing project information.

A popular and successful free newsletter was regularly produced by a team from the WG through all project phases. It was mailed to all residents, absent landowners, and distributed to a range of community and business places. Conversations and announcements were introduced by a mischievous character called 'ICWiG' (acronym for the Iluka Community Working Group) who embodied the initial cantankerous nature of the polarised stakeholders. It became a symbol of the vibrant spirit of the WG. The newsletters over time documented the story of the project's evolution, progress, challenges and success. As a series they became a valued documented history. Importantly, reflecting the empowered collaboration and meaningful commitment of a local community working together for equitable, mutually supported and ecologically sustainable outcomes.





## Case Study 3

### Processes that bind to places & citizenship: reflections from Morocco

**Charaf-Eddine Fgih Berrada**, *Architecte Urbaniste, Past President of Cobaty International, Past Président de la Francophonie*

#### Summary

This study of regional planning in Morocco sheds light on the steps needed to truly enable citizens to contribute to participatory democracy.

It is a simple fact that cities are not homogeneous. The initial structure of districts has evolved to produce city pieces which have visible and legible disparities with pronounced social traits, as well as geographical, economical, and even political distinctiveness.

This is why urban problems and solutions will differ depending on the specific neighborhood, and its urban fabric, original construction, and inhabitants' ways of life.

So, if we really want to stitch together the different pieces of the city and reconnect the human through the dynamic of participatory development and citizenship-based approach then, rather than just urban life, the 'place spirit' should be taken into account prior to any intervention.

When considering the 'place spirit' in urban planning, collaborative participation is a fundamental factor in creating sustainable urban spaces that are adapted to each local context and provide benefits to their users. Although that consideration might be recorded in words, it is not the same in practice, judging by common uses, obstacles and dysfunctions observed.

#### Open processes for planning

Drawing on decades of study of cities in Morocco, and looking across the regional and metropolitan planning conducted historically, some key themes emerge. In this 'case study', rather than going into the technical details of open processes, which are enormously varied, I offer reflections on how to align with the core

notions of the concept of participatory democracy and what could be done better from observations in Morocco.

### *Open processes*

Open processes ought to take account of social logic of the city. The disparity of cities and neighborhoods must be recognized due to economic, social and political markings. Depending on the neighborhood, the methods are not the same. We must take into account the spirit of the place to resolve social fractures.

The goal is to reconnect humans, with an approach of citizenship rather than city dwellers. Urban scars cannot be addressed by projects decreed from above. Instead, there is a need to promote neighborhoods bearing in mind their social traits.

It is important to acknowledge and reaffirm a sense of belonging to the territory. This can involve the promotion of neighborhood residents, singers, athletes, and other civic or social groups.

The best processes will avoid assumptions about a neighborhood, and adopt a policy of taking small steps and appreciating the place. For example, it will matter greatly to understand if the neighborhood has the best donuts in the city. Likewise, when it comes to heritage, residents should say to conservation experts, “What you do for stones, do it for us!”.

### *Case Study 3 Processes that bind to places & citizenship: reflections from Morocco*

### *Closed Processes*

Some procedures have a tendency to be ‘closed’. An overly technical approach necessarily alienates citizens from administrative and political processes. The interests of citizens are not technical matters, and the ‘spirit of a place’ is not about individuals – it has hybrid interests at heart. Regulation offers false promises of participatory democracy, it is too late for deep engagement with places and humans, and so it does not leave room for real participation. There are rules about how to make a petition, for protest. However, everyone talks about it, no one does it.

### *Citizen relations*

Currently, the relationships between elected officials and citizens are marked by a crisis of confidence, mistrust and suspicion. Key to this problem, is that elected officials too often think that that they must do *for* citizens and not *with* citizens. Also problematically, elected officials assume a type of top-down logic, and yet they do not have a global vision. This comes back to the key point about binding citizens to participatory democracy thinking. There is a great lack of awareness of the knowledge of citizens, who are the experts in use value of the place. They are the ones who will have the practice and insights of experience. This is seen in the lack of communication between those in public office and citizens.

## Observations from planning in Morocco

### *I. An overly technical vision*

Firstly, there is a lack of common or shared vision between citizens, public services and elected officials with regards to the city development and evolution. Secondly, there is a lack of visibility around citizen involvement. This is true for both local and strategic policies where there is no clear route to engagement. Thirdly, there is a lack of vision about the approaches and modalities needed in order to implement truly collaborative citizen participation. This leaves planning entirely to the realms of technical and legal rationality, which is not a space for citizens to engage and has no consideration of 'place spirit'.

### *II. False promise of regulations*

Currently the mode of engagement available to citizens is via public inquiry. This regulatory moment of intervention is a very late stage in the development process when no modification is permitted. Therefore, engagement at this point only offers a false promise of collaboration or meaningful participation.

Citizens may bring petitions or motions forward but they are effectively excluded from the proceedings. The high level of precision, formulation and justification compromises the admissibility of these initiatives of citizens. The number required for

the admissibility of petitions (5,000) and motions (25,000) is a considerable deterrent. Further there are no means for citizens to follow up on their petitions and motions. Such regulatory mechanisms are non-existent.

In addition to the practical barriers to citizens' participation in regulatory space, there are several derogations for urban planning from other routes for citizens to claim their rights to participation in matters that affect them. Introduced between 1999 and 2010, these derogations are at odds with the concepts of participatory democracy and moreover the run counter to the citizen participation stipulated by the new constitution. Concerns about the lack of inclusivity continue (OECD, 2024).

### *III. Exhausted legitimacy of elected officials*

There is a crisis of confidence in elected officials, and citizens have great mistrust and suspicion in their relationships with them. Elected representatives act as substitutes for citizens rather than representing them, and they have no obligation to consult with their constituents on decisions. The actions of elected officials are often anchored in top-down logic towards citizens which do not always meet their needs and expectations. The elected officials do not mobilize citizens' expertise in decision-making. The levels of representation of elected officials are worsen by the low rate of

participation in elections, which leaves the system with legal power for representation but low representativeness.

#### *IV. Incomplete and ineffective mechanisms and tools*

The mechanisms and tools for citizen participation are incomplete and ineffective. This is seen in: the lack of mechanisms for developing citizen participation; the persistence of traditional and ineffective approaches to collaborative participation; the lack of opportunities to mobilize and involve citizens; the lack of effective and innovative collaborative participation tools; and the lack of citizen participation structures.

#### *V. Insufficient communication and collaboration skills*

Communication is insufficient but there is also a lack of competence in the field of collaborative participation. There is insufficient communication and information on choices related to urban spatial planning. There is also insufficient communication on existing tools for collaborative participation. There is weak supervision of citizens in the existing approaches of the collaborative participation. There is a lack of training for qualified persons in collaborative participation, such as mediators, negotiators and others with critical roles in communication with citizens. There is a lack of awareness among citizens of the value of collaborative participation, and its role in improving the living environment.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the assessment above there are areas for improvements to the existing framework, tools, and communicative practices, which can improve processes, opening them up and ensuring participatory democracy.

#### *The legislative and regulatory framework*

Firstly, the number of signatures needed for petitions should be reduced to 500, from the previous 5,000, and the number signatures needed for legislative motions, reduced from 25,000 to 1,000.

Secondly, the modalities of public inquiry should be reviewed for how to establish it as a public consultation. This would need to have processes that bring people into planning sufficiently in advance, with sufficient communication tools and the provision of reports. If all of those were available for citizens, it would allow people to deliberate decisions.

Thirdly, initiators of any petition should have a reliable source of feedback. It needs to be worthy of citizen participation instead of just being a sterile formality for review and dismissal.

Fourthly, it is critical to pass a law that would oblige municipalities with more than 40,000 inhabitants to provide each of its districts with a neighborhood council.

Fifthly, existing right of access to information should be activated, including access to legal news that must be made available for citizens.

#### *Tools and mechanisms of collaborative participation*

Firstly, collaborative participation should be institutionalised through the establishment of an inter-ministerial structure for citizen participation.

Secondly, a structure should be set up within Municipal Councils to receive and process petitions.

Thirdly, as part of the general budget of the city there should be a participatory budget. This would allow part of the investment expenses of the city to be dedicated to the specific needs of the inhabitants.

Fourthly, the scope of participation should be broadened and facilitated through the creation of digital platforms that promote citizen participation. This should include provision of web portals, electronic consultation platforms, neighborhood councils, public debate commissions, local referendums, opinion polls, forums, and citizen e-councils.

Fifthly, it is essential to create neighborhoods councils that are places of democratic learning, as well as being spaces for debate, listening to citizens by elected officials, open dialogue, and ultimately the collective making of public policies.

#### *Training and communication*

Firstly, assistance must be provided to petitioners within regulatory processes, to avoid inadmissible their representations and submissions. This can help them navigate the processes and prevent wasted efforts, which lead to frustrations and further fuel mistrust. Secondly, as well as building assistance for engagement with regulatory processes, it is important to strengthen the skills of initiators of petitions or motions. This might include training, coaching, mentoring and upgrading information to the public about the available tools.

Thirdly, there should be support for civil society to develop tools needed to build debates and facilitate consultations. This will help them fulfil their critical role in open process as a bridge between citizens and the state.

Fourthly, it is important to promote the training of qualified people in the collaborative participation. Immediately help can be provided by mediators and negotiators who act to empower citizens within processes. Digital technology is an increasingly critical factor, that is not equally available to all. This uneven distribution means that

digital participatory processes have very different levels of effectiveness for different social groups, as it enables the involvement of young people but does not benefit the most vulnerable. Hence associations are needed that can provide essential support for the integration of the digital space into social and political life.

Fifthly, it is vital to develop a culture of citizen engagement that can support participatory democracy over the long-term. This can be enabled through awareness-raising, for instance with the establishment and annual celebration of a 'Citizens' Day.



## **TAKE AWAYS** Processes that bind to places & citizenship: reflections from Morocco (Berrada, 2024)

### **Reflections**

Citizen participation would not bring anything, if we are to believe the common viewpoint of elected officials and administrations that implement public policies. Their fear is that individual interests rather than collective interest drive the aspirations of citizens.

I disagree with this assertion because individuals are intelligent, and understand the notion of collective interest, linked to their place of life, with its particularities and its uses.

The possibilities of citizen participation need to be taught in schools, and each individual needs to have a clear vision of what the general interest is.

### **Practical points**

The methods of planning and the pathways to open democratic processes will depend on the particularities of a neighborhood. The spirit of a place matters enormously, and recognising this will be essential to resolving existing social fractures.

The goal of open processes must be to reconnect humans, via an understanding of their citizenship rather than notions of 'city dwellers'.

It is important to acknowledge and reaffirm a sense of belonging to the territory.

The best way forwards is to avoid assumptions about a neighborhood, and adopt a policy of taking small steps.





## Case Study 4

### Actionable rights to participation: a 'Partial Urban Improvement Program' in Ensenada, México

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**Javier Sandoval**, CJUR Colegio de Jurisprudencia Urbanística

#### Summary

This case study looks at the approach in México where rights are ready to be actioned. It considers the participatory ideals of the program known as the Partial Urban Improvement Program for Downtown and Waterfront of Ensenada, Baja California.

The participatory democracy approaches and the legal guarantees are sketched out. Through careful legal framings designed for action, these human-centered frameworks promote fundamental human rights and dignity.

For reasons discussed in the case, the program has not been fully implemented. Nonetheless the rights are ready

for operationalisation and constitute a critical step towards delivering participatory democracy.

#### A new framing

The *Partial Urban Improvement Program for Downtown and Waterfront of Ensenada, México* is an official and legal municipal planning document (Baja California Gob, 2019) made with the cooperation of government, business, academic and social sectors. It explicitly, and for the first time in an official planning instrument, addresses key challenges by ensuring urban development aligns with the recognition and protection of residents' fundamental rights, shifting focus from a purely economic and spatial approach to a human-centric approach that places individuals and their rights at the forefront, and transforming urban development laws into instruments that guarantee these rights. It incorporates a *participatory democracy approach*, emphasizing direct, equitable, and deliberative participation, allowing residents to influence municipal policies and budgets, and promoting inclusivity, solidarity, and transparency. The program targets all residents within its scope, municipal authorities, civil society organizations, and stakeholders, ensuring that urban planning protects and empowers the community, fosters equity and justice, and addresses social

inequalities through broad public participation and a rights-centered framework.

### **Participatory democracy ideals**

The program incorporates a participatory democracy ideals as it emphasizes direct, equitable, and deliberative participation by residents in defining municipal policies and budgets for urban projects. This allows for collective rights to file complaints and propose actions related to urban and environmental regulations, ensuring that all voices are heard and considered in the urban planning process. The development expectations or desirable community changes include fostering an inclusive, transparent, and just community where all residents can influence urban development initiatives.

The program aims to empower residents by recognizing and protecting their fundamental rights, promoting a shift towards a human-centric urban development that prioritizes the dignity and well-being of individuals. The processes involved include mechanisms for broad public participation, social participation based on substantive democracy, co-responsibility, inclusion, and transparency, and fostering a spirit of solidarity among residents to ensure equitable and just development outcomes.

This approach aims to transform urban planning into a tool for promoting and protecting fundamental human rights, ensuring a

more inclusive and participatory urban development process that addresses social inequalities and enhances the quality of life for all residents.

### **Constitutional underpinnings**

The Partial Program constitutes a legal instrument incorporating a Fundamental Rights approach, to fulfil the obligations outlined in Article 1 of the General Constitution of the Republic. This makes an Urban Development Program with a vision of recognition, respect, investigation, and promotion of the Fundamental Rights of the people living in the area within the spatial scope of the Program. This offers a way to progressively and gradually transform the legal instruments regulating Urban Development—laws, regulations, and Urban Development programs—into instruments that guarantee Human Rights.

### **A fundamental rights approach**

The *fundamental rights approach* consists of incorporating the contents expressed in verb form by Article 1 of the *General Constitution of the Republic of Mexico* regarding the Fundamental Rights of the residents of the area regulated by the Program into a legal and mandatory Urban Development Program. The aim is to provide maximum protection and development of these rights, establishing the conditions that the Jurisprudence of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation calls the ‘vital minimum’ necessary for

the free development of human capacities, linked to the Fundamental Right to the Environment, enshrined in Article 4 of the Federal Constitution.

This new approach implies a transformation in logics of urbanism. To date, the prevailing urban order has developed by focusing on the regulation of cities, population centers, properties, the economy, and 'zones'. By contrast, the *fundamental rights approach* reverses the logic and places the human person and their rights at the forefront.

This is in accordance with both the normative framework provided by Article 1 of the *General Constitution of the Republic*, and the framework constituted by the International Treaties signed by our country on Human Rights, which, together with the constitutional framework, constitute the Supreme Law of our country. As such, actualising the *fundamental rights approach* requires observance of norms considered supreme by the Federal Constitution, namely *International Treaties on Human Rights* and their constitutional expression constituted by *Article 1 of the Federal Constitution*, relating to Human Rights and their guarantees. These norms hold a higher hierarchical level than local regulations, highlighting their importance.

### **Application to the Program**

Based on the above, the conceptual proposal of the Fundamental Rights Approach applied to the Partial Urban Development Program is developed as follows:

#### *Beneficiaries*

The beneficiaries of rights are 'all persons' residing in the area within the spatial scope of validity.

#### *Obligated Subjects*

According to the constitutional text of Article 1, the obligations contained in this Program regarding rights correspond to the Municipal Authority, emphasizing the phrase "all authorities." Thus, this Program aims to become the first municipal urban planning instrument that recognizes, promotes, and protects specific Fundamental Rights in the regulated area, with the obligated subjects being:

- The Municipal Council
- Municipal Departments
- Decentralized Agencies

All with associated legal competence, depending on the type of Fundamental Right detected or selected.

### **Fundamental Rights involved**

All possible Human Rights derived from the content of International Treaties in the field, as well as constitutional provisions containing Human Rights.

We can group Fundamental Rights into the following categories of rights, according to the doctrine in the field of Fundamental Rights:

- Civil Rights
- Social Rights
- Cultural Rights
- Economic Rights
- Political Rights

Accordingly, in this program, from the diagnostic level, problems in the regulated area will be detected and associated with Fundamental Rights, which will be subsumed in one of the aforementioned categories of rights, indicating the Fundamental Right associated with the described issue.

### **'Rights verbs'**

The core part of the Fundamental Rights Approach in this program is associated with the 'rights verbs'. This expression refers to the obligations progressively arising for the municipal authority in the formulation, interpretation, and application of the Partial Program, and their manner of expression.

The 'rights verbs' are derived from Article 1 of the Federal Constitution, which states: "All authorities, within the scope of their competencies, have the obligation to promote, respect, protect, and guarantee human rights in accordance with the principles of universality, interdependence, indivisibility, and progressiveness. Consequently, the State must prevent, investigate, sanction, and repair human rights violations, under the terms established by law."

For the purposes of this Program, the rights verbs selected from the constitutional text are as follows:

- Recognize Rights in the Program
- Respect Rights
- Protect, develop, and guarantee Rights in the Program
- Prevent the violation of Rights in the contents of the Program
- Promote Rights in the Program

- Investigate the violation of Rights

It is important to note that the verb ‘sanction’, contained in the text of Article 1 of the Constitution, is not considered within the scope of this Program, as the essential instruments for establishing sanctions are Regulations, Bylaws, and Laws, primarily.

There are three essential elements from which the breadth of Fundamental Human Rights addressed in this regulatory instrument is derived:

A. The Right to Life

B. The Dignity of the Human Being

C. The vital minimum that human beings need to live with dignity, considering themselves as individuals and as part of a community

These elements are inseparable, as mere existence is not sufficient; the fundamental right par excellence is the Right to a Dignified Life. All fundamental urbanistic rights that we can imagine stem from Human Dignity; the ultimate foundation of these rights will always be the ability to live with dignity.

Therefore, this Partial Program constitutes a regulatory tool for conducting an initial exercise in recognizing and identifying fundamental rights in the territory. It aims to establish regulations

to guarantee the vital minimum for residents of human settlements concerning the matters regulated by the Program.

CUADRO 14. MATRIZ DE PROBLEMÁTICA Y DERECHOS HUMANOS EN EL ÁMBITO ESPACIAL DE VALIDEZ DEL PROGRAMA

PROBLEMÁTICA		DERECHOS HUMANOS																			
PROBLEMÁTICA	DESCRIPCIÓN	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
DIGNIDAD	1.1.1. Vivienda digna y adecuada																				
	1.1.2. Acceso a servicios básicos																				
	1.1.3. Acceso a espacios públicos																				
	1.1.4. Acceso a servicios de salud																				
SEGURIDAD	1.2.1. Vivienda segura																				
	1.2.2. Acceso a servicios básicos																				
	1.2.3. Acceso a espacios públicos																				
	1.2.4. Acceso a servicios de salud																				
SOCIOS	1.3.1. Vivienda digna y adecuada																				
	1.3.2. Acceso a servicios básicos																				
	1.3.3. Acceso a espacios públicos																				
	1.3.4. Acceso a servicios de salud																				
VIGILANCIA	1.4.1. Vivienda digna y adecuada																				
	1.4.2. Acceso a servicios básicos																				
	1.4.3. Acceso a espacios públicos																				
	1.4.4. Acceso a servicios de salud																				
PROTECCIÓN	1.5.1. Vivienda digna y adecuada																				
	1.5.2. Acceso a servicios básicos																				
	1.5.3. Acceso a espacios públicos																				
	1.5.4. Acceso a servicios de salud																				
DERECHOS HUMANOS	1.6.1. Vivienda digna y adecuada																				
	1.6.2. Acceso a servicios básicos																				
	1.6.3. Acceso a espacios públicos																				
	1.6.4. Acceso a servicios de salud																				

Figure 1: Illustrative image of the Matrix of Human Rights & Issues (Source: Author, all rights reserved)

## Human Rights Cartography

In accordance with the provisions in the various sections of the 'characterization' section of the Partial Program, certain provisions stand out and can be considered as layers within the fundamental rights approach. That is to say that within the scope of the Partial Program's validity, there are observable relationships between *Issues* and *Fundamental Rights* that constitute the subject of action, protection, and guarantees recognized in our constitutional system.

### Dimension of Fundamental Rights

The Program adopts the principles enshrined in Articles 4 and 5 of the General Law of Human Settlements, Territorial Planning, and Urban Development, which establish:

*Article 4:* The planning, regulation, and management of human settlements, population centers, and territorial planning must be conducted in adherence to the following principles of public policy:

- I. Right to the City
- II. Equity and Inclusion
- III. Right to Urban Property
- IV. Coherence and Rationality
- V. Democratic Participation and Transparency

VI. Productivity and Efficiency

VII. Protection and Progressivity of Public Space

VIII. Resilience, Urban Security, and Risks

IX. Environmental Sustainability

X. Universal Accessibility and Mobility

### Objectives & declarations

The Partial Program contains objectives ordered by fundamental rights guarantees. With the purpose of fulfilling the objectives set forth in the aforementioned provision, urban development policies should be determined based on the suitability of the land, its characteristics, and the fundamental rights involved in the area.

In addition, the Partial Program issues a Declaration of Recognition of Fundamental Rights, including the Right to Life, the Right to the Vital Minimum, the Right to the City, the Right to Urban Planning, and the Right to Access and Transparency of Information.

- Collective or individual right to file urban popular complaints and challenges against acts, legal facts, and omissions that violate regulations, legislation, or urban and environmental programs.
- Individual and collective right to organize under any lawful modality to defend themselves or present proposals and undertake



actions in matters regulated by this Ordinance and in general related to the contents of the Program.

- Right to direct, equitable, and deliberative participation in the definition of municipal policies and budget for urban projects in the area.

### Normative principles in the matter of rights

Social participation in all matters related to the interpretation, application, and control of the Program will be based on the respect for Fundamental Rights, under the following principles:

- I. Substantive Democracy
- II. Co-responsibility
- III. Inclusion
- IV. Solidarity
- V. Legality
- VI. Respect
- VII. Sustainability
- VIII. Tolerance
- IX. Transparency

### Scope of recognized rights

The Fundamental Rights recognized in the ordinance are subject to regulation. They will be considered Human Rights subject to the broadest protection, coverage, realization, and the most extensive possible interpretation in favor of their protection and reparation.

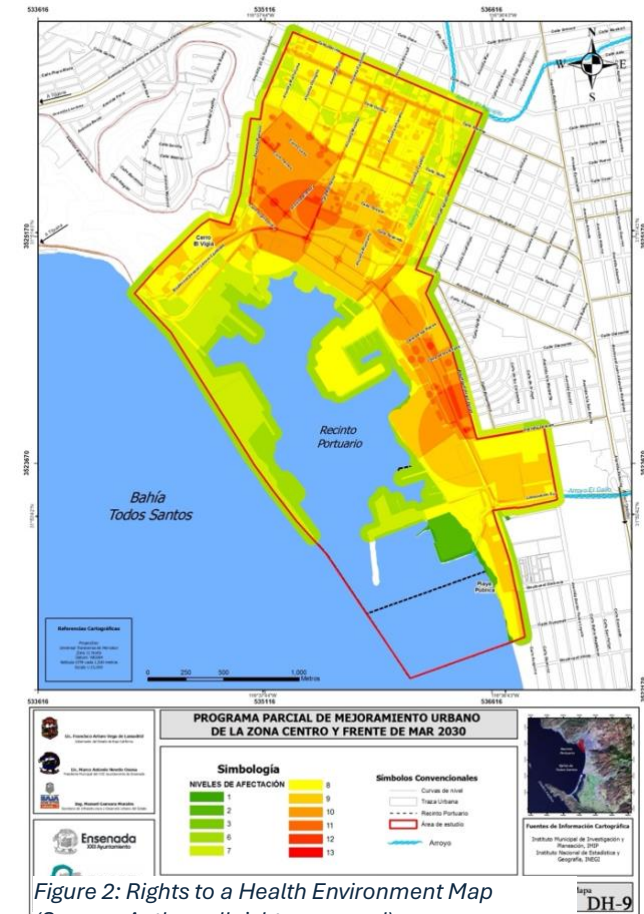


Figure 2: Rights to a Health Environment Map (Source: Author, all rights reserved)



## **TAKE AWAYS** Actionable rights to participation: a ‘Partial Urban Improvement Program’ in Ensenada, México (Aguilar & Sandoval, 2024)

The Partial Urban Improvement Program for Downtown and Waterfront of Ensenada incorporates a Participatory Democracy Approach with several identifiable outcomes.

1. A Human Rights and Urban Issues Matrix (See figure 1, above), that is the base to generate a Cartography of Human Rights.
2. A cartography of rights is created: maps that show the spatial status of various human rights (See figure 2, above) in the city.
3. Empowered Residents: Recognition and protection of residents' fundamental rights.

4. Human-Centric Urban Development: Focus on the dignity and well-being of individuals.
5. Inclusive and Just Community: Equitable and transparent urban planning processes fostering community solidarity.
6. Enhanced Quality of Life: Addressing social inequalities and ensuring a dignified living environment for all residents.

Two key challenges were encountered in this case. Firstly, there was resistance in respect of keeping to traditional urban planning approaches, and difficulties encountered in achieving broad public engagement. Secondly, the Partial Plan has not been fully implemented by the municipal government, and many public officials ignore its existence, mainly because it was made by a previous public administration.

## Case Study 5

### Tactical Urbanism: Post-Disaster Urban Recovery Following Beirut Port Blast

**Bachir Moujaes**, architect and urbanist, Director of Planning and Design at Solidere (The Lebanese Company for the Reconstruction of Beirut Central District) and Solidere International, Senior advisor at the School of Architecture and Institute of Urbanism of the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA) – University of Balamand, Lebanon.

#### Summary

In the aftermath of Beirut Port blast that occurred on the 4th of August 2020, architecture students at the Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts (ALBA) – University of Balamand joined the Tactical Urbanism Studio with the aim of contributing to the city recovery. The situation on the ground was extremely challenging as the healing process was compromised by the inability of the decimated neighborhoods to retrieve their former urban life. The clock was ticking. In a response to the urgency of the situation on the ground, the studio launched fast-track, small-scale, low-cost and short-term acupuncture

projects in the damaged neighborhoods facing Beirut Port. These attributes form the pillars of tactical urbanism (Lydon & Garcia, 2015). Tactical urbanism shines in times of crisis as it has the power to recover post-disaster street life via a people-centric process that involves community-driven actions. The students' projects, which are located in key public spaces, aim to bring life, joy, art, and trade back to the street. The proposed placemaking infrastructure embodies participatory urbanism that Beirut craves.

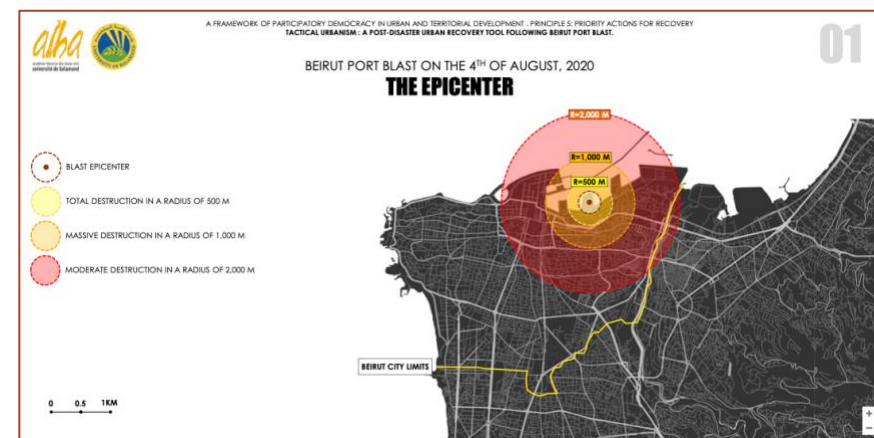


Figure 1: The Epicentre (Source: Author, all rights reserved)

## Context

### *The blast*

On the 4th August 2020, 2,750 tonnes of ammonium nitrate stored at the Port of Beirut in the capital city of Lebanon exploded, causing “at least 218 deaths, 7,000 injuries, and US\$15 billion in property damage, as well as leaving an estimated 300,000 people homeless” (Wikipedia, 2024). It is considered one of the most powerful non-nuclear explosions on record. The blast occurred in a country devastated since 2019 by an economic and financial crisis that was described by the World Bank Group as “one of the most severe crises episodes globally since the mid-nineteenth century” (2021), and it came in addition to the devastating COVID-19 pandemic which had overwhelmed many of the country's hospitals.

It was in this ‘perfect storm’ that the nine schools of the Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts (ALBA) – University of Balamand joined forces to put their energy at the service of the city and its citizens. This initiative translates the civic role that ALBA has always played at the national scale; the institution being recognized of public interest by the Lebanese State since 1943. It is in this context that a group of 5th year students of the School of Architecture joined the Tactical Urbanism Studio, contributing into the post-blast recovery process through on-the-ground actions. The studio methodology is a real-time process whereby the students have to design, build and

install small scale, low cost and short-term acupuncture projects. The ultimate goal is to recover post-disaster public space and subsequently initiate a long-term healing of Beirut Port neighborhoods and their local communities.

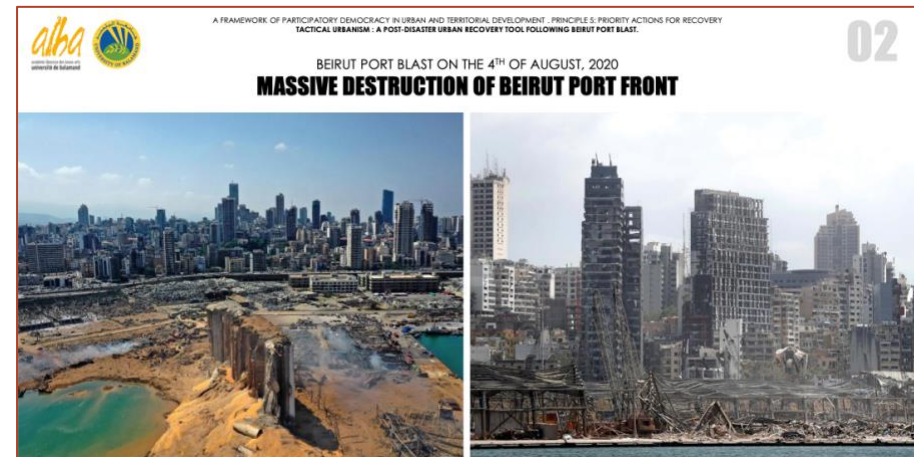


Figure 2: Massive Destruction of Beirut Port Front (Source: Author, all rights reserved)

### *ALBA Tactical Urbanism Studio: Inject positive change in the city*

The ALBA Tactical Urbanism Studio was created early 2020, few months after the outbreak of the revolution in Lebanon on the 7th of October 2019. In reaction to the harsh political, social, economic and sanitary context that the country was facing at the time, the challenge was to inject positive change in Beirut when everything was going wrong. The adopted strategy was to introduce alternative ways of claiming public space, away from any street violence.

## Case Study 5 Tactical urbanism: Post-disaster urban recovery following Beirut Port blast

Consequently, the students proposed the transformation of leftover public spaces in Beirut into meeting places throughout a series of small scale, short-term and low-cost projects. These three conditions, when they gather, establish a solid foundation for a bottom-up city planning that starts at the community scale, as opposed to the conventional top-down urbanism that has proven to be a total failure in its ability to plan a city for its people.

### Challenges



### *The urgency of public life recovery*

After the port blast, thousands of citizens were forced to abandon their homes in Beirut port district. In the absence of any public governance, the civil society, NGOs, activists, architects, planners and contractors deployed their capacities in no time to help the residents rebuilding their homes. However, despite all ongoing initiatives aiming to consolidate, rehabilitate or reconstruct the built fabric, the hidden threat lies in the incapacity of the decimated neighborhoods to reactivate their public space. This is why a

*Figure 4 & 5: Pre-disaster & Post-disaster condition on main street  
(Source: Author, all rights reserved)*

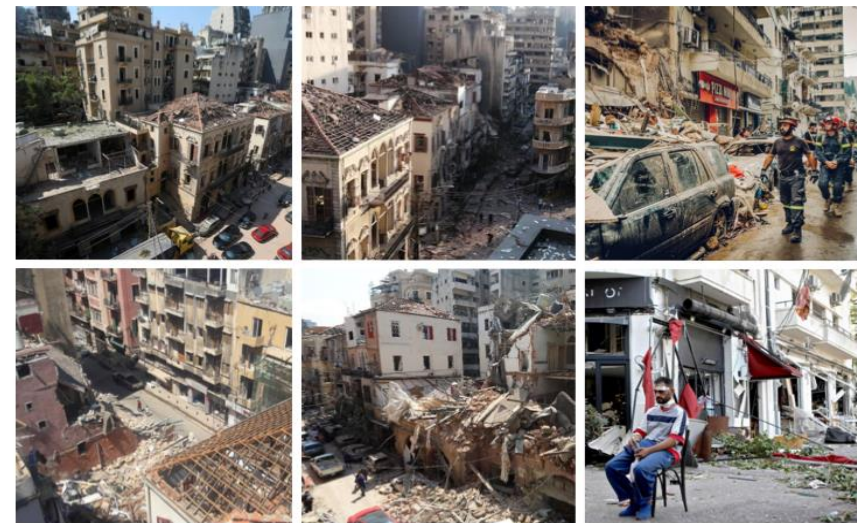






Figure 6: The Main Street of Beirut Port Neighbourhoods (Source: Author, all rights reserved)

substantial part of the population re-questioned its return, not only because of financial means, but because urban life was shattered. Ironically, this urban life was the main driver that turned Gemmayze and Mar Mikhael into the most active and creative neighborhoods of Beirut. Throughout time, their social and urban patterns had the power to build organic interactions between residents, merchants,

traders, retailers, vendors, designers, visitors and the like. However, if urban life did not quickly recover, these neighborhoods will be dead. The clock was ticking.

### Case Study 5 Tactical urbanism: Post-disaster urban recovery following Beirut Port blast

### *Tactical urbanism shines in terms of crisis*

Given the urgency of the situation, the proposed strategy of the studio was to launch in a pro-active process, small scale, short-term and low-cost acupuncture projects that are designed to bring



Figure 7: Student's Tactical Urbanism Projects (Source: Author, all rights reserved)

community life, joy, art, and trade back to the street. Projects can start tomorrow. They can happen accidentally, spontaneously or organically as an 'everyday urbanism' situation. They can also be

part of strategic actions under different labels: urban acupuncture, pop-up urbanism, guerilla urbanism, do-it-yourself urbanism, creative user-generated urbanism, urban repair, which are collectively called tactical urbanism. In this post-disaster context, tactical urbanism is urgently needed because of its capacity to re-stitch rapidly the social and urban fabric and subsequently encourages the return of the population, therefore avoiding any irreversible damage of the city.

### **Objectives**

#### *Activate street life*

The projects proposed by the Tactical Urbanism Studio focus on reactivating the 2.5km backbone of the port neighborhoods formed by Gouraud Street and Armenia Street. This is the spine that historically used to spread urban life in these neighborhoods, and this is where street-scale acupuncture actions will quickly regenerate urban life recovery as a prelude for long term change. The projects mainly occur in the public realm. They occupy different public space typologies to include stairs, sidewalks, driveways and street parking spots. Some installations may also invest empty private lots that are directly accessible and visible from the street.

#### *Develop placemaking projects*

### **Case Study 5** Tactical urbanism: Post-disaster urban recovery following Beirut Port blast

Projects are based on the three key pillars of tactical urbanism: small-scale, low-cost and short-term. The tools are basic: two recycled materials in line with a circular economy: pallets and tyres, in addition to street paint. The projects develop four types of urban spaces: places of expression, places to plant, places to play and places to connect, interacting with each other and generating a new placemaking matrix in Beirut. They will eventually become the cornerstone of the participatory process, thus fostering urban life and pedestrian mobility. They house ongoing actions initiated by associations and neighborhood committees. This alternative process of (re)doing the city can be defined as ‘doable urbanism’, putting forward realistic objectives with immediate effect while waiting for better days to come.

#### *Test flexible, expandable and movable prototypes*

The first prototypes were proposed on a portion of Gouraud Street, occupying street parking spaces, and Saint-Nicolas stairs. They are essential to assess the performance of the projects and analyse how the local community will potentially react, adapt and eventually adopt them. Based on the results, they will proliferate in different spots along the spine and its ramifications formed of stairs, internal streets and cul-de-sacs as they are flexible, modular, temporary, affordable and easy to manufacture, reproduce and relocate. The installations can morph to become plug-ins to ground

floor activities such as an outdoor extension for cafes, pubs, restaurants, shops, art galleries, exhibition spaces and the like.

#### *Foster a pedestrian-friendly street life*

Tactical urbanism projects have the capability to test, with short-term and temporary installations, a permanent pedestrian-oriented streetscape that reduces the car invasion in the public realm and give it back to its people. The aim is to design dedicated portions of the two main streets as shared spaces for cars and pedestrians or solely dedicated to pedestrians, either on a temporary or permanent basis, to be validated by traffic impact studies. Street markets, street vendors, street performance and the like may be introduced to form a comprehensive pedestrian network that connect Gouraud and Armenia streets to their immediate surroundings.

#### **Impact on the city and the community**

##### *Community-driven projects as a new form of participatory urbanism*

Tactical urbanism is an inclusive bottom-up approach that specifically relies on a series of community-driven projects to revitalize street life while improving pedestrian mobility. Thanks to its humane and human scale dimension, tactical urbanism has the ability to put forward the well-being of the local community by offering a pleasant, friendly and walkable neighborhoods. Inspiring



residents and civic leaders will therefore experience and shape urban spaces in a new way. It is the cornerstone of participatory urbanism.

#### *Short-term actions for long-term change*

Beyond short term goals, tactical urbanism plays the role of a catalyst for long term recovery and improvement of public space. The ultimate objective unthreatening and temporary projects is to unlock permanent changes that will be proposed via large scale and long-term urban projects. Tactical urbanism subsequently falls under the label of ‘transitory urbanism’ as it favours adaptive transitions between the miserable situation on the ground today and ambitious long-term visions. Consequently, acupuncture projects are not isolated in space and time as they were associated with other public space strategies of different scales that altogether build up in a bottom-up approach to form a holistic vision for a long-term public space policy.

#### *A multi-scale strategy for a holistic public space recovery*

The students’ projects of the Tactical Urbanism Studio were integrated in the “Beirut Urban Declaration”, a manifesto initiated

by the Order of Engineers and Architects in Beirut for the reconstruction of the neighborhoods devastated by the Port explosion. Their work was part of a strategy to reinject neighborhood life, re-stitch public space and revive dormant opportunities. It is a bottom-up approach that integrates short to long term actions on different levels: streetscape, infrastructural, urban and communal. The projects grow organically in the public realm, from the scale of the sidewalk up to the scale of a global public space policy. They build up in nine multi-scale actions: Launch tactical urbanism, revive the backbone of Gouraud and Armenia streets, activate in-between spaces, develop pedestrian and green local networks, create green anchors, develop a linking strategy through buffer areas, transform existing ground floor levels, reclaim public building anchors, and finally open up the port to the city. These actions are synchronized altogether, therefore creating a holistic vision that puts forward the well-being of the local community and offers a pleasant, connected, and walkable city. By doing so, neighborhood life that was shattered by August 4th blast will recover in Gemmayzeh, Mar Mikhael, Rmeil and Medawar. This is where it has always been and this is where it will always belong to.

## TAKE AWAYS Tactical urbanism: Post-disaster urban recovery following Beirut Port blast (Moujaes, 2024)

This case shows that public life must be given priority within crisis contexts, because this is the basis for activities for recovery. The use of ‘tactical urbanism’ is powerful and can help to test what will work, through flexible, expandable, and movable prototypes. It is particularly valuable for ongoing crises.

Community-driven projects offer a new form of participatory urbanism, which starts now and can endure. Short-term actions can and should lead into long-term change. Fostering a pedestrian-friendly street life contributes to the transition away from motorised traffic in cities.

At the same time wider challenges need to be addressed. In this case a multi-scale strategy was needed as part of the holistic public

space recovery. The case also demonstrates the enormous energies needed for tactical urbanism from civil society, which need to be acknowledged and supported.



Figure 8: A multi-scale strategy for a holistic post-blast recovery (Source: Author, all rights reserved)



## Case Study 6

### Catalysing change in an urban river catchment: Wealdstone Brook, London

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## Summary

Wealdstone Brook is in a highly polluted river catchment in London. The brook wends its way through residential and light industrial areas. It is highly modified, both covered and open, culverted and natural. Pollution and flooding have been a constant and continual problem in the living memory of the residents who neighbour the brook. In 2022, the smell was so bad that it was reported by BBC News Online, London, UK.

The research team, funded by the Natural Environment Research Council UK, took this horror as an opportunity to engage not only local residents, but also local councils, the water utility, and national agencies, to come together in two workshops. The first workshop developed a shared understanding why the problem has persisted for so long without solution. The second workshop co-designed solutions.

It was very revitalising for all the participants to have the space, time and structure to collaborate. Energy was used to understand the concerns held by each participant, rather than to protect each participant's point of view. This led to people committing time and resources to find ways each solution could be brought to reality at the close of the workshop.

## Context

Under-performing water management in a highly polluted urban river catchment can be improved by engaging community and statutory stakeholders with participatory and co-design methods.

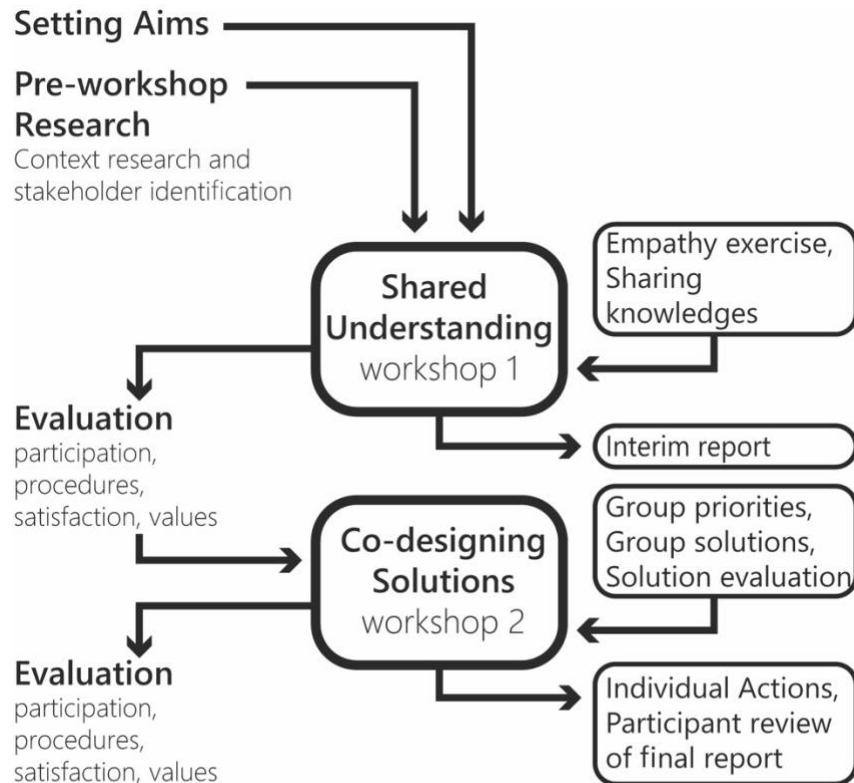


Figure 1: Workshop process (Source: Tse-Hui Teh)

This case study describes how a team of academic researchers from the programme Community Water Management for a Liveable London (CAMELLIA) engaged community and statutory stakeholders in the Wealdstone Brook urban river catchment in London to create

a shared understanding of water quality issues and to co-design solutions that work towards positive change in the catchment.

Wealdstone Brook is a small but heavily and chronically polluted tributary of the River Brent in North West London which crosses the boundary between two local borough councils. The Wealdstone Brook suffers from persistent pollution, primarily caused by sewage entering the water course through interconnected stormwater and foul water drainage systems, as well as private misconnections. These issues are typical for urban catchments across London and beyond.

An initial survey by the researchers found that weakly developed collaborative governance is a barrier to implementing solutions for improving water quality because solutions require multiple stakeholders to work together to raise funds and drive the implementation of schemes. The survey analysis showed a lack of integration and collaboration among catchment stakeholders. As well as poorly defined responsibilities and an absence of leadership by statutory stakeholders with the capacity to deliver schemes.

### Participatory Workshops

Two stakeholder workshops addressed these shortcomings. The stakeholders were a mix of concerned community members, elected members of the local council, local council officers, representatives from the water utility, the environment agency,

local non-government organisations concerned with water quality and the environment. Representatives from the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs, and the Office for Water were invited, but could not attend.

None of the stakeholders at the workshops knew all the other stakeholders, but there were sub-groups who did know of each other and were friends or colleagues. Most participants in the first workshop also attended the second. It was a condition of the invitation that all participants would attend both workshops because the content of the second workshop built on the first. The second workshop was opened to new participants because we gained access for a larger venue to host the workshop.

The first workshop introduced participants to each other. It built trust and empathy by asking people to condense their stake in the water quality of the Wealdstone Brook into 3 words or pictures that explained how they felt about the brook. It built on the beginnings of trust by asking people to work in pairs, with a person they had never met before to develop a map of why they believed water quality in the Wealdstone Brook was persistently poor. It then used participatory mapping with one map recorder, one facilitator and a large group discussion to develop a shared understanding among catchment stakeholders of the various issues affecting water quality and their governance dimensions. These comprise organisation, funding, stormwater and foul water systems interaction, riparian

ownership, housing development, incomplete information, and ineffective regulation. To address these issues, institutional resources to secure funding for schemes combined with joint efforts to move projects forward could tackle the flooding/pollution issue.

The second workshop began with rebuilding trust amongst participants who had not seen each other for a month. The shared understanding was recapped, and new participants were invited to add to the shared understanding. Using the shared map, participants were asked to work in small groups of 3-4 people to prioritise the problems presented on the shared map and think whether these were problems that should be in the short, medium or long term. Short being immediately; medium being in 3-5-years; and long being in 5-years onwards. A large group discussion was then used to create a shared set of priorities within each timescale. From these prioritised lists, participants were then asked to co-design solutions for one or more problems in new groups of 3-4 people.

Five different solutions were developed that ranged from hands-on interventions to deal with waste and vegetation management to a comprehensive scheme addressing a range of infrastructure and environment issues in the catchment. The solutions detailed the governance models required to deliver tangible progress on the ground, defined responsibilities for planning and delivery, and

emphasised the critical role of statutory stakeholders for the success of any project while acknowledging that the local community remains the key focus. These co-designed solutions were presented back to the group and participants were asked to evaluate the proposals individually using a Likert scale of 1-5, with space for qualitative comments. This evaluation was collated by the researchers and presented to workshop participants in a draft report for their comments and input. This draft formed the basis of the final report findings (Peters et al., 2024).

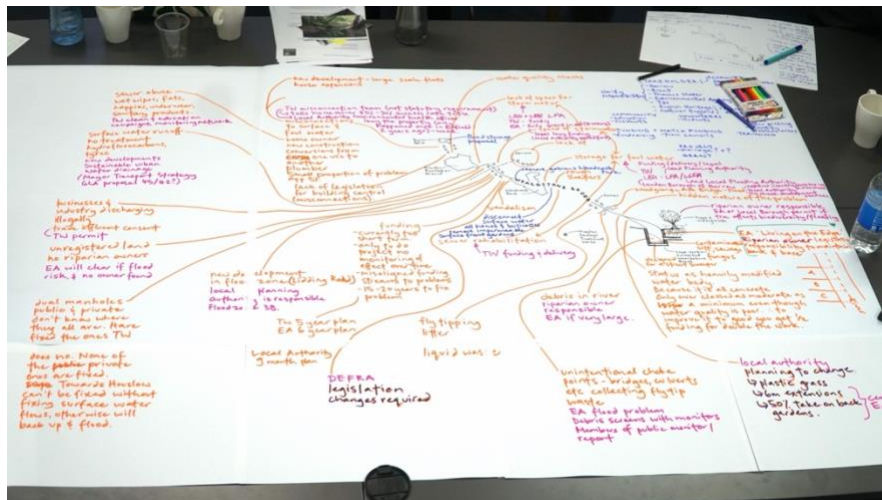


Figure 2: Shared map of problems (Source: Adrian Butler)

Throughout the workshops, participants were asked to work with people that they had not worked with before. This was to build greater trust and connections between people during the workshops with the intention that participants could build on these connections between and after the workshops. Indeed, the subsequent regular Wealdstone Brook Water Quality Action Group meetings were more well-attended than any previous meetings held.

To rebuild trust in collaborative water management in a catchment with weakly developed collaborative ties, community stakeholders need to be able to hold statutory stakeholders to account for joint project delivery. It is recommended that a community-centred stakeholder engagement strategy which considers the local community as a driver of change would ensure the implementation of solutions.

Further descriptions of methods for initiating change, analysing stakeholders, conducting preparatory research, participatory mapping, and co-designing solutions, are published elsewhere (Peters et al., 2024). Together these descriptions are a guidance to people who want to solve persistent problems that involve multiple stakeholders with adjacent boundaries, overlapping jurisdictions, and different but overlapping concerns.



## **TAKE AWAYS** Catalysing change in an urban river catchment: Wealdstone Brook, London (Teh, Peters, Landström , Butler, & Collins, 2024)

Crisis can be a trigger to energise and open fresh conversations to solve old problems. However, the conversation needs to be facilitated by a neutral party that does not have a stake in any solution but is clearly motivated to help participants find a solution to the problem.

Preliminary work needs to be completed by the workshop organisers so that the conversation can move forward from restating old issues, to focussing on finding new solutions to the old problems. Some naivety from facilitators can help with slowing down the conversation to help participants understand differing considerations of the same problem without embarrassment and gives participants a chance to build respect and confidence.

The structure of the workshop must give participants time to build trust with each other and form a productive group dynamic.

Participants need safe spaces to test how honest they can be within the group dynamic. This can start with the introduction, which is something easy to answer, but helps participants to connect as people and as a group. Trust is fragile and needs to be continuously maintained and monitored by the facilitators to ensure a collaborative outcome.



Figure 3: Collaborative work (Source: Adrian Butler)



## Case Study 7

### Community Engagement and Diversity of Professional Practices In Europe

**Melia Delplanque**, *Territoire Europe, Les Saprophytes*

**Mehdi Lassus**, *Territoire Europe, Les Papillons Blancs*

**Dominique Lancrenon**, *Territoire Europe, ECTP-CEU, CNDP*

**Claire Marquant**, *Territoire Europe, habitante de la Communauté Urbaine de Dunkerque*

#### Summary

Professional practices in Europe are driven by institutions and organisations that operate at different spatial scales. There are multiple points of entry to participation, across diverse statutory and non-statutory processes. Culture is a key point for mediation and communication, across the different practices of making and managing places.

The authors from Territoire Europe bring together experience from different countries. Here they look across actions at regional, local, and neighbourhood levels, which interlink to support participatory democracy. Three authors offer lessons learned to provide a study of diverse

interlocking activities and interactions between frameworks and citizens.

#### Participatory processes in France with the National Commission of Public Debates

In France, since 1995, the *National Commission of Public Debate* (the *Commission Nationale du Débat Public* or CNDP) an institution independent of the government, has ensured that everyone's voice is taken into account in public debates on major infrastructure, development and industrial projects. These debates have dedicated time and resources upstream of decision-making, and their principle is enshrined in the constitution.

Each debate is an opportunity to develop knowledge, share the voice and stories of citizens about their experiences, their questions, their fears and their proposals on the future of the environment depending on the projects. The interplay between project promoters, institutions, administrations and politicians is set in a framework to allow all citizens to make their voices heard.

The CNDP guarantees the traceability of all the points expressed within the debate, as well as the responses provided by project promoters those. About 60% of projects are modified following these debates, based on consideration of what was said by the project promoters. And for all projects, the very process of

exchange and participation has changed the state of mind of the construction of the project.

This process of collective culture puts into practice principles enshrined in the constitution, and allows everyone to verify their transparency and veracity. Its objective is to give everyone confidence to speak out and participate in projects by sharing their knowledge and experiences. A real engineering of citizen participation is developing, as well as numerous research projects.

### **Setting up a European Charter**

In 2015, a Charter on Participatory Democracy in Spatial Planning was approved by the General Assembly of the *European Council of Town Planners-Conseil Européen des Urbanistes* (ECTP-CEU, 2015). The drafting of the Charter was a collective work carried out over 3 years (for more detail see Bouche-Florin, 2019). Once it was in place, the ECTP-CEU then proposed to various political bodies to develop commitment to the Charter, via translation of the Charter and elected representatives signing up to the principles.

Those who signed the European Charter for Participatory Democracy in Spatial Planning did so from various institutional platforms. These include the Committee of the Regions (or CoR), the European assembly for regional and local voices in European framework. CoR also hosted the European Award for Spatial Planning on participatory democracy in spatial planning.

Democratic elected representatives of cities also signed up with Leuven, Brussels, Lille, Berlin, and Barcelona leading the way.

This signing of the Charter was a time for professionals and elected representatives to share good practices in participatory democracy. It centred on the need to allocate serious time and resources to participatory democracy within spatial planning processes. The ECTP-CEU had a special role as it provided a laboratory for creating ideas and ideals that are shared between professionals from different European countries. It helped to cross cultural differences, for example, it has enabled translations into French, Romanian, Spanish, Dutch, and Portuguese.

### **Connecting to work on the ground**

Territoire Europe was created in 2019, with the aim of putting the principles of the Charter into practice, concretely on the ground. Territoire Europe is a collective of researchers and practitioners. Melia Delplanque, an urban architect, has been developing a practice of self-construction with residents for over 15 years. This involves self-building process with an architect team. With the Saprophytes team, they intervene in public spaces in disadvantaged neighborhoods. They build works of art, street furniture, events with residents.

The very process of the construction site is an opportunity to share common values, needs, desires. The team deliberately place

themselves in a process of doing things together, using existing resources, with the support of communities. The time spent together, the construction sites and the festivals draw on the knowledge and imagination of all, and build up a common space.

The Saprophytes claim they are multipurpose ‘Swiss army knives’! They reproduce cooperative techniques to activate initiatives and support the emergence of collective living spaces. They carry out active reflections, around the creation of co-constructed, resilient, systemic projects, taking care of the living, and carrying new optimistic stories for cities. They bring a multidisciplinary practice, which comprises art, architecture, landscape, and support for collective dynamics.

In this way, they offer support to communities through many diverse projects (Saprophytes, 2024), including:

- Studies: Assistance to project management and Urban, architectural and landscape project management
- Animation of participatory processes: Co-design and co-construction of collective places.
- Training: For upskilling people in permaculture, agro-ecology, low-tech and participatory processes.
- Project facilitation in permaculture: Support for the definition of systemic projects.



Figure 1: Activities on the ground (Source: Les Saprophytes, all rights reserved)

- Storytelling about desirable futures: In particular through place-sensitive maps.
- Artistic productions: Scenography and artistic installations.
- Action research: Purposeful investigations around low-tech, urban permaculture, commons, anchored in our territory (Hellemmes-Fives), and around the animation of a third place.

The Saprophytes are currently working on the site of the Foyer d'Accueil Médicalisé (care home) in Les Moères where they participate in the collective called Mitoyens Commanditaires. In the spring and summer of 2024, an artistic life base was built there with the residents of the foster home and the neighborhood, and other people involved in social action in Dunkirk.

This life base opens a 'futures space' about a wasteland, which is a space of possibilities and projects for the collective and has the ambition of creating multiple new participatory actions. The envisaged future wasteland will provide for soil care and its pollution, discovery of plants and their qualities, artistic and landscape research, recovery of materials from demolished neighboring housing, research and development of bio-sourced materials, festive meetings within a framework of Drôles de Fêtes or Funny Parties.

### **Developing citizen power - people with disabilities**

Care home director Mehdi Lassus (Directeur du Foyer d'Accueil Médicalisé des Moères) promotes ways to develop citizen power of people with disabilities, and boost participatory democracy with people in this care home. The people supported in this care home are adults with disabilities. Around 45 adults live there permanently alongside medical care professionals, within the framework of an association created 60 years ago by the parents of people with disabilities. This association is called Les Papillons Blancs, and it has built 21 establishments in the Dunkirk area that accommodate more than 2,000 people with disabilities.

Mehdi Lassus is attentive to respecting the citizenship of each person. He ensures that they can express their desire and build their lives as freely as possible. The framework of care provided by the association and by the institutions that support it must go beyond their original frameworks in order to allow this.

Along with Patrick Lebellec, the cultural mediator of the city of Dunkirk, and Claire Marquant, Mehdi is a co-founder and 'unhabitant' of a collective called Mitoyens Commanditaires. Since 2021, the Mitoyens Commanditaires have been developing the Fab Lab Effet Papillon (Territoire Europe, 2024) within the care home. Thanks to his efforts, the framework of the home has been renewed by listening to the requests of the people, with the help of artists who organize their participatory workshops on site.

Little by little the environment is evolving and offering new activities, with a theatre, an orchard, a bread oven, an art gallery, a phyto-management park, ... work continues! And together everyone is developing new skills of singing, carpentry, gardening, and farming.

The Fab Lab Effet Papillon respects personalities, sensibilities, and citizenships. The Fab Lab transforms the reception center into a cultural place open to the Dunkirk urban area. It also comprises a research laboratory on the environment, plants, wildlife, and the quality of water and land, as well as our ability to depollute them by experimenting with phyto-management.

The path created connects the site to the Degroote district, which is undergoing urban renovation, and forms part of the green and blue framework of the Communauté Urbaine de Dunkerque. We meet there and share artistic experiences during the Drôle de Fêtes organized on weekends, or during construction sites and exhibitions.

### Developing citizen power - inhabitants of a 'renewal' area

Claire Marquant is a resident of the Communauté Urbaine de Dunkerque (CUD). She previously lived in the Degroote district, close to the care home in Les Moères, which is now undergoing urban renovation, and had to move because of the demolitions that were underway.

As an educational assistant by profession, Claire has been participating with her children in the space appropriation projects and festivals organized by the cultural department of the city of Dunkirk for about ten years. She communicates and writes numerous texts and collects the stories shared by the actors during the projects.

*Figure 2: Funny Party – Drôle de Fête signage (Source: Territoire Europe, all rights reserved)*





## **TAKE AWAYS** Community engagement and diversity of professional practices in Europe (Delplanque, Lassus, Lancrenon & Marquant, 2024)

### **Frameworks across different areas of work for citizen participation**

An institutional framework such as that of the National Commission for Public Debate (CNDP) at the national level makes it possible to develop a culture and tools for citizen participation. The key role played by this institutional and independent framework is to guarantee that everyone's voice is heard and taken into account. It thus prepares a collaborative ground for the design and implementation of projects.

An associative framework such as that of the European Council of Town Planners (ECTP-CEU) creates a place for informal exchanges between professionals from different European countries and develops relationships mainly with elected officials from these different countries. This provides a frame of reference that can then be used concretely on the ground.

A professional framework such as that of the Saprophytes offers tools to communities to develop participatory democracy concretely on their territory, based on the site's resources. An associative and professional framework such as that of the Papillons Blancs, when connected with the cultural ecosystem of the Communauté Urbaine de Dunkerque (CUD), makes it possible to develop very rich inclusiveness and creativity between all stakeholders.



## Case Study 8

### Co-Designing Public Makerspace with Communities in Shanghai, China

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**Dr Busayawan Lam**, Reader, Brunel Design School, Brunel University London <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/people/busayawan-lam>

**Professor Youngok Choi**, Professor in Design, Brunel Design School, Brunel University London <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/people/youngok-choi>

### Summary

The project brought together academics, practitioners, students, makers and members of the community in Shanghai through co-design activities to explore how best to nurture creativity in the local population, and to develop a framework to support the communities working together to shape public makerspaces in their area. A core objective was to create space and mutual respect for a

diverse range of stakeholders. The project was driven by the rationale that human capital had increasingly become important asset to most nations, including China, and the argument that the key to the sustainable economic growth of a city/country was its ability to attract, nurture and retain a creative workforce (Florida, 2002). It was observed that whilst Shanghai already had some infrastructure in place to support creative activities (e.g. offering arts & craft classes at community neighbourhood centres), most people did not see creative activities as part of their daily lives, and the makerspaces in China were generally designed to support professional makers and start-up entrepreneurs rather than casual making within and with the community (e.g., knitting groups). Using an inclusive co-design approach, the project helped unearth untapped skills and knowledge of creative citizens within communities and enable them to shape and support spaces where creative activities were made accessible to people from diverse economic, educational and sociocultural backgrounds in an inclusive and



sustainable manner. This co-design process has helped active participants form a working group called “creative citizen” to implement key actions developed through the co-design process and ensure longevity of the impact beyond the lifespan of the project. The key lessons learnt from this case can be categorised into 2 levels. At the individual level, the co-design process helped 1) raise public awareness and understanding of everyday creativity; 2) encourage knowledge/idea sharing across different groups of people; and 3) enhance creative outputs at the community level. At the organisational level, the project helped participating communities develop sustainable infrastructures (e.g., a public makerspace and a working group). Knowledge and ideas gained through this project could also contribute towards evidence-based policymaking.

### **Introduction to the project**

Fostering creative citizens through co-design and public makerspaces, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and the Newton Fund, was a collaboration between Brunel

University London in the UK and Tongji University in China, with support from various project partners, including The Glass-House Community Led Design in the UK and hyperlocal Chinese partners such as the Siping Road Community Centre in Shanghai. The goal was to explore how the strategic use of design, and in particular co-design and public makerspaces, could help foster creative citizens in China in an inclusive and bottom-up manner. The project was designed very carefully to involve people with diverse skills/input/interests/capabilities, and the methods used within the engagement activities helped promote respect for differences as well as shared interests. Hence, Shanghai was chosen as an area of focus due to its diverse population and its ambition to become a place of innovation, humanity and sustainability (SUSAS, 2021). Crucial to this is helping citizens to develop their creative skills and according to previous studies, one effective way of promoting and fostering creativity is to actively engage people in creative activities, such as design and hands-on making activities (Sanders and Stappers, 2008). Thus, a key deliverable of this project was to co-design a prototype of a public makerspace with local communities to help them unearth and mobilise their creativity and to develop it further.

The project was phased over 3 years (2018 – 2021). Year 1 focused on investigating existing makerspaces in the UK and China to

capture good practices and explore how makerspaces sat within different contexts. Year 2 concentrated on developing the process to co-design public makerspaces with communities in Shanghai. Year 3 focused on applying this co-design process to help local residents imagine how their existing community centre could be transformed into a public makerspace. The study employed various types of co-design tools including the “Design by Consensus” (DbC) method developed by The Glass-House Community Led Design, to ensure an accessible and democratic process. Invitations to take part in the co-design process were circulated to a wide range of audiences to ensure diversity. Participation was completely voluntary and all those taking part were given equal opportunities to experience what a public makerspace could offer, raise concerns, exchange ideas and propose strategic directions.

### **Development expectations**

The goal was to explore how existing community neighbourhood centres could become public makerspaces where residents can co-create creative programmes and outputs for their communities. In this case, a public makerspace is referred to as a physical location where people gather to co-create, share resources and knowledge, work on projects, network, and build (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, 2017). Our emphasis was on offering multipurpose spaces where creative activities (e.g., painting,

knitting, cooking and creative writing) can take place, rather than providing traditional and digital fabrication tools (e.g., woodworking machinery and 3D printers). Ideally, making activities could be achieved with existing facilities within these centres.

### **Development process**

Although most activities in Year 1 (e.g., conducting case studies to capture good practice) were carried out by the team (see Lam et al, 2022 for more information), the study viewed the co-design process as a learning and prototyping tool. The team aimed to explore the role of co-design in shaping makerspaces with communities. As a result, 4 different co-design workshops were organised as a means of co-creating public makerspaces in an inclusive manner. Participatory Democracy (PD) principles (e.g., treating participants with dignity, ensuring a democratic process, engaging with key stakeholders throughout the entire process and enabling everyone to voice their views) were adhered to throughout the process.

#### ***1st Co-design Workshop (Facilitator Training Workshop)***

The DbC workshop created by The Glass-House Community Led Design back in 2006 was adapted for this project (de Sousa, 2021) to focus specifically on co-designing makerspaces. DbC contained 2 main activities: role-play and co-design/co-creation. Participants were each assigned a stakeholder role, which fell into one of three



创意公民 Creative Citizens

Figure 1: Results from 1st co-design workshop  
(Source: Authors)

categories: 1) makerspace staff; 2) experienced or professional makers who needed regular workspace; and 3) occasional or aspiring makers with varying degrees of experience. Using a range of defined stakeholder roles, aimed to help them explore diverse potential users of a makerspace and develop empathy for other stakeholders, the participants were asked to work together to negotiate a shared vision and to co-design their ideal makerspace

building. This was to be based on the needs and interests of the various stakeholders represented within their group, developing design ideas that responded to both individual and collective needs as well as the ambitions of various users.

To introduce some key design considerations, the workshop introduced an imagined building with internal and external space, and a series of tactile props to help explore shared and private workspaces, clean and messy spaces, quiet and noisy environments, storage and social spaces, as well as different size kitchen spaces, toilet configurations and some standard building features (e.g., doors, windows and corridors). Whilst the workshop task focused on co-designing an imagined makerspace, the key objective was to help explore the process of co-designing with and for multiple stakeholders, and the considerations of creating a space that catered for diverse makers.

Workshop participants were divided into two groups, each taking quite different approaches to formulating their visions and in so doing illustrating how who is involved in a co-design process shapes both its process and outcome. Group 1 created the shared vision, “theme park of making” (emphasising the joy of making), first and then developed the design ideas for their building. Group 2, instead, explored design ideas for their building first and then created their vision statement, “make, share, connect and show”,

based on their identified working zones (see Choi et al, 2022 for more information).

The first workshop in London focused on introducing the DbC workshop to visiting students and researchers from Tongji University who would then help the team facilitate the co-design process with local communities in Shanghai. As well as helping to introduce the workshop model itself, the workshop explored how to create a workshop environment that was accessible and welcoming to participants from all walks of life, and that actively promoted respect and empathy for all participants and that enabled them to voice their views equally. Insight gathered from this workshop helped inform the structure and format of the 2nd workshop in Shanghai.

### ***2nd Co-design Workshop (Public Engagement Workshop)***

The second workshop, in Shanghai, brought together design students, creative professionals, local residents and academics at Tongji University, and was facilitated by members of the team and researchers who had participated in the first workshop. The presence of a wide range of participants in this second workshop, and the interests that they represented, as well as the workshop being rooted in a local conversation, led to some interesting ideas,

observations and tensions emerging through the task and follow-up discussion.



*Figure 2: Results from 2nd co-design workshop (Source: Authors)*

As with the first workshop, two groups were formed, and stakeholder roles were assigned so that each table had participants taking on different stakeholder roles. Group 1 was made up of predominantly students of a similar age and educational background. Group 2, however, had participants from varied age groups, professional backgrounds and making experiences. The design ideas that emerged from this workshop were quite different from each other and from the outputs of the first workshop. Here, participants placed more emphasis on catering for people already engaged with making. Social interaction was perceived as a means of promoting the makers and selling their



artefacts than introducing the makerspace to the community and encouraging the general public to engage in creative making activities.

### **3rd Co-design Workshop (Makerspace Taster Workshop)**

This next public-facing workshop in Shanghai was held at the Fushun Road Community Centre, in collaboration with Innocent Drinks, China. This one aimed to give residents first-hand experience of what a public makerspace could be like and what kinds of making provisions it could offer. Borrowing the “big knit” idea from Innocent, the workshop used the “Creative Co-Knitting” theme and a professional knit designer was invited as an on-site tutor. Responding to an open call via a social media site, more than 50 applicants expressed an interest in attending the workshop. 26 participants were carefully selected to ensure the diversity of age groups and backgrounds, including local residents, professional designers as well as some external partners. Some participants were skilled in knitting, while others had basic knitting skills or no experience at all.

The co-design method employed in this workshop was “Story Sharing, with participants encouraged to share stories while knitting hats for Innocent drink containers, with their designs based on element(s) related to the city of Shanghai (e.g. local dishes or



Figure 3: Results from 3rd co-design workshop (Source: Authors)

architectural features). Feedback from participants after the event revealed that they felt their creativity had been enhanced through drawing and knitting together and that the expert's guidance as well as peer-learning had been helpful for people to recognise their potential in creative making. Experienced knitters realised that their skills could be improved, while inexperienced knitters recognised their potential to be creative makers and part of a transformative process, sharing knowledge freely. The workshop revealed an interesting form of creative making within the community centre, e.g., local knitting groups, which was identified as something that should be part of the future public makerspace plan.

Getting participants to think about their local cultural references also helped them realise that the community centre provided a



good platform for creative making. Collaboration with external partners such as Innocent Drinks, China, was considered useful in building up and sustaining self-organised local networks in the long term.



Figure 4: Results from 4th co-design workshop (Source: Authors)



#### **4th Co-design Workshop (Mapping Local Assets):**

Using an “Asset Mapping” technique as a means of discovering and unlocking hidden resources within the community, this workshop provided a starting point for local people to work together to create a long-term plan for everyday creativity projects. This event brought together nearly 50 participants including representatives from the Community Centre, the Siping Road Street Officer, Siping Road Community Non-profit Foundation, local enterprises in the Siping community, students and lecturers from Tongji University, representatives of the civil society, and several local residents. The workshop consisted of 3 parts: the first focused on showcasing existing creative resources (including the knitting project) to inspire people; the second focused on identifying and mapping local assets; and the third was to initiate the community makerspace project based on the identified assets.

During this session, participants were asked to identify and link available resources with the use of tactile props and visual tools, including icon cards (e.g., venues, facilities, skills and human resources). Placing the Community Centre at the heart of this visual map, as people connected different resources, they were expected to propose new creative activities for the centre and explain how different assets and various stakeholders could work together to resource them. This helped participants not only identify their



individual and collective assets, but also begin to explore how connecting them could help put them to good use. By examining relationships between different resources and the Community Centre, they could also sense-check the viability of their proposals. The final step was to initiate the community makerspace project based on the identified assets. It was observed that some participants were active/positive about leading potential projects in the future, so they were invited as the community representatives for the last workshop to discuss and action plan some potential strategies.

#### ***5th Co-design Workshop (Action Planning)***

Results from the previous four co-design workshops were analysed and combined by the team to create 6 strategies for future development, namely: 1) collecting and classifying existing community activities; 2) exploring how the College of Design and Innovation, Tongji University, could contribute knowledge to the community and acts as an effective agent for social change; 3) utilising Tongji DESIS Lab to empower the community centre in a long term (DEGIS is short for Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability. Tongji DESIS Lab employs design activism as a means of achieving a sustainable lifestyle. Hence, the lab is keen to support its local community in fulfilling its aspirations through creative acts.); 4) initiating and incubating more community projects; 5)

launching “Knit How” as a pilot project to engage with more residents in the community centre; and 6) establishing an online/offline creative citizens group to start taking action.

Six active residents who had attended the previous workshop were invited to take part in this workshop and were joined by a member of staff from the local foundation and a student from Tongji University. Firstly, participants were asked to introduce themselves. Next, they were encouraged to brainstorm potential solutions/projects that were aligned with the 6 strategies. Participants were then asked to map identified resources (or assets) to their proposed ideas/projects, using the questions “What do I need?” and “What can I do?” as prompts for discussion. They were then asked to consider: 1) what the Community Centre needs; and 2) what DESIS Lab can support. Lastly, a group discussion was carried out to prioritise proposed ideas/projects. These steps helped them draw up action plans including the operational details and how different individuals could contribute to them.

## **TAKE AWAYS** Co-designing public makerspace with communities in Shanghai, China (de Sousa, Lam, Choi, 2024)

### **Key messages for public makerspaces**

The project revealed that community spaces (e.g., neighbourhood centres in this case) have the potential to be transformed into public makerspaces, able to provide a place where people from different groups and with different making skills could come together to explore creative activities. This is possible because:

- 1) most centres are well-equipped and strategically located in the middle of residential areas, attracting a broad range of audiences, including older people, families, children, students and working professionals;
- 2) the multipurpose spaces in most centres can easily be adapted for creative making activities; &
- 3) many centres already have substantial experience of organising and supporting creative making activities.

For other towns/cities that are interested to providing provision for community making activities in this manner, it would be useful to:

- 1) identify potential community spaces;

- 2) ensure that they can be adapted to suit different activities; &
- 3) leverage existing services, previous experiences of members of staff and/or established networks with local residents.

By focusing on communities of interest (e.g., self-organised groups), community-based makerspaces might not need to be equipped with heavy machines; small handheld tools are likely to be sufficient, making them more flexible for various creative activities.

The co-design workshops in this project showed that:

- People were interested not only in participating in creative activities at the community-neighbourhood centres, but also in developing and running them.
- This type of makerspace could also encourage personal development and social impact within communities, enabling people and groups to plan, lead and participate in creative activities. At present, most community neighbourhood centres' activities are planned and organised in a top-down manner, with ideas often coming from the local government or the managerial team of the centres. This can mean that activities and programmes do not always meet user requirements and only involve specific groups. Therefore, a better balance of bottom-up and top-down approaches is required to support more inclusive and user-oriented community centres with more achievable and impactful social innovation. This multidirectional approach



could also lead to more opportunities for people to get engaged in proposing and leading programmes that better link with government policy.

- Social aspects (e.g. making projects that could benefit the local community) could play key roles in attracting people to engage with community-based makerspaces. We should move away from the idea that creative sessions are only about making “*things*”. Instead, these creative activities should focus more on “*empowering people*”, encouraging them to be more proactive in supporting their community.

### Key messages regarding stakeholders

To achieve a well-balanced top-down and bottom-up approach, it is recommended that the stakeholders expand their roles and start working more closely with community actors – i.e., people proactively put themselves forward to plan and organise creative activities leading to social innovation. This will expand the pool of stakeholders able to drive change:

- External parties (e.g., companies, schools, universities, NGOs, government organisations and any other entities) could help provide support to community-based makerspaces and community projects with resources including finance and in-kind support.
- Community actors (e.g., people who are willing to proactively participate in planning and organising creative sessions and/or community projects for their local

communities) should be encouraged to be part of public makerspaces. They can contribute to programming and also help attract more people to join.

- Designers and creative professionals should be properly engaged. This group of people could contribute to design thinking and design processes to help advance creative skills and creative thinking through critical analysis of current problems and potential issues. They could also support co-design activities with stakeholders and users to produce more practical and comprehensive ideas and action plans.

### Key outcomes and impact

- At the individual level, the co-design workshops and making activities helped increase public awareness and understanding of everyday creativity. They also helped participants develop their creative skills further by providing opportunities for them to engage in creative tasks during the workshops and encouraging them to continue to do so outside the workshops.
- The co-design and making activities in the creative workshops encouraged knowledge sharing among different groups of people.
- By getting residents involved in co-design and making activities, the project also helped enhance creative outputs at the community level. A working group called “*creative*

*citizens*” has been established as a result of this study, and they have already started working on community projects.

- This kind of project could potentially help local makers upskill and upscale their work. It supports self-organised making groups in collaboration with community neighbourhood centres by demonstrating: 1) how design could be used to help makers turn their passion/interest into a well-established business; and 2) how they could secure a constant stream of funding from external organisations (e.g. Innocent Drinks).
- The project could help the local authority develop sustainable and resilient infrastructure (public makerspaces) for residents based on existing resources (community neighbourhood centres).
- The outputs created by residents, presented to representatives of the local authority and other key stakeholders, could potentially also influence public policies at a local level.



Figure 5: Results from 5th co-design workshop  
(Source: Authors)

## Case Study 9

### Creating Space for Participation in City Master Planning in Delhi

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#### Summary

In India, the master plan is the key macro-level spatial document that lays down the guidelines for future development of a city. Written every 20 years, the master plan guides other policies and programmes planned by different levels of the central, state and local governments. Despite the power of master plans as a tool to shape the terms of life and work in a city, previous plans (in 1961, 1981 and 2001) have been limited in terms of public participation and are often disconnected from the lived reality of the vast majority of urban residents. While the master plan may be based on an inaccurate understanding of existing realities, its power to alter

developments post-facto and render people's lives insecure if their livelihoods are not compliant with its dictates is significant and has been devastating in Delhi. As a statutory document that is legally enforceable, the Plan has the force to declare all "violations" to it as illegal and thereby render them insecure. It was this legacy of exclusion that the Main Bhi Dilli ("I, Too, am Delhi") campaign aimed to disrupt with advocacy around the 2021–41 Master plan. The Main Bhi Dilli (MBD) coalition was made up of diverse civil society organizations, activists and informal workers' organizations. In the absence of a state-led participatory process, the MBD Coalition created its own - co-producing a "people's plan" that outlined a progressive vision for a housing, zoning, economic development, and other areas that would benefit the majority of Delhi residents living on the margins. This campaign experience offers lessons for those trying to secure inclusive planning elsewhere: building coalitions of mixed expertise well ahead of time; foregrounding the lived experiences of those most



affected by the failures of the current system, demystifying the technical aspects of master planning; and articulating not just problems, but also concrete solutions.

### **Introduction**

In Delhi, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), is the body in charge of formulating the Master Plan. It defines the Master Plan as a ‘long-term perspective plan for guiding the sustainable planned development of the city.’ This macro-level document will determine the spatial aspect of how socio-economic activities in the city will be arranged and define the supporting infrastructure that is required by the city’s population.

The DDA officially announced the drafting of the fourth Master Plan for Delhi in April 2018, contracting out the process to the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA). The NIUA, a think tank, was established in 1976 to support and guide the government on urban development and planning. It works closely with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and civil servants in charge of urban development and city planning.

Running parallel to the official planning process, the MBD campaign took many steps to mobilize an inclusive agenda, challenging the existing hierarchies around the “technicality” of the plan, which resulted in, for the first time, the extensive participation of informal workers and other marginalized groups in the master planning exercise in Delhi. This included groups representing residents of informal settlements, homeless citizens, women, children, and people with disabilities. In this case study, we are looking at the process from the lens of participation of informal workers of Delhi<sup>i</sup>.

The MBD campaign centered the voices of informal workers in the city-planning process over four years through three key phases, as follows.

1. Knowledge co-production: Collective sense-making and harmonizing grassroots and technical expertise.
2. Advocacy: Launching a public communications campaign and engaging with the drafting agency.
3. Accountability: Mobilizing a rapid response to the draft master plan and securing expanded space for public participation.

### **Knowledge Co-production**



A core guiding principle of the campaign was the belief that those most affected by the existing failures of policy and planning have unique expertise around solutions. From the start, livelihood was a key pillar of the campaign, along with gender and housing. MBD partners recognized that for informal workers and their representatives to be able to articulate targeted recommendations specifically in relation to the master plan, they would need support in translating their demands into technical planning language. This required the creation of a process that could harmonize technical knowledge about the plan with workers' grounded knowledge of the dynamics of their livelihoods in the city.

After launching as a public campaign in May 2019, the group continued to meet regularly. At the end of the first year, the group charged with knowledge co-production assessed that campaign members had extensively deliberated on the master plan and built a shared understanding of its intersections with different sectors and themes. Each group strived to better understand how the master plan could be a useful document for advancing a social and economic justice agenda. To this end, meetings were held among planners, experts and representatives of people's organizations, including workers' organizations, where master plan norms relating to each sector were shared and key issues affecting each sector discussed. These discussions served to broaden and "translate"

specific workers' demands into spatial or technical recommendations.

The next step was to further contextualizing the recommendations at the community scale and, to this end, workers' and housing rights organizations organized over 100 public meetings in informal settlements and workplaces across Delhi to source new insights on the problems, priorities and demands of its communities. These meetings supported communities to see the master plan as a tool for change, and to explore how to connect their urgent everyday challenges and priorities with provisions in the plan. During these meetings, activists would briefly introduce the master plan and the work of MBD, after which participants discussed their issues and what they most needed from the city going forward.

For example, based on their pre-existing knowledge of the community, activists highlighted how issues such as a lack of livelihood or piped water are a function of how the plan shapes housing for the poor, which then enabled the local community to articulate their concerns and needs for infrastructure improvements. Activist and worker groups also used popular education methods to enable groups to understand the macro scale of the plan, and to connect their everyday needs and experiences to it. For example, MBD member the Mahila Housing Trust (MHT) started each meeting by presenting a visual layout plan of the

settlement where the meeting was being held. By identifying local amenities and unique features, and familiarizing themselves with how to read and use a map, participants were able to think spatially at the scale of their own neighbourhood. They were also able to encourage communities to actively start envisioning what they would like to see in an upcoming plan for their own neighborhood.

These public meetings aimed to source community input, but also create widespread grassroots awareness of the master-planning process and build support for the MBD campaign. Later, when the draft Master Plan for Delhi–2041 was opened to public comment, activists were able to return to communities and engage with them for feedback, building on this initial base of understanding.

Subsequently, the research group of the MBD distilled the insights from these meetings to formulate specific recommendations for the drafting authority. These were structured as fact sheets, written in simple language, with points presented as accessible visuals, and primarily meant to build common understanding among the members of the campaign and the general public.

### **Advocacy**

Towards the end of 2019, the campaign had an arsenal of critical data and clear propositions with which to approach the NIUA, the organizations which was drafting the master plan. MBD was able to

arrange an initial meeting with the NIUA in November 2019. At that meeting, fact sheets were presented by worker leaders and mobilizers rather than non-governmental organization (NGO) representatives or technical experts. The decision of the DDA to use a semi-public think tank to draft the new master plan allowed a greater chance at advocacy than had been possible in the past with bureaucratic and governmental bodies. This determined what approach the MBD campaign would take to engage with the process. After these meetings, the MBD put sustained pressure on the DDA and the NIUA through a broad public communication campaign, including a website with open access to all MBD resources, and a social media presence.

In 2020, owing at least partially to the pressures applied by MBD and other civil-society actors, the DDA organized a series of public consultations for understanding people’s needs from the master plan before it was drafted – the first time this had ever been done. Achieving these consultations was one of several ways MBD successfully opened up participatory space within the planning process. Public consultations were not legally mandated at this early stage, and where traditionally only organized bodies of elite residents have had their voices heard through informal consultations on the master plan, the presence of a public campaign ensured that meetings were also held with workers’

groups and the residents of slums and unauthorized colonies. This is an important precedent that was set through the activism of the campaign.

### **Accountability**

The DDA released the draft Master Plan for Delhi–2041 on its website on 9 June 2021 and announced a period of only 45 days for citizens to send in their objections and suggestions. As per the Delhi Development Act, 1957, which provides the legal framework for master planning in Delhi, once a draft is in the public domain, citizen inputs must be solicited and provisions must be made for them to submit objections and suggestions. Historically, this has always been the stage at which public and media attention is generated about the master plan, which is followed by a phase of public hearings. Informal workers and other marginalized groups have seldom been able to claim a seat at the table, even at this phase, due to the non-transparent, fast-paced and expert-driven nature of the process. This time, however, when the draft master plan was released with just over a month for citizen input, MBD worked quickly to force open a space for meaningful public participation.

When it was first announced, the process of giving citizen feedback was set up to be entirely virtual and consequently inaccessible to

most informal workers and other marginalized groups due to the digital divide<sup>ii</sup>. The process for physical submissions was not widely advertised and could only be made at DDA headquarters. The campaign also put sustained pressure on the DDA to extend the timeframe for citizen feedback. Through letters written to the authorities, media campaigns and public protests, the campaign successfully pushed the DDA into granting a 30-day extension to the public comment period.

The MBD leveraged the strength of its diversity and regrouped into sectoral and thematic groups, as was done in the first year, to quickly and carefully review the plan clause by clause. The results of the MBD’s review and accompanying recommendations were shared via social media, public meetings and at a press conference. This initial broad public-awareness strategy was aimed at helping as many people as possible understand the plan, and encourage them to go online and submit their own suggestions and objections.

With extra time secured for feedback, the campaign’s final strategy focused on massive, direct community outreach. MBD worked with a cadre of grassroots leaders who held close to 250 meetings with street vendors, waste pickers, domestic workers, home-based workers, residents of informal settlements and other communities across the city. Leaders used popular education techniques in markets, public spaces, parks and streets to deconstruct the

complex maps and figures, and to support communities in articulating their needs and objections to the draft master plan.

One of the MBD member organizations, Social Design Collaborative, created a popular education toolkit for community leaders to use in explaining the draft master plan and gathering objections from community groups. Called Kaun Hai Master? Kya Hai Plan? (Who is the Master? What is the Plan?), the toolkit relied on participatory tools such as flash cards, maps and blackboards to explain what the draft master plan was saying about issues relevant to community members' lives (transport, work, social infrastructure, etc.) and help them to articulate their objections.

In the end, by the deadline set by the DDA, MBD partners and community leaders had physically gone to the DDA headquarters and filed nearly 25,000 objections from communities across Delhi on issues relating to livelihood, housing and social infrastructure.

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<sup>i</sup> Based on recent labor force surveys, it is estimated that of the nearly 6.09 million workers in Delhi, an overwhelming majority of 4.92 million (80.7%) are informally employed (Raveendran & Vanek, 2020). Informal workers in Delhi are a large and heterogeneous group consisting of diverse sectors including home-based workers, domestic workers, street vendors, waste pickers, construction workers and workers engaged under varied types of informal wage and employment arrangements in fields such as transport, manufacturing and retail.

ThDDA was initially resistant to receiving the paper submissions, but campaign representatives convinced them to accept every single objection and provide individual receipts. This was a historic achievement in the city's planning process, normally the exclusive domain of well-off and powerful groups. The process described here took place at an extremely vulnerable time, immediately after the devastating second wave of COVID-19 in Delhi that affected working-poor communities most acutely. It is a testament to the strength of workers' organizations, activists and individual workers that they were able to recognize the gaps in the draft master plan and its potential harm if unaddressed, and act at this critical moment to claim their right to participate in defining Delhi's future.

<sup>ii</sup> Access to information and communication technology (ICT), smart phones and the internet often reflects the existing socio-economic divide of class, caste and gender in India. Those on the margins have limited or no access to smart phones or internet – working poor especially women being the most marginalized. Major reasons for this digital divide are the lack of robust infrastructure for providing quality internet services, people's ability

## **TAKE AWAYS** Creating Space for Participation in City Master Planning in Delhi (Sinha & Harvey, 2024)

The MBD sought to take on a historically exclusionary process, highlighting the opportunities for resistance, struggle and advocacy at the interface between techno-managerial planners/government administration and collectives of the working poor. The strategies employed in building and nurturing a diverse network like the MBD coalition is also a story of building a movement that negotiates within spaces of a formal urban-planning process while remaining true to the constituencies it represents. One of the enablers of this process was the prior existence of strong people's collectives and platforms – labour organizations, trade unions, grassroots activist networks – who were representatives of their constituencies, and in a position to reflect the needs of their respective bases. They facilitated an effective and robust participation of workers and grassroots communities which kept the MBD campaign grounded, at every stage of its evolution.

MBD used a co-productive approach to bring together diverse forms of knowledge (lived experience, technical knowledge, and forms of knowledge held by activists and movements) even if the

State did not. As a result, the coalition attempted to model an approach to planning that could capture the on-the-ground realities and needs of city residents in a way that could not be achieved by the top-down approach used by planners. In order to be truly inclusive of the needs of informal workers and other marginalized communities, city planning has to adopt a co-productive approach, bringing planning to the people, as MBD has done.

In terms of achievement, the campaign succeeded in expanding existing and creating new spaces for civic participation throughout the master plan drafting process. Advocacy through the campaign opened up this top-down technocratic process and made it so that planners had to listen to workers' voices. The participatory space opened up by MBD was under threat during the second wave of COVID-19, but still it successfully resisted the digital overhaul of participation proposed by the DDA. Perhaps most importantly, working together on a campaign has created a strong coalition of allies who will continue to engage collectively in future urban struggles in Delhi.

In terms of accomplishments relating to the content of urban planning and policy, some progressive language has been incorporated in the draft master plan<sup>iii</sup>, although not to the extent that the MBD had hoped. Significantly, more concrete allocations for informal workers in the master plan are missing because of the

existing vision of the city and its political economy. The economic vision laid out in the master plan is still divorced from the realities of urban employment in Delhi. Taken together with the measures facilitating the privatization of public land and leaving the provision of housing almost entirely to the private sector, the main aim of the master plan becomes quite clear: to create a market-friendly “worldclass” city irrespective of whether the majority of Delhi’s residents have any share or place in it. This underscores a key lesson in this case: although civil society actors can create rich processes of co-production that result in forward-looking progressive proposals for change, unless there is some openness on the part of the state, the possibilities for these proposals to land in urban policy are limited.

Finally, the MBD identified lessons for other civil society groups interested in intervening in a master planning process, namely:

- Start building a campaign early to enable a slow, collective process of demystifying the technical aspects of planning. The MBD campaign started much before the draft plan was made public – and almost ran parallel to the official planning process.

This is critical for building a campaign which is public-facing and participatory - ensuring that the voices of the vast majority, especially the most marginalized, are represented takes time and nurturing.

- Centre the lived experience of workers in policy recommendations and offer solutions, not only a list of problems. Participatory and inclusive approaches can bring to life many innovative models and practices when it is informed by the voices on the ground.
- Create space to develop and sustain a diverse coalition with a mixture of skills and expertise. Working with partners with different disciplines and areas of expertise allows for a comprehensive articulation of problems and needs, but also requires patience and a commitment to nurturing democratic functioning. In the early phase of the campaign building, this ‘communication’, across disciplines and organizations is critical.

This text is drawn from WIEGO Policy Brief No 28 (Sinha et al., 2022).

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<sup>iii</sup> At the time of writing, the final Master Plan document of Delhi is yet to be released by the DDA





## Case Study 10

### Understanding wind farm impacts together: citizen voices in UK regulatory processes

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#### Summary

The case is of UK government planners making decisions on major renewable energy infrastructure consenting and the knowledge associated with participatory processes. It looks at data from England and Wales around 2019, about the specific areas of knowledge needed, and the legally determined processes of information sharing.

The focus of the study is showing the contributions that citizens can make, which are critical determining whether or not the development should go ahead. Several lessons emerge around how knowledge can evolve. Digital platforms are key for sharing information about proposed developments and impacts, but they cannot replace face-

to-face exchanges and public deliberation as a way to build knowledge.

The case demonstrates how we can go further to develop participatory democracy in critical decisions for sustainable urban development that is open, informed and accountable. The overall lesson is that, while there are concerns about the power dynamics, the sharing of knowledge was vital.

#### Introduction

There are some well-known concerns about new developments for renewable energy generation, including Wind Farm projects. To put it simply, there is a justifiable fear of green-wash about land use changes and local impacts of projects. As set out here, this is evidenced in UCL's research on the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects or 'NSIPs' consenting processes in the UK<sup>iv</sup>. That study showed the importance of engaging with the complexity of evidence about the local impacts of Wind Farms, and the challenges of involving the public in decision-making for the

development of new renewable energy generation stations and associated changes in land use.

The general ‘public good’ of a low-carbon development is sometime presented in such a way that objections are misrepresented, ignored or simply not given a hearing. This happens when objections to Wind Farms are assumed to arise from a NIMBY attitude (‘not in my backyard’). The widespread ‘national support’ for renewable energy infrastructure is often cited as proof that local citizens’ concerns are marginal, unimportant or selfish. In fact, the opposite is true when local people raise concerns in public forums; they want to protect about their communities and the places where they live<sup>v</sup>. Equally importantly, local people can explain the detail of environments, infrastructures, and places in a unique and insightful way. Their knowledge can help decision-makers – both developers and planning authorities - to identify important issues that need to be addressed.

Development projects cannot be allowed to go ahead just because they are ‘low carbon’. Instead, planning processes engage with knowledge. On the other hand, understanding whether and how sustainable development has impacts locally and globally is inevitably complex. So, information sharing is needed to shed light on the likely impacts that will arise from proposed new infrastructure. Detailed study of developing and operating new

infrastructure projects is needed to evaluate the relative merits of proposed locations for Wind Farm projects and identify where mitigation measures can reduce negative impacts, on the local communities and natural environments where they are sited. Local people can help broaden out what is considered, and deepen understandings of the local impacts of Wind Farms.

### **Knowledge building**

When the public is brought into decision-making citizens can help decision-makers learn about the local impacts of developments, by explaining how communities and ecologies might be affected by proposed changes. UCL’s research into decisions on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects showed how this matters, particularly for onshore and off-shore Wind Farms. Citizens can get involved before and during project planning stages. This study lookst at 1) the areas of knowledge of local impacts, and 2) the opportunities and barriers to local people engaging in decision-making at different stages.



## 1. Knowledge of Local Impacts

### *Nature*

Modeling, short-term surveys and quantified assessments one way of knowing environmental impacts, and often used to provide legal certainty for instance about impacts on bird populations (Lee, Natarajan, Lock, *et al.*, 2018). Such forms of knowledge are inevitably narrow and limited to pre-determined areas of nature, as they (quite rightly) seek to establish the lawfulness of decisions. Therefore, predictions with the highest level of scientific certainty cannot possibly hope to capture the fullness of the impacts of any single project on nature in the local area.

Local people have other types of knowledge of local nature, accumulated from experiences of living and working in the area. This type of knowledge is 'lay' and non-professional, and it is often undocumented. Yet, local knowledge shows up the gaps in 'expert' data, and expresses the 'grey' areas of shifting tides, seasonal behaviours of local fauna, and other changing natural patterns.

*as a fishing person and you know about the sea, I can close my eyes and I see all the mess underneath. And these cables are going on top of other cables, now the national grid going through. It's just a total, total mess underneath (fisher woman)*

Local people also have more formal expertise. Special interest environmental groups conduct their own surveys regularly. They are also aware of how their places is important to the thriving of particular species, and consequently to wider biodiversity.

*We've probably got one of the richest offshore areas, not necessarily in breeding terms but in what sort of birds we get. If there's storm in the channel, lots of stuff is thrown up this way. We are on a main migration route. For instance at the moment there's stuff varying from little yellow warblers 5 inches long called Chiffchaffs coming in overnight. But you'll be getting things like wading birds called Whimbrels with a big beak like a curlew, they'll be coming in from the south from their wintering grounds. You'll be getting straight-billed things called godwits coming through on their way north to Scotland... (local birder)*

### *Economies*

New Wind Farm projects generate economic activity. Yet in practice local economies might not benefit from the new developments in their area. This is exacerbated by insufficient knowledge of the diversity of local economic interests, and the lack of explicit strategy for how to hook into the local skill-base and existing local businesses.



*...such infrastructure generates important economic benefits and is essential for national economic growth. But there is also often an assumption that these projects will produce local economic benefits (Rydin, Natarajan, Lee, et al., 2018a)*

As Rydin et al. explain (2018), direct employment in NSIPs construction was frequently overstated by developers. The eventual levels of employment of local people is typically low, and in any case construction jobs are short lived. The use of local supply chains for new renewable energy development is also known to be low and planning for this was limited, for instance when the ports to be used by maintenance crews were not decided.

Local business may suffer from the disruption caused by construction as well as effects of the new infrastructure. Sites of development were often those places that were heavily reliant on tourism and fishing industries, and many small and medium sized operators were affected. So, it was key to know which business would be affected and how, and provide mediation or compensation. However, the level of evidence on local economies provided by local authorities was very low, and only one sector benefitted from protocols and a strategic liaison body to aid liaison and secure compensation<sup>vi</sup>.

*Landscape*

Landscapes are central to debates about Wind Farms, but there is great difficulty in understanding impacts because of the fluidity and live social nature of the value of landscapes. As Lee discusses, there are many claims to knowledge “because of its slightly ambiguous status in terms of factual claims” (Lee, 2017). There are expert, professional, and lay approaches to landscape. The matter goes beyond the purely visual to other issues of quality, including long-term psychosocial need, such as cultural and spiritual identity, and place-related affect. Therefore, the impacts of changes to the landscape relate to human responses and social understandings.

Lee (2017) found that both local people and local authorities brought lay knowledge of landscape into decision-making. They referenced the cultural and emotional importance of views. Institutional and professional actors also referenced aesthetic values and ‘beauty’, but their ‘expert’ forms of evidence were preferred in decision-making because they were more rigid. This means that the important *local social* perspectives on landscape may be drowned out by other approaches.

*the dynamism and particularity of the social construction of landscape, is likely to be lost, even in the very best of cases (Lee, 2017)*

As Rydin et al. (2017) discuss, local people are able to bring their knowledge of landscape through contestation of expert's 'artefacts' such as maps, digital graphics and visualisations. Often the points they made explained the relevance of context, and showed how the living and changing nature of the landscape couldn't be known through those materials.

*... certain photos were criticised because it was misty on the day they were taken. There may be more fundamental concerns over the ability of visualisation to represent the local environment ... it was argued that the visualisation could not capture the difference of up to 6 m between the open sea level and the retained water in the proposed lagoon, that is, a dynamic feature compared to a static visualisation. (Rydin, Natarajan, Lee, et al., 2017)*

## 2. Engaging in Decision-making Processes

### Decisions on Spatial Policy

The public can be involved directly in decisions on Wind Energy Infrastructure at a variety of points. The earliest point is consultation on the development of regional/national policy about a desirable location and level of energy infrastructure development. These spatial policies are important as they identify the overall

distribution and patterns of use of land for Wind Farms that are in the public interest.

In Wales, citizens and civil society organizations were involved in developing policy on preferred sites for Wind Farms. This type of regional/national policy can provide explicit protection to irreplaceable areas of wilderness and associated economic activities (e.g. heritage landscapes, unique ecologies, tourist destinations). The Welsh policy gave guidance on the intensity of development that was appropriate for preferred sites, i.e. the maximum total number of Wind Turbines permitted. This type of policy can give confidence to developers about sites they might consider for large scale new Wind Farm projects. It also prevents 'cherry picking' of valuable sites that are easy to develop. In England where no such policy existed, a major offshore Wind Farm station underwent a planning examination and, even after technical debates and project re-design, was refused consent in large part because of significant landscape impacts.

*The technical and expert knowledge claims of the applicant were very robustly challenged by objectors, and specifically through competing technical and expert knowledge claims. And further, the shape of the prior institutional knowledge was novel in this case, since the project would affect an area designated as a World Heritage Site. (Lee, 2017)*

The UCL study also showed the importance of properly applying spatial policies later on in decision-making on projects, and making sure that the detail of policy that had been worked out with communities' input is not over-ridden. In the UK, energy policy was used to 'outweigh' spatial policy, because of the a-spatial centralized nature of decision-making on energy. So, some regional protections in Welsh spatial policy were not applied, consequently undermining democratic processes and citizens' relationships with devolved authorities.

*... more emphasis was placed on UK energy policy than Welsh planning, and national policy could override Welsh policy even where it offered no position on the matter at hand. In addition, energy strategy could eclipse (devolved) planning powers, and thereby 'squeeze out' potentially protective aspects of spatial strategy. (Natarajan, 2018)*

In the absence of statutory guidance on the importance of the various dimensions of specific sites, the discretion and knowledge of consenting authorities became more significant. Their site visits offered a possible route to understanding the local social importance of environments, though not necessarily a reliable one.

*The ExA [examining authority, i.e. planning officials] seem to be partly creating their own "expert-led" discourse, in which the*

*emotional value of the landscape is constructed as a particular form of knowledge, but also sympathising with existing local discourses of attachment to place. It remains for further investigation to consider whether the key regulatory actor, here the ExA, is advancing their own discourse on nature while ignoring/discounting local ones or is generally supporting them. (Rydin, Natarajan, Lee, et al., 2017)*

### **Decisions on Projects**

There are further points for public engagement in decisions on Wind Energy Infrastructure, during the design and regulation stages of new infrastructure projects, when developers and planning authorities address the expected local impacts of projects. In the NSIPs cases studied, there were two key means of public engagement; community consultation by developers, before they applied for consent, and representations from local people and organizations' to the planning authorities during their examination of the developer's application.

#### *Pre-application*

Under the Planning Act 2008, developers must conduct a local consultation about their proposals prior to any application for planning consent, and including consulting with relevant local authorities on their approach to the local consultation. When done



well developers made significant investment in communications and public engagement across several districts. Interestingly developers typically found the consultations very worthwhile in terms of improving their applications and streamlining design processes.

*I think it is important to have these discussions as you develop plans, because a lot of work goes into surveys ... and if you didn't have that insight on where it needs, taking on that feedback, you could end up doing a lot of work and having to change plans multiple times. (NSIPs developer)*

Good practice involved going beyond the statutory minimum requirements. It required information at multiple stages of project design in formats that were accurate and could be easily understood, and diverse means for public interactions, through online exchanges and discussions with technical specialists at open events. However, there were still reports of poor practice by some local people, and developers engagement consultants had concerns about the complexity of the processes.

*... [developers] had needed to provide a good deal of explanation to local people, in one instance even producing a 'roadmap' guide to navigating the participatory processes. (Natarajan, Rydin, Lock, et al., 2018)*

### *Examination*

Local citizens, businesses and organizations were deeply involved in formal examination of applications to develop NSIPs. They could register as Interested Parties (IPs), and then give evidence by directly submitting written representations and speaking at hearings to the examining authority. There was also great transparency with free public access to the application materials, and all of the other documentation submitted to the examining authority, which were loaded onto the planning inspectorate's website.

The local knowledge of IPs was significant. They identified the exact nature of the social and environmental impacts and gave details that would not otherwise have been known. This opportunity to feed directly into an examination is valuable since earlier consultations might fail to capture information on all of the local impacts of the new developments, or the response to issues raised might not be insufficient.

*I'd been monitoring the Belted Beauty moth for probably about 10 years, or a bit less than that prior to the development being proposed. [The developer] employed that company, an environmental impact survey company, at the early stage, who*

*purportedly did surveys of the site. They didn't identify the moth.  
(resident)*

*They are too close to where horses will go. So because to run a  
business, you've got to have insurance, you can't insure somebody  
to take the horses somewhere is not safe. You are crippling those  
businesses (local organization)*

*But what they don't look at is that small but significant number of  
occasions where we have a weather route for particular weather  
conditions. There hasn't yet been a major incident between a car  
vessel or ferry and an offshore windfarm turbine farm but at some  
point there is going to be one. (local business)*

However, there were barriers to engagement in the NSIPs examination. Local people were engaging on a voluntary basis in formal procedures that were new to them, and therefore materially onerous and culturally challenging. Involvement of the public required significant efforts and resources, and this created an imbalance not only between developer and IPs, but also between citizens.

*Those with lower download capacity struggled more than others to  
access information; those with low levels of literacy or digital skills  
were less able to engage in documentary exchange; those without  
public-speaking experience were more nervous in their oral*

*representations; those without private transport were more  
challenged by locations of hearings; and those in full-time  
employment were more strained by ad hoc scheduling of  
hearings.(Natarajan, Lock, Rydin, et al., 2019)*

And a final consideration is, what counted as the authentic input from a local place in the decision-making. The performance of the examining authority was critical to this. The interpersonal skills and use of discretion by the individual planning officers could be helpful in dealing with the challenges. However, there are important ways in which the examination processes might work against the representation of communities' interest. Rydin et al (2018) explain how 'local voice' was constructed within the examination.

*the complexity of how a new major infrastructure project may  
impact on the locality and its people is rendered simpler and  
atomised into a set of distinct questions. Will reasonable enjoyment  
be impacted? Can the economic effects on businesses be  
compensated? (Rydin, Natarajan, Lee, et al., 2018b)*

## Reflections

The involvement of local people in decisions on Wind Farm developments is under-rated as a form of learning about local communities and places. Engagement before and during decisions on projects promotes participatory democracy, and expands the knowledge used in decisions. Planners can acknowledge the challenges involved, and deal with them by opening up space to

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<sup>iv</sup> Statutory planning for major developments, which included Wind Farms at the time of the study. The UCL web pages contain more information on the ESRC-funded study, a summary booklet with recommendations for the UK, and links to the research publications. <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects/>

discuss complexity, uncertainty and lay knowledge. Communities can be aware of individualizing practices in decision-making and seek support through local and wider networks. If local people and decision-makers work together, they can produce a fuller understanding of the local impacts of Wind Farm developments.

<sup>v</sup> Bell at al. explain the 'social gap' between national and local support for energy (Bell, Gray, Haggett, *et al.*, 2013). Devine-Wight and colleagues explain place attachment (Hall, Ashworth & Devine-Wright, 2013).

<sup>vi</sup> The Fisheries Liaison with Offshore Wind and Wet Renewables (FLOWW) group mediated between developers and the local fishing industries.

## **TAKE AWAYS** Understanding wind farm impacts together: citizen voices in UK regulatory processes (Natarajan, 2024)

### **The value of learning together**

Sharing knowledge is vital because sustainable infrastructure development must take account of local impacts. Concerns go beyond the 'low carbon' technology. Information is needed on local impacts that will arise from new technologies.

Detailed study of developing and operating new infrastructure projects is needed in order to evaluate the relative merits of proposed technologies. We also need to identify how liveability and ecologies of places might change and deal with negative impacts on local communities and natural environments where infrastructures are sited. So, local stakeholders participation can help broaden out what is considered, and deepen understandings of the impacts of projects.

### **The challenges of informational exchange**

Information within decisions is under review and constantly changing. New understandings emerge when people consider information together, and citizens must be part of those exchanges. They might need extra support. Digital platforms are very helpful as they can be updated as knowledge evolves. It is also important to recognise that the online world is not equally available for everyone to use and that the human touch makes all the difference.



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