

SPECIAL FOCUS

Public Engagement

This third issue of **URBAN SOLUTIONS** has a special focus on public engagement – a subject of growing importance to city leaders around the world. We feature insights from leading engagement practitioners and scholars, and survey contemporary practices in Singapore, Bilbao (Spain), Hong Kong, Colombia, Kuching (Malaysia), Rahat (Israel), New York City and the European Union.

Rahat's Participatory Planning



When I first met members of the Bedouin community at Rahat, I was asked, "What did you plan for us?" I answered, "I haven't started to plan. I propose two alternatives: that I will study the place and the community and sit in my office and plan what I think is suitable for you, or that we work together and make this plan in full collaboration."

– Rahat urban planner Amos Brandeis (Israel) (page 32)



The Limits to Engagement

The hope for citizen participation is that deliberation will lead to compromise and inclusion but sadly, stalemate is the more usual result.

– Harvard University Professor Susan Fainstein (United States) (page 81)



The Case for Engagement



Rapid communication through a more pervasive media also meant that if the government did not proactively engage, we would soon end up losing the agenda.

– Chief Secretary for Administration Carrie Lam (Hong Kong) (page 77)



100 Urban Interventions in 1 Day

100en1dia is a movement that aims to initiate change through the participation of hundreds of united citizens, each accomplishing the projects and changes they want to see in their city, all on the same day.

– 100en1dia (Colombia) (page 52)

Civil society



The special interest and technical familiarity of civil society groups and professional organisations position them as credible parties in mediating and shaping public opinion in the public engagement process...

[but] these groups need time and opportunities to develop and mature.

– CLC's Limin Hee and Louisa-May Khoo (Singapore) (page 63)

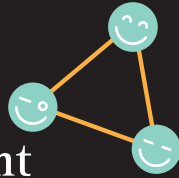


library@chinatown

A key challenge is to sustain volunteer involvement and motivation, which can never be taken for granted and requires dedicated resources to cultivate.

– National Library Board CEO Elaine Ng (Singapore) (page 43)

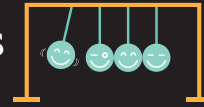
Kuching's Enhancement Plan



We want to get everyone to understand, you are involved now, what is your contribution? We want people to stop pointing fingers and to give us the necessary support.

– Kuching North Mayor Abdul Wahap (Malaysia) (page 18)

New York's Legislated consultation



Although a statutory process like the Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) could be rigid and dominated by powerful lobbies that may not be representative of general sentiments, it is a transparent system where all parties concerned respect the final decisions made, even if it does not satisfy everyone. ULURP is also strictly time-bound, thus ensuring a consultative process that is finite.

– CLC's Limin Hee and Louisa-May Khoo (Singapore) (page 59)

Engagement in Singapore



What are the common things we can work on and where are the common areas we can collaborate to do something? There are areas where we can talk to death and never see eye to eye.

– Senior Minister of State for National Development Tan Chuan-Jin (Singapore) (page 10)

Legitimacy in Hong Kong



Independent parties, such as academics and accredited professional bodies, can help build legitimacy in development proposals. Hong Kong uses them widely, commissioning studies by third parties who are seen as more "neutral", thereby shoring up credibility for proposals.

– CLC's Limin Hee and Louisa-May Khoo (Singapore) (page 61)

Open data



"Open data" is information that is freely available for anyone to use as they wish... [which] enables the development of useful new services, like smartphone applications, that can improve our quality of life, sustainability and competitiveness.

– Citadel on the Move coordinator Geert Mareels (page 47)



Community in Bloom



NParks officers engaged the community by listening and connecting... Officers were first friends with members of the community, then government officers.

– National Parks Board Deputy CEO Leong Chee Chiew (Singapore) (page 25)

Transparency in Bilbao



Transparency is valued highly as a determinant of good governance... The aim is to establish a channel of communication to promote discussions based on accurate facts, thus ensuring useful, rather than misinformed, public debates.

– CLC's Limin Hee and Louisa-May Khoo (Singapore) (page 60)