THE CITY AT EYE LEVEL ASIA

COMPOSED BY STIPO, URBAN DISCOVERY AND THINK CITY

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This book is a collection of 43 cases, equally spread in over 15 countries throughout Asia.

FOREWORD
THE NEW ERA OF PLACEMAKING

Hamdan Abdul Majeed (Think City)

As I write this, much of life as we know it has been upended. Many cities remain under full or partial lockdown. The public places and spaces we have traversed and loved have not seen the warmth of human traffic for several months, and placemaking success stories seem like tales from the distant past.

While the world adapts to the new normal, the big question to ask is — will cities remain relevant? And therefore, will placemaking?

If you look at how cities were created over time, you will find that almost every historical period is charac- terised by the emergence and development of cities in connection with economic and social opportuni- ties. While economic opportunities are a major draw,

the other aspect of a city's DNA — and what makes a city truly great — is the way it engages people. In this aspect, the use of placemaking in the shift towards human-friendly cities has always been the enabler, the 'X-factor' that has ensured a sociable and interactive environment.

In fact, in the post-Covid world, the pressure for cities to be habitable, resilient, inclusive and healthy remains as acute as ever. Viruses aside, threats to human-kind from climate change, dwindling resources, war or terrorism, pollution and other disease outbreaks remain very present. As we move beyond the virus, now painfully aware of how vulnerable we are, the role of placemaking contin-ues to be just as, if not more, relevant.

Today, new norms are threatening human connection. Movement controls have emptied streets and public spaces, and hygiene requirements are literally placing physical barriers to create distance between us. But cities are also home to over four billion humans[1], and humans require liveable and resilient habitats. Thus, I say with conviction: **human-scale cities are here to stay.**

VIRTUAL VS. IRL (IN REAL LIFE)

Even during the lockdown, Digital Placemaking has been having its moment in the spotlight. With the mass onboarding of our lives and activities into the virtual world, this is hardly surprising.

In the past, digital placemaking was used to enrich the experience of visitors (think augmented-reality apps that offer extra information). Now, it has the role of serving the enlarged global digital community, enabling anyone to access places of interest from wherever they are. From virtual holidays to tours with 360-degree views, to live-streamed performances; digital placemaking is keeping our places of interest alive in the minds of people.

However, one thing is clear: it is no match for the quality of live physical inter-actions we experience in real life. After all, having a virtual dinner with friends through Zoom is a very different experience from seeing and being with them in person. Likewise, visiting the Eiffel Tower on your device is no match for staring up at it with your own eyes.

While both the virtual and physical worlds will co-exist, we should also con-sider the digital implications and the clinical, anti-social nature of new norms. With our movements constantly traced and captured, are there ways to ensure that data privacy is not usurped or abused in the name of protection? Can we maintain opportunities for human connection, and mental and emotional wellbeing while observing safety precautions? Can placemaking offer positive messaging and optimism in these dark times?

 All this remains to be seen and placemaking has a role to play in all of this.

THE TIME FOR PLACEMAKERS IS NOW

What's next for the future? Emerging trends are pointing towards a great need for comfort and healing, with a mandate for future spaces to observe the delivery of comfort, hygiene, and mental and emotional wellbeing. This is not new, but it is heightened.

In the built landscape, we are seeing an increased focus on hygiene in architecture[2] with protective tech features (air purifying systems that can filter out pathogens, self-sanitising substances, automated doors and elevators to reduce contact), coupled with an enhanced understanding of the important roles nature and sustainability play in developing thriving and resilient communities (self-sufficient buildings such as Space 10's Urban Village which generate their own power, water catchment, and urban farming). Disaster-proof structures are emerging as bunkers for the elite, replete with escape helipads, state-of-the-art security, protected recreational facilities and food storage and growing systems. Meanwhile, healing spaces the likes of Hudson Yards' 3Den in New York, have been surfacing around the world to give respite to city dwellers, along with a slew of new enterprises that deal with the business of healing and wellbeing.

However, these places are not for everyone. How will those who can't afford luxury disaster bunkers find healing, comfort or protection on the streets, in public places, and in their urban neighbourhoods?

There are many other questions to be asked that placemakers may hold the answers to. And so I say, **there has never been a more challenging or exciting time to to work together on better and more human-scale cities.**

Which brings me back to this book. *The City at Eye Level Asia* is a compendium of real-life urban stories with lessons learnt from our Asian experience, proudly produced in collaboration with STIPO and Urban Discovery. As part of a community of urban practitioners, we have long felt that Asian cities have much to contribute to the global urban narrative and so, here is a book that offers antidotes to 21st century urban challenges, and excellence in creating city spaces for people. The aim of the book is to inspire and provide reference to innovative solutions for great cities at eye level with an Asian perspective.

Within these pages, you will find best practices that provide hope for communities struggling to hold on to their way of life while navigating the tides of change sweeping through. The stories of both top-down and bottom-up interventions indicate critical lessons for city managers, local governments and developers, on how planning and urban design must involve the voice of the community, and much more.

Think City is very proud to present *The City At Eye Level Asia* with STIPO and Urban Discovery, two organisations that are leaders of the placemaking movement in their own right.

This effort is part of a larger attempt to build the placemaking community in Asia and beyond, and it is my humble hope that it will contribute to shaping placemakers of the new era.

June 2020

Hamdan Abdul Majeed
Managing Director, Think City

NOTES

1) At the time of writing, cities are home to over 55% of the world's 7.8 billion population. Source: Worldometers. (2020) *World Population.* [online] https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/ (Accessed June 2020)

2) Wunderman Thompson Intelligence. (2020) *The Future 100: 2020.* Wunderman Thompson Trend Report. [online] https://intelligence.wundermanthompson.com/trend-reports/the-future-100-2020/ (Accessed June 2020)

THE BASICS

INTRODUCTION TO A BETTER CITY AT EYE LEVEL

Hans Karssenberg & Siënna Veelders (STIPO)

Public space is the backbone of a sustainable city. Great streets, places where you instantly like to be, human scale buildings and streets, co-creation of the public space by the users, placemaking, active ground floors and a people-centred approach based on how we as human beings experience the space around us — that is what The City at Eye Level is all about.

We all know that intuitive feeling when we really feel at home in a street, a park or a square: it is not just a public space, it is a place. With the City at Eye Level, we aim to understand the mechanisms behind that feeling. Because if we do, we can recreate these places in newly developed or in already existing parts of our cities. We can then work with the community to get from spaces to places, from liveable to lovable.

ABOUT THE CITY AT EYE LEVEL

We ask ourselves: what do we as pedestrians experience when we look around? Is the street comfortable, welcoming and walkable? Do the surrounding buildings, their use, and their design makes an attractive urban environment where we feel at home? Do the ground floors connect with pedestrian flows in the urban area? Do the squares, parks and terraces function as places where we exchange ideas and encounter new, different types of people?

To understand the underlying mechanisms better, and work on strategies for change, we (STIPO, a team for urban development based in Rotterdam, The Netherlands) initiated the international program The City at Eye Level. The network was built with partners such as UN-Habitat, Project for Public Spaces, Gehl Architects, The Future of Places, Think City and PlacemakingX. With them, we generated a group of 80+ contributors worldwide and collectively wrote the book *The City at Eye Level*. All the lessons are open source and shared via the website: www.thecityateyelevel.com.

HOW DID WE LOSE HUMAN SCALE?

Before, we built our cities on walking dis-
tance. Everything had to happen within one
hour of walking: living, working, shopping.
It led to compact, walkable, mixed-use
cities, that adapted to the local climate.
Not because we wanted to, but simply be-
cause that was the way life was organised.
This all changed in the '60s, with the mass
introduction of the car, and the mod-
ernist approach to urbanism, separating
functions. Le Corbusier's 'Plan Voisin' was
the example: a rational high-rise model
designed to replace the historic inner city
of Paris. It did not get implemented there.
However, it did get built in the Paris out-
skirts, and in so many other cities across the
world throughout the '60s, '70s and '80s.
Most cities lost their eye for a walkable,
human scaled city.

Shops and traffic in Cheapside, London (1831).

The muted Catharijnesingel-canal in Utrecht, built in the 1960s.

This book is not meant as a plea against
modernism in general, nor as a plea in favour
of traditional architecture. Modernist architecture has brought about some of
the most exciting buildings of our time. Modernists sought to create liveable,
green, clean cities. However, modernist urban design neglected one key ele-
ment: we have two parts of our brain. We want our cities to function rationally,
but we also want to be inspired and to listen to our hearts. We cannot capture
the city in simplified rational models only. Jane Jacobs advocated to embrace
the full complexity of the city, and she made us aware of what we throw away
when demolishing existing urban fabric. We stand on her shoulders now.

This *City at Eye Level* book, if anything, is meant as a plea to combine and
enrich any kind of urbanism with human scale, with the eye level experience,
that has been so often overseen in the past decades. This is why from 2014 to
2016, we worked together with UN-Habitat, Future of Places, Project for Public

Spaces and many others towards a new World Urban Agenda. We advocated for a holistic, fine-grained city with human scale and a people-centred, participatory approach, and adequate public spaces for all. This was adopted in Quito in 2016, in Habitat III for the New Urban Agenda.

In the meantime, our cities have started to become more attractive to live in. More and more, our economies are based on creativity and innovation. High quality public space and interaction between people are no longer *nice to have* but *need to have*. Many cities are working on restoring the balance between pedestrians and cars. We are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of healthy and happy cities, with public spaces that invite its citizens to walk, cycle, play and engage in sports.

HOW DO WE EXPERIENCE THE EYE LEVEL?

If we want to work on the eye level more, we should first dig deeper into how we, as human beings, experience our surroundings as we walk down the street.

Let us dive into urban psychology for a bit and highlight three universal aspects of how we experience the city:

1. **How do we see?** For our eyesight, we have to go back to the frog eye. Frogs can only register moving objects, like a fly passing by. Human eyes are the same, but evolution has provided a trick: tiny muscles make our eyeballs tremble so that we do register still standing objects. Yet, like the frog, we are much more drawn to moving objects. What does this mean for our cities? If we walk in a street with long, horizontally oriented façades, our frog eyes get bored and our view wanders off. We don't feel at home and feel in a hurry. We know from Jan Gehl's research that people turn their heads much less, make fewer stops and walk faster. However, in streets with vertically oriented façades, variety and new units every 5 – 10 meters, our frog eyes are drawn to the side. We slow down, look around, spend more time, and feel more at home.
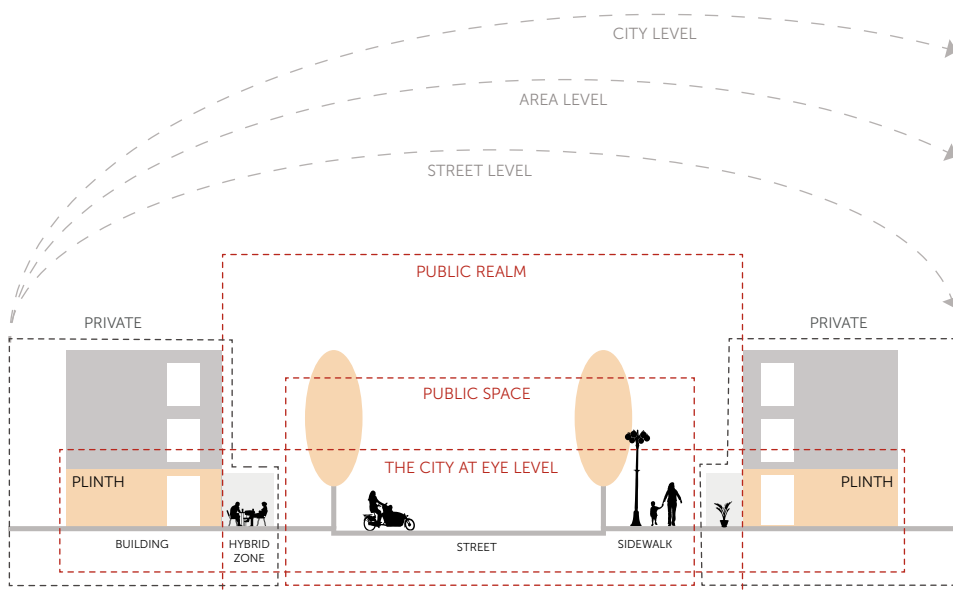
2. **How do we hear?** *The City at Ear Level,* a chapter in the first City at Eye Level book, shows that sound determines approximately half our experience. In the city, all (mechanical) sounds pile up. With stony and glass surfaces we create the same effect as an empty living room after moving house. Once we have to raise our voices to have a normal human conversation, we don't feel at home anymore. The environment should have 'sound dispersers', as urban acoustics call them, where grass may take the role of the carpet in your living room, and trees, benches, façades jumping in and out, help to break the sound and create a human soundscape.

3. **How do we feel?** There is a lot of research here, on how we need a 'circle of intimacy' around us, on how we react to urban heat islands, and on how we feel more comfortable with a building at our backs. Among others, it relates with the size of the squares that people like as a place to stay. People like the Italian piazzas that are 40x40 to 50x50 meters on average. Why this size? It taps into our subconscious behaviour. While we walk, we constantly scan the expressions on other people's faces to judge whether we will be safe. Under 40 to 50 meters, we can still see these expressions. Over 40 to 50 meters, we feel anonymous and lost.

Our frog eyes call for variety, our ears call for trees and our feeling calls for intimate spaces. These are universal values. Of course, if we want to understand the full experience, the next step should be to dive into the specific aspects depending on the local culture, the social and political relations, the local acceptance of what is decent behaviour, the local climate.
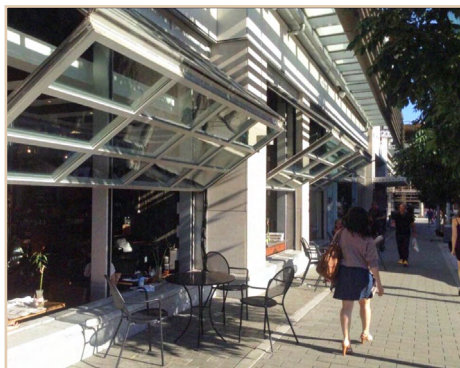
These are the reasons to compose this book, specifically delving in the specific contexts in Asia. But first, we will go into the elements we can take to Asia from the international experiences.

FOUR LESSONS FROM THE CITY AT EYE LEVEL

The City at Eye Level book, fed by many insights and cases from across the world, describes the mechanisms needed to create a more human scaled city. Let us first summarise four key lessons that are a fundament for a better city at eye level in the Asian context and beyond.

1. **Public space should be the backbone for sustainable development**, not just the leftover space next to buildings.

2. **Public space is not 2D but 3D.** Public space is not just the street the city council owns and maintains, it is the entire environment we experience around. So it includes buildings, and most important is the ground floor. It may be only 20% of a building, it determines 80% of our street experience.

3. **From liveable to lovable.** City councils and developers usually take care of only the two basic layers or Maslow's hierarchy of needs for a liveable, whole, clean and safe environment.

**MASLOW'S HIERARCHY
OF NEEDS**

Self-fulfilment needs

Self actualization: achieving one's full potential, including creative activities

Esteem needs: prestige and feeling of accomplishment

Psychological needs

Belonging and love needs: intimate relationships, friends

Safety needs: security, safety

Physiological needs: food, water, warmth, rest

Basic needs
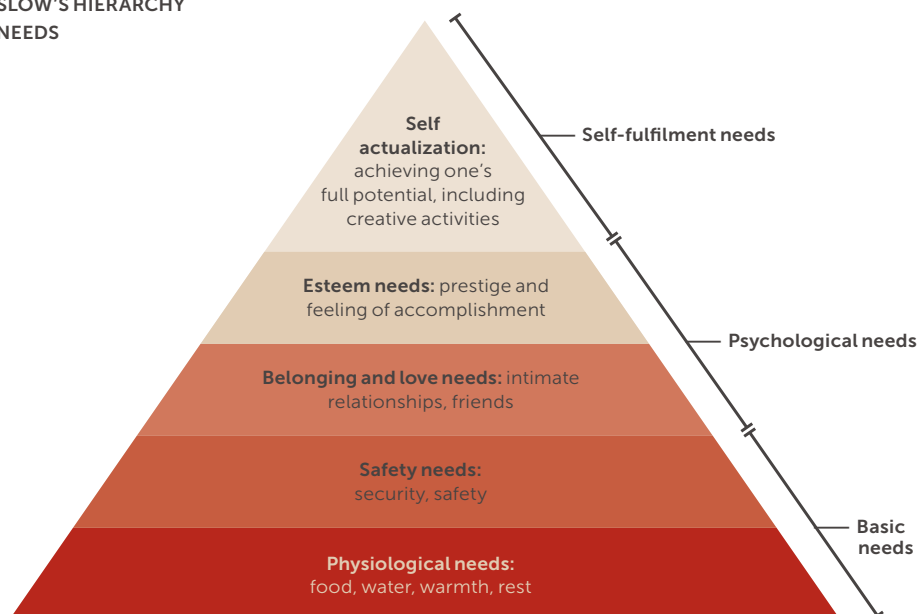
With placemaking we take it to a higher level to turn it into a lovable, social, active, fun, health, tempting and inspiring place.

4. **Software, hardware *and* orgware.** First, understand the current and potential use patterns and activities (software), then the design follows (hardware), followed by program-ming of new activities (orgware). For the long-term, think of a strategy, a method, an approach, a set of rules, a coalition, and funding to keep the learning and investment cycle going for a longer time.

WHAT ARE THE MECHANISMS WORKING AGAINST US?

Working to achieve a better city at eye level, we need to understand why we are getting so little of it in day-to-day practice.

If we know which mechanisms are working against us, we will know better which issues to address in developing new strategies for our cities. In brief, we recognise at least seven mechanisms:

1. **Cities and developers lack good rules for human scale;**

2. **Human scale often comes too late in the process;**

3. **Short term profit orientation;**

4. **Standardisation of the construction industry, sterile development;**

5. **Lack of proper management for good places (place management);**

6. **Top down planning and lack of (mental) ownership;**

7. **Designs being made from the bird's eye view.**

TOWARDS SYSTEMIC CHANGE

With the City at Eye Level programme and network, we are uncovering criteria, new approaches and methods for development, transformation and systemic change and tools to address these mechanisms working against us. Many of these can also be recognised in the contributions in this book. We see six drivers for systemic change towards developing our cities more around social life, human scale and great public spaces:

- There is an open source list of **Eye Level Criteria** to use in urban development projects to achieve a better city at eye level.

- We work on **organic transformation** to turn existing urban areas and streets around with the local partners.

- We work on **place-led development** with real estate partners to embed the eye level into the development process from the very first stages.

- We work on **creative bureaucracy** to open up city councils to work together with communities and tap into the city's energy and creativity for improving public space.

- We work on **place management** to build sustainable communities, public-private partnerships and cooperatives to keep programming and improving over time.

- We are building a **global toolbox** with open source tools for the city at eye level and placemaking.

If you would like to learn more, please visit our website www.thecityateyelevel.com, where you can find the other *City at Eye Level* books and downloads, and join the global community for exchanging ideas.

THE CITY AT EYE LEVEL IN ASIAN CONTEXT

**Ester van Steekelenburg, Stephanie Cheung (Urban Discovery)
& Jia Ping Lee (Tempatico)**

Not all concepts that are successful in 'the West' may work in 'the East'. Asia's cities are booming, and rightly in their own unprecedented ways. There are no cookie-cutter solutions as each city is unique in its strengths and challenges. Hence solutions need to be tailored and contextual. And in order to arrive at that, city managers, activists and planners need to look for creative and innovative ways to involve, engage and entice multiple stakeholders, in particular those that dominate urban development, to understand that developing human-centric places that build communities can be profitable. In fact, it is precisely what savvy urban consumers are now demanding.

Below are some interconnected forces at play in Asia's cities:

1. **High growth and high density —** The pace of development in Asia is unprecedented, the urbanisation rate is higher than in any other continent and 15 out of the top 20 fastest-growing cities are located in Asia. The urban reality of dense cities is what shapes the definition and importance of public place. In cities where living spaces are small and living environments are crowded, all basic necessities are amplified and the significance of public space is more profound; no longer is the street an

ordinary common good, it becomes an essential part of urban life, per-haps even a physical and emotional refuge, especially in cities with a high concentration of informal settlements. Many places are overcrowded, yet at the same time, the city often has an abundance of under-utilised and inaccessible spaces — think disused laneways, closed waterfronts, dark overpasses, abandoned buildings. So how does one create valuable public space in overcrowded places and open up underused spaces?

2.   **Loss of place identity: The disappearing spirit of place —** In Asia's build-ing frenzy, some of the original qualities of human scale tend to get lost. In many of the skyscraper cities, it is increasingly difficult to find the char-acter and vibrancy that is so typical for traditional neighbourhoods. How does one embrace the qualities of old city centres (human scale, open squares, walkable streets) and translate them successfully for high rise development and environments? How do we create a level of permeabil-ity in high rises that keep activity at street level — crucial for place identity, street vibrancy and vital for the success of small retail businesses.

3.   **Personal identity and nation building: Young creatives and home —** An emerging group of millennials and Gen Z's are looking for their own defi-nition of urban identity. Unlike post-independence generations that focus primarily on economic growth, they are increasingly looking beyond financial prosperity, eschewing materiality and seeking for a better quality of life through intangible experiences. In this post-capitalistic urban realm, this demographic is dynamic and eager to contribute to the place they call 'home'. They are shaping cities and boosting the soft economy. How can we leverage their creativity and energy to create people-centric places that better serve the needs of their communities?

4.   **Climate and comfort of place —** Many countries in Asia are prone to natural disasters like typhoons, earthquakes, monsoons, tsunamis and more. Cities are currently facing multiple climate challenges and there is an urgent need to create comfortable spaces in increasingly hostile urban environments such as rising temperatures, high humidity, torrential rain as well as flooding. Climate has shaped the design of public places for centuries as is visible in the hybrid indoor and outdoor spaces and ingen-ious solutions like shaded streets, sponge surfaces, deep wells, bioswale systems, ponds and lakes, and open spaces to optimise air circulation. As cities become denser and climate change and air pollution bring them to a boiling point, we need to define the modern-day equivalent towards creating comfortable places.

The notion of 'Public Space' is fundamentally different from the West due to how Asian cities are planned and built. The dense urban environments and fast-growing cities call for multi-layered and multifunctional uses of spaces.

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Public spaces in Asian cities are often multi-layered and multi-functional depending on the time of the day.

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5. **Fluidity between public and private space —** The line between what is public and private space in a dense urban environment is often blurred. Privately owned and managed public spaces (or third spaces) like shopping malls, rooftops, arcades, footbridges that dot the urban landscape respond to citizens' needs. On the other hand, there are many instances where public space becomes a tenable good; used by street vendors, food hawkers, fruit sellers that together constitute a separate street-side economy and often contribute towards the vibrancy of the city. The informal sector is prevalent in Asia, taking a large share of the economy. Cities need to relook at revenue and management models to cater for this fluidity and look at how this model can be reviewed to allow for the replication of successful bottom-up endeavours, such as citizens' contributions either via design or placemaking to public spaces. There is also a need for city managers to ascertain ways in which they can learn and benefit from the attributes of private spaces and connect the public and private domain.

6. **Multifunctional use of public spaces —** Public spaces in Asian cities are often multi-layered and multi-functional depending on the time of the day: a street food market in the morning,

traffic lane during the day and a football pitch by night, or busy thoroughfare during the week and pedestrian zone in the weekend. How can cities be flexible and creative in the design and management of very expensive prime areas that are also very dense, ensuring its optimum use?

7. **Multi-cultural and multi-religious spaces —** The population in Asian city centres is rarely homogeneous, almost by default it is multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious, all living side-by-side, often in close proximity. Depending on the population mix, they may or may not have the same preference, perception and use of public space. They may have specific gatherings, festivals and celebrations that claim the public space. Also, religious sites are interesting examples of shared space. Temple complexes, church yards, mosque compounds and school grounds are not just places of worship, they also function as important public, community and recreational spaces, not just to pray but also to play. Yet, these are not always inclusive spaces, each comes with their own rules and regulations. How can cities and communities work together to allow for greater inclusivity and understanding to strengthen neighbourhood identities?

The previously named forces are unique in Asia, often creating a melange of experiences that make Asian cities very exciting and vibrant but on the other hand, not necessarily supportive of an inclusive and comfortable environment for low-income, informal and aged communities. This is often exacerbated by the following:

1. **Urban development is typically real estate-driven —** Compared to well-resourced municipal governments in the West, local or district governments in Asian cities often have limited room to manoeuvre to make large-scale investments in buildings, infrastructure or public space. With some notable exceptions, the local tax base is limited, political leverage constrained and therefore it is typically property owners and developers that dictate development in these places. In Southeast Asia's competitive land and real estate markets, many governments have adopted a *laissez-faire* approach and an economy-driven mindset to urban development. As such, there is an urgent need to engage property owners and developers to adopt a place-led approach which focuses on human scale design that embraces social interaction and community building.

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The unique Asian urban context calls for innovative solutions, site-specific methodologies and unconventional approaches.

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2. **Shifting political climate —** Some Asian nations are characterised by volatile political regimes. A swinging power pendulum — at different administrative levels — impacts the longevity and continuity of urban plans. Re-election seems to be always just around the corner and senior decision-making positions in government can change based on political affiliation, which can impact plan making, operations or implementation or even abruptly cancel or catapult new ones. Political change can also influence leadership at powerful state-owned enterprises, and when it comes to placemaking and city-building this means that a 'client' relationship built over the course of many years can change overnight, particularly if they happen to own or operate real estate. Political urgency can also act as a catalyst; in many Asian nations, decision-making typically involves less layers and when the green light is given project implementation can move swiftly.

3. **Planning profession is traditionally affiliated with architecture —**
This explains an often top-down, technocratic attitude that designs to the needs of the client, often with very high plot ratios and GDVs (Gross Development Value). There is a lack of social and cultural thinkers that understand the interconnectedness between place-led design and economically vibrant places. Concepts like placemaking, public engagement, participatory designs and planning are novel to many and are finding their way into the Asian contexts via numerous trials and errors by professional and civic organisations. There is a need for city managers and local governments to recognise their efforts and make sure they are an integral part of urban planning and policymaking.

This unique Asian urban context calls for innovative solutions, site-specific methodologies and unconventional approaches. There are many successful examples and case studies across the continent, but often language prevents this knowledge to travel across borders. The City At Eye Level celebrates the practitioners who have brought change in their cities and provides a podium to share their stories among colleagues and urban professionals in other countries.

TURNING UNDERUSED SPACES INTO PLACES
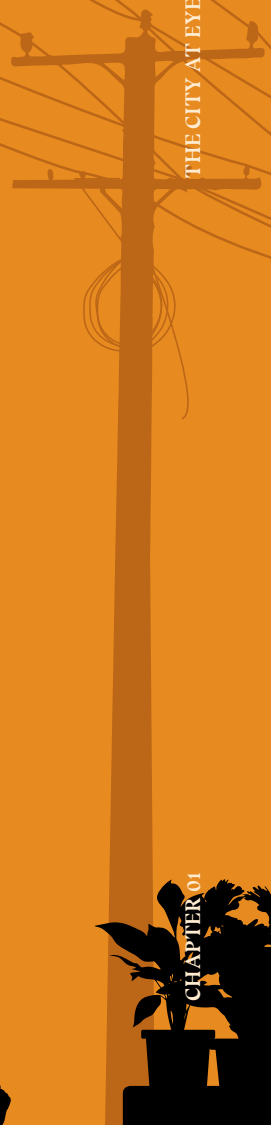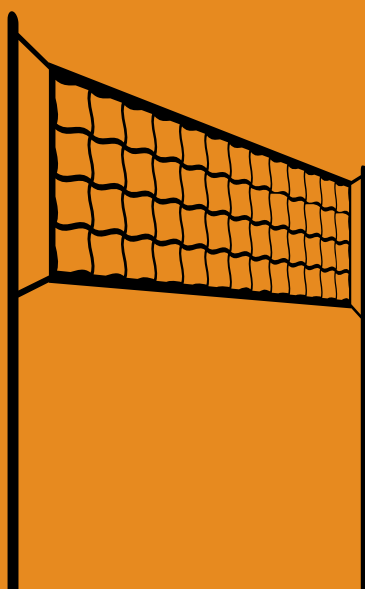
INTRODUCTION

Lorenzo Petrillo (LOPELAB) & Lisette van Rhijn

Asian cities throughout the region continue to grow rapidly. Real estate development is in overdrive to give space to this rapid growth and all the mouths to feed. Often this results in large commercial developments, top-down planning and complicated infrastructure projects. Cities cannot keep up and in many cases they end up with an overpopulated urban environment with a lack of public space and open green areas, low levels of hygiene, and easy spread of disease. It seems that urban planning in Asian cities frequently overlooks the needs of the community and lacks a human-centred approach.

This was not always the case. Across many countries in Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Cambodia, Singapore) communities were often organised in small urban settlements, called *Kampong* (or *Kampung*). They were traditional villages with a few shacks and a very community-centred way of living. Unfortunately economic development and urbanisation have almost entirely replaced them. In Singapore for instance, there's only one left and in the other countries they are now generally considered as slums.

The need for optimisation of urban space saw the rise of another common urban development in the region: that of 'The Shophouse.' These buildings were generally two to three storeys high, built in contiguous blocks with common party walls. They functioned as narrow, small-terraced houses with commercial activities at the ground floor and a residential area above. The need for a service access in the rear part of these buildings created a network of narrow alleys or back lanes in between two rows / blocks of shophouses. These alleys were once very popular for all kinds of commercial and street activities like outdoor barbers or gambling.

Similar urban settlements existed in the northern Chinese cities like Beijing, where neighbourhoods were characterised by narrow alleways called '*hutong*', formed by a series of traditional courtyard residences connected to each other. The *hutong* were initially occupied by single families and after subdivided and shared by many households.

Unfortunately these traditional, community-centred urban settlements have made way for new high-rise developments and small alleyways or spaces in-between have been left abandoned and under-utilised. The consequences are large: loss of identity, loss of culture, overpopulation and lack of space. People who relocate to brand new (high-rise) developments have difficulties to connect to the surroundings and experience a low sense of place. The dem-olition of entire districts together with the rapid influx of foreign citizens and top-down policies have made led to communities feeling disconnected from public space and a lack of ownership.

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Traditional, community-centred urban settlements have made way for high-rise developments and small alleyways or spaces in-between have been left abandoned.

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Capitals and tier one cities are suffering more because they were the first to be affected by rapid urbanisation processes, at a time when they were mainly focused on economic growth and were typically finding short-term solutions for overpopulation issues. Second tier cities in countries like Indonesia, India and China have better chances to avoid the mistakes and wrong decisions made by the tier one cities.

For instance, investing immediately in public transport and in alternative ways of mobility would allow them to design more human-centred cities. By championing 'car-lite' solutions, they can immediately convert roads and parking lots into public spaces for people. This needs a shift in awareness.

In today's harsh urban environments many people have a thirst for space; a space outside their cramped apartments. A space where they can thrive, mingle and be creative. Spaces that boost the existing qualities so unique to Asian cities. Residents now flee into air-conditioned spaces in shopping malls as the available public space does not meet the needs. Luckily, even in these dense environments, space is available. As buildings and infrastructure occupy only a fraction of land in cities, there is the space 'in-between'.

This includes unused land underneath bridges or flyovers. Or forgotten land, filled with trash or deemed too dark and scary to enter. Do these spaces have the potential to be reimagined, to become stunning by distinguishing its specific character, or to uplift communities in the vicinity? As land value soars, and space is scarce, it is easy math. One just has to find these places and envision their potential. While this takes courage, the cases in this chapter show that it can be done.

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> **Do these spaces have the potential to be reimagined, to become stunning by distinguishing its specific character, or to uplift communities in the vicinity?**
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These projects are sometimes catalysed by a visionary mayor (like in Bandung), but are often down to mischievous urbanites in search of space for some kind of need, not knowing what they are up against, but succeeding with a mix of perseverance, positive thinking and vision (Yangon and Mumbai). Unlocking an unmet need in the community — unmet, and perhaps unknown by the community itself. The initial dream might have been the key connector, but the people — both those who took part in the programming and the community members who got involved — make it happen (Petaling Jaya). The relationships people and organisations form with one another through rejuvenating underused spaces are invaluable to make cities work for people (Singapore). And sometimes, giving face to these forgotten spaces can even help to stop top-down urban planning (Hong Kong).

This is what happens when residents or local organisations take control to activate underused spaces. These cases serve as an example and can help to catalyse a much needed cultural and mental shift of urbanites towards their city, their neighbourhood. They remind us that it is possible to bring back the sense of belonging to a community, even if for the last thirty years it has been neglected in favour of economic growth. They help to realise that all this is possible — even within these harsh, dense urban environments. Armed with this knowledge, we must encourage more and more people to take ownership of their cities, to restore the green and community-centred spaces so often removed in the past decades.

INTRODUCTION

TAMAN FILM: INSPIRING A SENSE OF BELONGING

Florian Heinzelmann & Daliana Suryawinata (SHAU)

In 2013, the newly elected Mayor of Bandung and current Governor of West Java, Ridwan Kamil, initiated plans for Taman Film (Film Park) as one part of a linear chain of smaller, connected public spaces underneath the Pasupati overpass; an iconic cable-stayed bridge in Bandung, Indonesia. In previous years, there had been loose proposals put forward by local communities and students for the 'abandoned' space, but a lack of funding meant nothing has ever been done. Such a pity for such a strategic location near urban villages in dire need of public spaces. Things started to change in Bandung under the governance of Ridwan Kamil – who is a trained architect with the backup of the creative community. With him as Mayor, the city started to develop better public space awareness.

PART OF A CHAIN

Mayor Kamil envisioned a continuous chain of parks, which would provide direct pedestrian access from the city to the famous shopping street of Cihampelas and would suit the needs of many nearby communities. Jalan Pasupati is Bandung's main traffic artery, connecting the city to the Jakarta toll road. It cuts straight through the residential areas of Tamansari, and the proposed chain of parks would reconnect them.

The first public space project in the chain is Taman Jomblo ('Lonely Hearts Park'), an outdoor installation of colourful, single-seater concrete cubes, sketched as a creative response to a previous bureaucratic design with the same materials as budgeted. This is followed by a skate park; after which comes Taman Film; then a sports field for playing mini soccer; finally ending in a green park of a local *kampung*, or urban village, adjacent to the river.

PROCESS AND DESIGN

Taman Film was intended to accommodate Bandung's film community, who, until then, struggled to find facilities to screen movies or public spaces with adequate seating. In 2014, the mayor appointed SHAU to design the park. After a site survey in Bandung, the team worked on the design in SHAU's Rotterdam office. Communication with contractors, potential users and the local government was made possible via their Jakarta team to ensure that the design would fit local needs and possibilities. Mayor Kamil sped up the design process, and after the schematic drawings were submitted, construction started immediately. The budget of 1,1 billion IDR (equivalent to €70,000 in 2014) was financed by the corporate social responsibility funding of two local companies.

Taman Film was completed and opened to the public in September 2014. The park is designed in such a way that it not only accommodates movie screenings for large audiences but also functions as a seating and activity landscape in between showings. The existing topography naturally descends towards the river.

Therefore, it was more a question of how to model a stepping / seating land-scape on one side, with a view of the screen on the other. Instead of a parallel stepping array of seating where people would sit shoulder to shoulder, curvi-linear steps with different inner and outer radii were proposed. The intention was to give people pockets of different sized-spaces, or 'rooms', allowing for groups to have better conversations, and for individuals to have a more seclud-ed experience.

RICE PADDY FIELDS

The city's park department seems to give special attention to Taman Film in terms of maintenance and cleaning. In 2018, they organised to cover the whole park (including the seating landscape) in artificial grass. This was not part of the initial design intention, but with the different shades of green alternating between the curving seats, the park now resembles a rice paddy field during harvest time, full and inviting. Added to the fact that the whole area is rain pro-tected by the overpass, which acts as a roof, visitors often treat the park more as an indoor rather than an exclusively outdoor environment. Residents from nearby urban villages can often be seen using the space at any time of the day, with or without a movie screening.

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A sense of belonging has built up naturally among the residents. In some ways, they have claimed Taman Film as their 'urban living room'.

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AN URBAN LIVING ROOM

What is fascinating is that a sense of belonging has built up naturally among the residents. In some ways, they have claimed Taman Film as their 'urban living room,' where neighbourhood kids play after school and babies take their first steps. Every week there are various gatherings, large and small, from mothers doing their weekly *arisan* – an Indonesian social gathering involving collective fundraising and a monthly lucky draw – to robot-making clubs and Taekwondo training sessions. On the weekend, vendors sell long 'balloon swords' for kids to play with, while families have picnics.

Pasupati Flyover

Screen
4*6m

Taman Film   -2.10   -0.35   +0.35   +0.00

Section

24.40   18.60

Taman Film

5.50

15.95

5.37

43.00   Plan

Ø 2,5m   Ø 2,5m   Ø 1,9m   Ø 1,9m   Ø 1,0m

Sitting alternatives
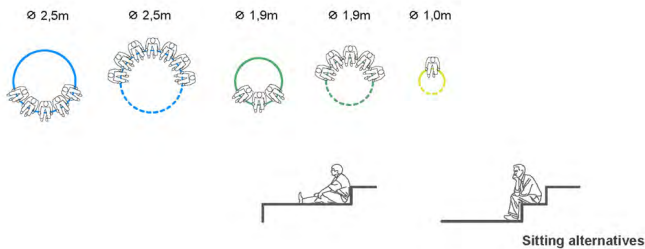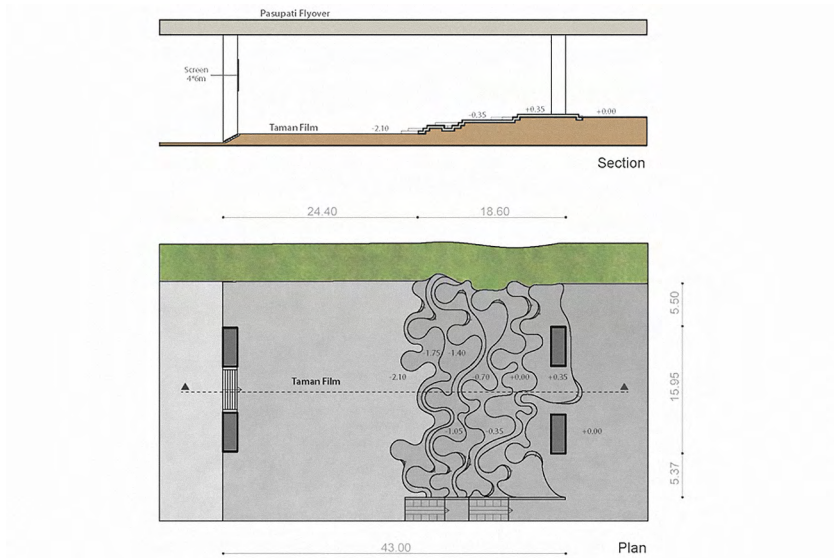
Seven years on, Taman Film is still relatively clean and maintained, in comparison to other parks in Bandung. There is an unwritten agreement between residents to take their shoes off before entering the space as if it was a carpeted living room or a *musholla* (a small mosque). The residents even seem to have their own cleaning schedule, which is heartwarming.

"All this is extraordinary since our experience with other public spaces in Bandung has been very different," explains the design team. "Looking back, we feel that the design of friendly curves in various sizes and shapes — which perhaps inspire visitors to use the space in a democratic yet respectful manner – combined with the soft artificial grass are two secrets that led to the park's success."

THE PRESIDENTIAL CUP

In terms of moving pictures, one can expect a diverse programme at Taman Film, with screenings ranging from local productions, news items, cartoons, to sports events, but also short films, festivals, and more.

Anyone can use the space, as long as it is not for commercial purposes. The most spectacular use of Taman Film, however, took place when Persib Bandung, the local football club, won the Presidential Cup in 2015. On that evening, Taman Film was filled to the brim with thousands of spectators supporting their team. The next day, the park was somewhat damaged due to the sheer amount of people who attended. This led Mayor Ridwan Kamil to make a public statement via social media to remind citizens to take better care of Bandung's public spaces.

IN CONCLUSION

The success of Taman Film is due to a magic mixture: the right combination of stakeholders, location, and design. SHAU believes that architects and designers have a role to play in convincing city government, users, communities and funders. The hope is that the 'Taman Film effect' will take place in many more cities across Indonesia and in other places with similar challenges.

DO'S

- **For a bigger impact on a citywide-level,** make sure to create a strategy that activates a chain of smaller, connected, 'abandoned' public spaces in your city.

- **Create an urban living room by designing for multi-functional spaces** that stimulates use outside of programmed hours. Users may visit TAMAN Film park even between movie screenings due to the flexible seating / landscape design and because the space is not reliant on the weather situation thanks to the overpass that provides shelter.

DON'TS

- **There is no need to provide users with rules, this may affect the welcoming atmosphere of the place.** Instead, allow the community to establish their own rules organically. At Taman Film, residents have come up with common standards on how to use, clean and maintain the park.

YANGON'S ALLEY GARDEN PROJECT

Emilie Roell (Doh Eain)

Some projects aren't long-planned and strategised, they just unfold. The Alley Garden project is such an example. "It started when a group of us — young, local and expatriate residents in Yangon — decided to set up a small permaculture garden," tells Emilie Roell, founder of Doh Eain. "At that point, we were an informally organised group of volunteers worried about the lack of public space, the government's focus on cars, the absence of provisions for pedestrians and cyclists, and the destruction of heritage buildings in favour of new shiny condominiums."

When the group failed to find a suitable plot of land for their permaculture garden anywhere near downtown, they began considering the back alley space behind the site of one of their heritage restoration projects. Like all back alleys in Yangon, this was a smelly place filled with two feet of trash. Emilie reveals: "Yet after some deliberation, we thought, why not start here? Despite its flaws, it was nearby, 'free' and it allowed us to experiment."

သင်သိပါသလား ?

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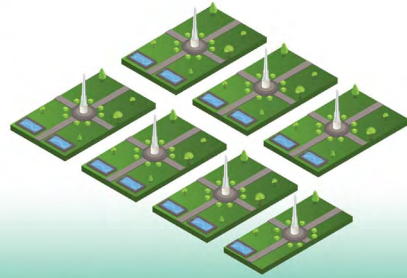
180 alleyways in Downtown Yangon makes **6.7 Mahabandula Parks**

ABOUT YANGON'S BACK ALLEYS

When the British established Yangon in 1852, a new city plan of wide roads in a grid pattern was implemented with an emphasis on proper drainage systems, to manage the area's frequent floods. In between buildings along two parallel roads, 15-foot wide back alleys with open gutters and underground sewers were built to protect the city from disasters. Residents started using the space for unintended purposes such as relaxation, passage or to escape the city's hot air. This pattern changed in 1962 as the dictatorial government ceased maintenance and sought to restrict people's opportunities to gather. Yangon's back alleys were officially closed in the 1980s. Over the next three decades, they lost their function and became little more than waste dumps in the absence of a well-functioning waste collection system.

THE TIPPING POINT

In 2017, with a more open government and a small number of gardeners, the group started cleaning the site and realised its full potential. Downtown Yangon only has one small public park, called Mahanbadoola Garden, but it has over 150 back alleys, each about 250 m long and 5 m wide. Some quick math told them that if they cleaned them all, they could free up another 6.7 times the surface area of Mahanbadoola Garden.

"We engaged our neighbours in the idea of cleaning and transforming one back alley. Initially, people were divided, upset with the government for not providing a waste collection

Alley Garden Project Process

DOH EAIN
renewing yangon

discover

Our team visits an alleyway, taking notes, photographs, measurements and drawing, take note of the condition and learn through observation and interviews how residents, business owners and or public currently use it.

develop

This is the fun part, over a number of workshops, our team will facilitate the participants from the project neighbourhood through activities that explore the area, vision and ideas so that our team can develop concepts and finally create implementable design with budget/maintenance in mind.

deepen

After the launch, Doh Eain will work with the representative Alley Garden committee to support regular maintenance and ongoing activities.

1.5 Months

1.5 Months

1 Month

1 Month

On-Going

Business development, kick off and internal organisation

At this stage, our team begins to map and analyse all the groups and individuals involved in the project. Our team will introduce ourselves, the project, process and the next step to anyone who attends.

define

From here on, Doh Eain's team of architects, landscape designers and construction staff carry out the construction, purchasing and installation of the agreed design.

deliver

Figure 1.

system, and uncertain about the project's benefits. Only after we organised a mural painting workshop for children in the neighbourhood, which brought some colour to the freshly whitened walls, did the idea finally land," explains Emilie. Residents saw how this could be a space for their children to play in safely. After this, the idea went truly viral. The mayor visited the location within a few days and the group was able to crowd-fund $60,000 from residents, local businesses and embassies within the space of three months.

The team saw this alley work as heritage preservation of a use of space in Yangon, and the organisation 'Doh Eain' was born with the mission to preserve cultural identity and ensure a liveable, inclusive and sustainable city. By 2020 Doh Eain had completed eleven Alley Garden projects throughout the down-town area.

THE PROCESS

Just as with Doh Eain's heritage work, in which they try to prioritise the rights and roles of the original owners, the team wanted the alleyway transforma-tions to be community-led. They developed a methodology around joint research of sites, asset mappings, participatory design exercises, community building days and long-term programming and maintenance. These activities were supported by the additional revenue gained from walking tours and vol-unteer work impact days (see figure 1).

An assessment of the first six transformed back alleys undertaken in 2018 revealed that they resulted in a positive overall impact by increasing the usage of the alleys from nearly 0 to 50%, improving the residents' perception of these spaces and encouraging communication among different stakeholders.

YANGON, MYANMAR

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The survey revealed that participation was mostly limited to committee members and ground floor residents — those directly affected by the improvements. This showed that potential users (residents of higher floors, businesses from nearby blocks, etc.) still needed to be persuaded of the project's benefits.

To foster broader participation, the team built in more creative ways to boost the interest of all residents. An important strategy was to undertake more pop-up style events at the beginning of each project. A limiting factor was and remains the limited accessibility of the alleyways. While all apartments are supposed to have emergency escapes into the back alleys, over time these have been neglected. The community's limited awareness of the risk of natural disasters (which is not aligned with Yangon's reality) means there is little initiative to repair or install emergency escapes.

To address inclusion, Doh Eain started undertaking placemaking projects centred around vulnerable groups such as young women and girls. It is widely known that in Myanmar this group is less involved in decision-making and that they experience more discomfort in public space. They launched a number of girl-led placemaking projects, giving girls a platform as a form of empowerment, to illustrate how they could influence the design of public spaces. These efforts helped them understand how to better represent the voices of vulnerable people in all of their projects.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Lastly, Doh Eain is always seeking financial sustainability. The initial funding for each Alley Garden ($60,000 of raised money) covers the costs of community engagement, design, construction and one year of maintenance. However, the gardens need ongoing upkeep and frequent upgrades. "To reach those long-term goals we try to build in strategies through which the communities them-selves can generate revenue," tells Emilie. For example, Doh Eain partnered up with a blockbuster movie to create an in-alley mural that served as both a classic film poster and a social media strategy for a scavenger hunt, in return for free paint. Others have hosted corporate team-building 'Impact Days' for cleaning, painting and planting materials and a donation to the Alley Garden maintenance fund.

CONCLUSIONS AND GOING FORWARD

Since its inception, the Yangon Alley Garden project has brought nearly 15,000 m² of public space back into use. The 12 different sites now feature gardens, playgrounds, street art, seating areas, exercise equipment as well as other elements influenced by local priorities. The project has also been instrumental in supporting Yangon residents' civic engagement and sense of ownership over the public realm — which after 60 years of dictatorship had understandably weakened. It has also been the foundation on which we have built skills and experiences to approach other types of spaces such as streets and playgrounds.

DO'S

- **Find the right financing schemes** for your in-depth participatory processes. These are often demanding in terms of resources, while the benefits aren't always fully understood by funders.

- **Try to link your projects and sites and align them to other schemes** including community-based tourism, social cohesion, natural-disaster resilience, sanitation, etc. (in addition to the smaller revenue-generating opportunities within each project).

- **Make sure to constantly reflect on your project** and iteration to reach its full potential.

DON'TS

- **Don't aim to stay fully involved at all times.** Instead, work on setting up neighbourhood committee networks and provide small grant opportunities as incentives.

REFRESHING THE HISTORIC SINGAPORE RIVER

Yanling Lin, interviewed by Serene Tng
(Urban Redevelopment Authority)

Once the centre of entrepôt trade in Singapore, the Singapore River was cleaned up in the 1990s and has since evolved into a popular lifestyle destination filled with hotels, shops, restaurants and waterfront housing. Restored shophouses and warehouses flank the river, giving the area an unique and eclectic charm. Set against the signature skyline of Singapore's Central Business District (CBD), the river stretches three kilometres long and has three distinct zones. Boat Quay next to the Central Business District is home to many waterfront dining establishments. The middle zone, Clarke Quay, is bustling with nightlife and entertainment. Further upstream, Robertson Quay has a quieter ambience for residential and hotel use.

FINDING THE RIGHT APPROACH

In 2010, the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), Singapore's national planning and conservation authority, initiated efforts to identify a more effective placemaking approach to further realise the precinct's potential as a major destination. Finding the right line of action took two years.

It involved engaging placemaking experts to assess the feasibility of forming a partnership between the public and private sectors and identifying suitable champions to do so. As part of the process, a rigorous approach was taken to identify key issues in charting the river precinct's future and to engage various stakeholders in understanding the importance of placemaking, and the value of working together.

The initial conversations led to the formation of a voluntary, informal Singapore River Task Group, made up of both public and private sector stakeholders. The group was co-chaired by Mdm Fun Siew Leng, Chief Urban Designer of URA and Mr. Colin Wang, former General Manager of the Grand Copthorne Waterfront. They demonstrated a shared commitment to building a strong public-private partnership, and the group served as a sounding board to provide ideas and support for initial plans to revive the precinct.

Several teething issues that tarnished the image of Singapore River for many years were quickly brought to the table. One such issue was touting and over-charging at Boat Quay. In response the group launched A Better Singapore River campaign in December 2011, encouraging Boat Quay tenants to sign pledges to adopt good business practices. Hotels helped to market the efforts and agencies carried out regular patrols to warn businesses against these activities.

The campaign was a success, and the effectiveness of the platform paved the way for a stronger commitment from stakeholders to set up a more permanent group. This led to the formation of the Singapore River One (SRO) in 2012, a non-profit company dedicated to the place management of the river precinct.

Since 2012, SRO has worked closely with government agencies and its stakeholders to improve the river precinct's image through quick-win projects. SRO also refreshed the river's appeal through active programming ranging from river festivals to regular street closures. Riding on the positive change, membership increased from 12 members in 2012 to 121 in early 2020.

Charting the way forward in placemaking, the Singapore River became the first precinct to come on board a pilot Business Improvement District (BID) programme that was launched in 2017. Under the programme, the Singapore Government provides matching grants to encourage business / property owners to pool together their resources to manage their precincts in a more sustainable way.

LESSONS LEARNED

SRO's active efforts to shape the river precinct over the years offer useful lessons for effective placemaking, especially for an area

with such a diverse range of stakeholders and needs.

DO'S

- **Develop a clear vision.** The vision and plan for the area should consider the identity, activities, and uses within the precinct, and reflect what the place means to the community. SRO's first five-year business plan focused on active programming and projects which create a stronger identity for the precinct, such as the Singapore River Festival. New murals along the underpasses also enlivened the connections between the three quays of the river. Initiatives were also tailored for each quay, such as regular weekend car-free zones at Circular Road / Boat Quay to increase foot traffic, and a new playground at Robertson Quay for children. To draw more visitors, precinct and business promotions were rolled out, tapping on a range of marketing and communication channels.

- **Engage the community.** It is the people who use a place that can offer the most valuable perspective and support. SRO regularly consults its group of diverse stakeholders ranging from landlords to business owners and residents. An open channel of communication (through one-to-one sessions, newsletters, town hall meetings, etc.) is maintained to encourage dialogue.

- **Start with simple, short term actions.** These can help test ideas and demonstrate positive change. Quick-win projects such as the anti-touting campaign carried out during SRO's infancy saw a significant reduction in touting and helped galvanise support and inspire stakeholders to do more together.

DON'TS

- **Don't plan for one-time events.** Entice people to keep coming. Beyond comfort and image, it is active programming that will attract visitors. Major SRO events such as the Saint Patrick's Day Street Festival and the Singapore River Festival have attracted more than 100,000 people with each edition. The regular weekend street closures at Circular Road (initiated by SRO) have led to increased footfall and a 20% increase in sales.

- **Don't only invest in the short-term.** Build strong partnerships for the future. SRO has worked closely with the government and its diverse stakeholder groups to drive initiatives together, for example, to revamp the outdoor dining areas along the Boat Quay waterfront. URA undertook the design and implementation of the project in close collaboration with SRO, who took the lead to engage and consult the stakeholders over the course of the project. Because of the strong public-private partnership, significant improvements were made possible, and more stakeholders have come on board to join as members.

THE NEXT STEPS

Since SRO joined the pilot BID programme in 2017, it has continued to pursue substantial plans in shaping the precinct. As part of its four-year business plan (2017-2021), it will focus on promoting the full breadth of offerings and activities for the river, enhancing visitors' experience, as well as supporting and creating value for property owners and businesses.

HOW A COMMUNITY FARM SAVED THE LAST VILLAGE IN HONG KONG

Benjamin Sin (Caritas Hong Kong)
& Stephanie Cheung (Urban Discovery)

Pokfulam Village is an extraordinary sight in Hong Kong's urban jungle. Perched on a hillside in the west of Hong Kong Island, with narrow laneways meandering around traditional houses, Pokfulam was home to the first dairy farm in the territory, playing an important role in the history of Hong Kong. No longer surrounded by farmland, the village atmosphere and tight-knit community have remained amidst the high-rise developments surrounding the village. Yet, despite its rarity and significance as a custodian of Hong Kong's cultural heritage, the 200-year-old village is now under threat of demolition.

A SURVIVOR OF HONG KONG'S PAST

Whereas villages in rural parts of Hong Kong are left largely undisturbed, Pokfulam Village has had its fair share of government interference. Home to a population of more than 3,000 people, sitting on a piece of four-hectare land, the village is possibly the largest area still suitable for development

in the district. No surprise then, that the villagers are living under the constant fear of demolition. A 2014 World Monuments Fund study explains: "Pokfulam is a remarkable survivor of Hong Kong's past, but it is facing pressure from urban redevelopment plans, including a proposal to convert unoccupied dairy farmworkers' dormitories into high-density housing. Also, stringent squatter control policies make it hard for villagers to repair their dwellings."

Villagers felt the threat particularly in 2011 when the government put up plans to build a road connecting the main artery, Pokfulam Road, to nearby plots zoned for upmarket residential buildings. The new road would cut straight through the village. For Pokfulam, this was the first real sign of development pressure in more than a century.

In response, the community jumped into action. Caritas Pokfulam Community Development Project, a local NGO rooted in the village, identified the plots that were destined to become the road. They started working with locals to transform the plots into places that villagers care about so that it would be more difficult for the government to bulldoze the area.

CO-CREATING A COMMUNITY SPACE

Co-creation was the principle underpinning the project. The villagers decided on the design and use of space. Starting in July 2012, it took a team of 40 people months to transform 4,000 square feet of wild grass and shrubs into a place the community could be proud of. When it opened in April 2013, the community garden, known as *Choi Yuen Tei* 菜園地 (vegetable farm) quickly became the new heart of the village.

Its significance and impact can be attributed to:

1. A Continuation Of Village Lifestyle

In its heyday Pokfulam Village was sur-rounded by acres of fertile farmland, feeding over 80 cattle and producing fresh milk on the property. Although the agricultural function is long gone, the village lifestyle and its rich cultural traditions have been maintained through generations, a rarity in cosmopolitan Hong Kong. Pokfulam is the only remaining original village in the urban core of the city, yet few Hongkongers know about it. The ones that do generally perceive it as an obscure and backward area, rather than the interesting cultural phenomenon it is.

For local residents, the farm has become a place to rediscover their roots and practise their village life loud and proud. Amidst plots with herbs, turnip, winter melons and soybeans, the farm also features a 'Farmer's Kitchen' with an authentic stone-and-brick kiln, a firewood stove and a traditional mill-stone.

Management and maintenance are all in the hands of a designated committee, but once a year all villagers gather for grass clearing. Reviving a long-lost practice, traditional festivals such as Mid-Autumn and Tuen Ng are now celebrated with potluck dinners bringing together people from all walks of life.

2. Reinvigorating Pride Of Place

Unlike other rural villages in Hong Kong with typically homogenous populations, Pokfulam Village is home to people from different Chinese ethnic groups and back-grounds. This extraordinary mix of culture and traditions in a unique urban setting would be treasured in many places around the world, but not here. A 2007 survey by Caritas showed that one-third of the villagers showed signs of depression or low self-esteem. Some were even ashamed of being Pokfulam villagers.

These days, with the revival of the com-munity garden and associated activities, villagers gather more frequently, encourage each other to practise their culture and start to realise their communal spirit and lifestyle are something to be proud of. The urban farm has also brought positive attention to the village, attracting thousands of weekend visitors. The sentiment has changed: "Finally, there is a decent place in the village where we can welcome our guests and showcase our culture." In just a few years, the villagers' attitude towards self-identity and their per-sonal relationship with the village has been turned around.

> **"**
>
> **Finally, there is a place in the village where we can welcome our guests and showcase our culture.**
>
> **"**

3. The Pokfulam Spirit – A Resilient Community

Ten months of hard work bonded the residents. Their active involvement in the design of the place and physical input in the building process were crucial and created an unparalleled sense of ownership. "If we can achieve this, nothing will ever be too difficult for us," embodies the newfound spirit of the village. The garden is a place to channel their sense of belonging. The creation of Choi Yuen Tei has proven to be a turning point in the history of Pokfulam Village.

Once a piece of abandoned farmland, now a constant reminder of personal strength, urban resilience and capacity to shape the future.

4. Spin-Off Effect
As the villagers worked, others started to take notice. In 2014 Pokfulam Village became the first Hong Kong site to be included on the World Monument Fund Watch List. In 2015 the government agreed to fund revitalisation of the former Dairy Farm staff quarters, a nearby heritage site. In the same year, the Pokfulam Fire Dragon tradition was inscribed in the city's Intangible Cultural Heritage List, making it an instant hit at Mid-Autumn Festival, attracting over 6,000 visitors.

The road-building project has been stalled, demolition is off the cards for now and the community has shown that Pokfulam Village is an enormous cultural asset to the city.

DO'S

- Involve and co-create with the community from the beginning of the project.

- Build up the community's confidence and pride through quick wins; always celebrate small successes.

- Go back to the roots and history of the community, respect and turn that into champions of the project.

DON'TS

- Start a project without understanding the context, history and needs of the community.

- Impose your plan as organisers onto the community.

TURNING SPACES INTO PLACES IN MUMBAI

Tina Nandi & Anca Abraham (Love Your Parks Mumbai)

In 2012, Anca Abraham and her husband Alan, discontented with Mumbai's poorly connected open spaces and inadequate infrastructure, founded Bombay Greenway: a series of urban planning and placemaking interventions across the city. In 2018, her friend Tina Nandi had found herself secretly plotting ways to persuade her husband to move to a more 'liveable' part of the world. But she was inspired by the efforts of the Bombay Greenway, and together with Anca, began brainstorming ways to put her own skills to use for the city.

As mothers to young children, they decided a good place to start would be to reach out to other families in the city who also needed access to urban green space and figure out creative ways to activate them. Within two weeks, Anca and Tina founded Love Your Parks Mumbai: a community-led initiative to promote engagement, stewardship and love for public parks through singing and the creative arts.

In December 2018, their fledgling choir performed at two local parks to an audience of about 200 people, who clapped, sang and danced under the setting sun. LYPMumbai has since organised dozens of free pop-up events and mini-workshops in parks and public spaces across the city. Their platform grew steadily, advocating for accessible, inclusive and sustainable open spaces for all Mumbaikars. All this led to an invitation to join a roundtable discussion organised by the municipality (MCGM) in 2019 to elaborate on new park policies.

ACTIVATING ST. STEPHEN'S STEPS

In November 2019, LYPMumbai became involved in activating a new public space project by Bombay Greenway that had been proposed in 2016 and was finally coming to completion. The proposal was to transform a neglected, narrow staircase in Bandra into a public gathering space. The mismanaged space, which was frequented by drug users, had been erased from collective memory and was at risk of becoming yet another backroad in a city built for cars.

It took three years to implement something that should be a no-brainer: to turn a 40-year old garbage dump into a multi-use, inclusive community space, open 24/7 (a rarity in Mumbai!), and accessible to pedestrians, cyclists, prams and the differently-abled. In the early days, the group received discouraging feedback from some local residents, who were initially suspicious of a pro-bono initiative that wanted to re-visit a space that had acquired a lot of negative connotations. Fortunately, some key figures within the community stood up and supported the dream: to give back 1880 m² of accessible and inclusive public space to the community in a city of less than 1 m² of open space per person!

A huge milestone was managing to extend the width of the promenade on top of the steps, by taking over a part of the road. In preparation for the inauguration, an open call for muralists helped revive the ample wall space available. Their art weaved together a visual narrative depicting the unique, distinctive and cherished aspects of the area. By then, suspicion had given way to hope.

Existing steps.

"We know that the arts play a signifi-cant and meaningful role in sparking vitality in communities of all sizes and shapes. We wanted to get people to experience this regener-ated space, so we toyed around with the idea of a festival to engage the local community and put the steps back onto the local map," said Ar. Alan Abraham.

The proposal.

FESTIVAL AT THE STEPS

With the support of the local municipal councillor and a few prominent mem-bers of the local residents' groups, the group put together a five-weekend festival to celebrate the area's transformation. This was done by connecting the Bombay Greenway to the LYPMumbai community and another local or-ganisation, LittleBigCity.in, to launch the #FestivalAtTheSteps.

The packed programme took place between 14 December 2019 and 12 January 2020, and consisted of live performances, film screenings, photo ex-hibitions, interactive art & craft workshops, sports, heritage walks & cycle rides, and a unique art installation to reflect on unity in diversity and sustainability. The team even managed to organise an inclusive event for pets, and permits for local community members to sell food.

With the steps doubling as an open-air amphitheatre (the higher risers pro-viding comfortable seating for the elderly) the weekend activities continued with great success to much larger audiences that anyone had expected. Riding on the success of the festival, they initiated a Republic Day celebration on 26 January 2020 and are keen to continue programming the space on a regular basis.
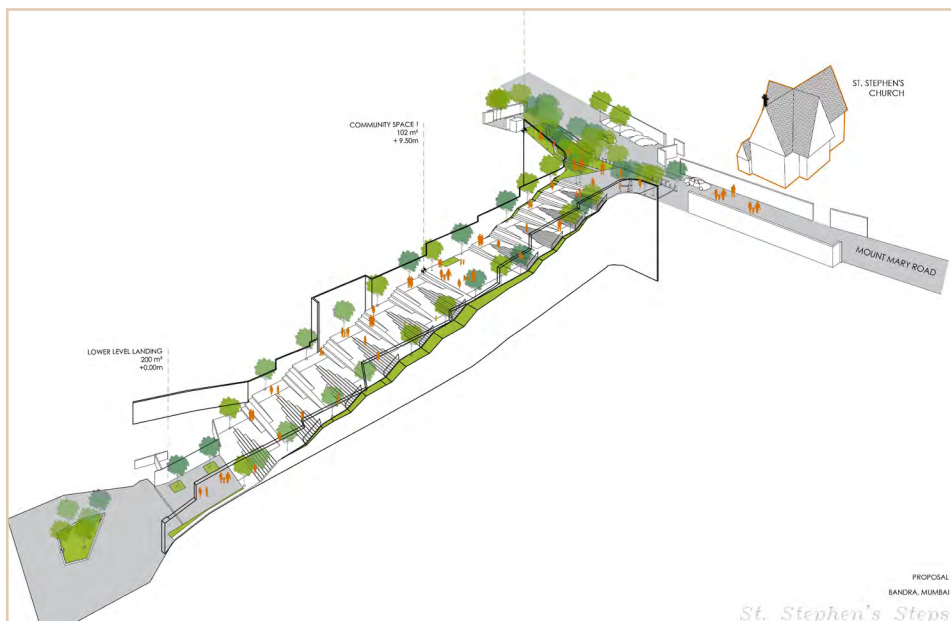
LESSONS LEARNED

Eight years into Bombay Greenway, St.Stephen's Steps stands testament to the power of people-friendly design and involvement on the part of public servants, citizens, artists, and volunteers. The power to improve our surroundings lies in each one of us, and the communities we nurture. #FestivalAtTheSteps has shown that there is a deep need for communities to get together. People from all social backgrounds happily shared the new space, and weekend upon weekend, throngs of people discovered this new venue for the arts, and the warmth of community.

DO'S

- **Seek long-term relationships with the community.** More than a year into LYPMumbai, local residents continue to come together to keep this new public space alive, and they look forward to seeing similar projects mushroom across the city.

- **Complacency in policymaking and in citizen involvement may some-times need a creative push.** Working with local governments, municipal corporations and resident associations can feel like hitting a brick wall. Using creative placemaking and programming to get strangers together under the open sky can do wonders to chase away the cynicism.

- **Document each event through professional photography and videog-raphy** to better communicate your intentions and to gain trust from local governance and the public at large.

DON'TS

- **Don't be discouraged by bureaucracy.** While the municipality and local councils have traditionally worked hand-in-hand for the maintenance and management of public spaces, placemaking initiatives like this play a crucial role in activating these places. The hope is that the city will move towards more transparent processes, allowing more activities like these flourish.

SPACE: DEAD OR CATALYST FOR CHANGE?

Philip Tan (Epic Communities)

LESSONS FROM THE FIELD OF REVITALISING UNDER-UTILISED SPACES

In Malaysia, it is common to find dead public spaces located in leftover parcels of public housing developments due to poor planning, cost constraints and mismanagement. Can these underused spaces be a catalyst for change within the community?

Epic Communities Malaysia is sharing the placemaking process that they've developed to guide other placemakers and their stakeholders in transforming spaces into places. Epic acknowledges that each space and community is unique, therefore, the process was designed to be flexible, moulding itself to the needs of the community and its external factors.

A PUBLIC LIBRARY

The story of PJS6 Library (PJS6) in Petaling Jaya began with an architect who grew up in the neighbourhood who saw an opportunity to bring a community space back to life. Together with other passionate residents, they lobbied Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) for the redevelopment of an

PJS6 site, before.

abandoned community building. This building was in a corner lot that adjoins an intersection with heavy traffic. The site was uninviting and had become a hotspot for crime.

Epic was invited by MBPJ to engage the participation of the local community in designing the lot's outdoor spaces. The participatory design process that they developed represents a loop that cycles in five stages: Initiate, Engage, Develop, Activate and Empower.

The loop reflects the reality that places are alive, organic and ever-changing. Ideally, a project should complete each phase and continue to flow through the cycles.

THE PROCESS

1. **Initiate**
    The first step was *streetcombing*. Inspired by *beachcombing*, the team walked the streets to look for ideas, inspiration and valuable insights. *Streetcombing* allows them to meet with the community at their pace and in an informal manner — along the street, playgrounds, at the local shops or the weekly night market. They asked residents simple questions about their lifestyle, interests and familiarity with their neighbourhood. This helped the team to build valuable relationships with the locals and to contact interested participants who would like to explore the placemaking activities further.

Community engagement with voting for outdoor public spaces.

2. **Engage**

Collaboration is a key factor in gathering community interest. To build momentum, Epic conducted a series of engagements. The first layer involved a vote for ideas and spaces. They worked with MBPJ, relevant authorities, resident's associations and locals to build awareness around the project. Call-outs to participate in a series of co-design workshops and ideation sessions were made via social media channels and through word-of-mouth to ensure cost-efficiency.

As with most cultures, food connects people. Epic's engagements are called *Kopi Sessions* (Coffee Sessions) and they involve chats over coffee and local desserts. The first public engagement was conducted during the local council's launch ceremony. Although there were many re-spondents, unfortunately the results were skewed due to the majority of participants being adults.

To bring in younger participants, the Epic team had to re-strategise to provide a holistic overview of the community's aspirations. Using a design thinking approach, they organised a session that was inclusive of all ages by using modelling clay, LEGO blocks, art and storytelling as tools.

3. **Develop**

To develop the ideas gathered in the previous stage, participatory co-design workshops were conducted with groups to draw out a collective outcome for the space. In the process of co-creation, we see empower-ment fostered through the community taking ownership of their spaces.

4. Activate

"We see activation as life flowing through space. In PJS6, the participants collectively voted for a sports court, recycling centre, community garden and a small café kiosk to supplement the use of the library. These spaces were then actualised and built by the city council," explains Philip Tan, Project Manager at Epic Communities Malaysia.

Today, the community frequents the library. It's a space to meet friends or read a book in a pleasant setting.

"Our recent visit discovered that locals embraced the space as their own and have felt safer with the activated surroundings as this has deterred drunkards, crime and waste. The success of the community's involvement in PJS6 also saw some teenagers forming a committee to run small activities in the space such as movie nights," tells Philip.

Although the overall space has improved in serving the community, some of the co-created spaces such as the community garden, recycling centre and café kiosk still have the potential to be used to its full capacity. Speaking with users, they expressed hope for the kiosk to be operational as there are no other food stalls in the vicinity. The staff informed Epic that many entrepreneurs were hesitant to lease the space given the risk of running a full-time business in a place with perceived low footfalls.

Co-Developing with the community.

PJS6 Library today.

The Community Edible Garden today.

Inside the PJS6 Library today.

Launch Day and the outdoor spaces, with the cafe kiosk in the background.
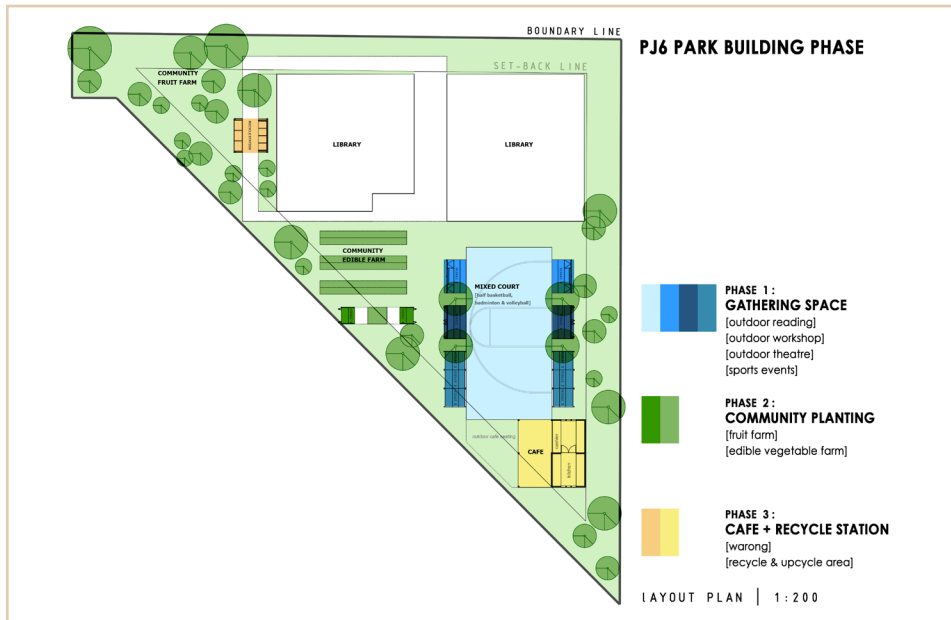
Results from the co-creation workshops driving design and spatial planning.

Hence, Epic is exploring an ownership / tenancy model, which would see the kiosk space leased to micro-entrepreneurs on a pop-up basis; businesses rotating each week to keep the space active. Combined with a lower rental commitment, this could minimise the barriers of entry for micro-entrepreneurs. By bringing life back to the kiosk, the hope is that this will activate the outdoor spaces further.

5. **Empower**

Empowerment begins with small steps to create change agents. Through Epic's activities, the team came across local champions — individuals who are passionate to see their community prosper and thrive. "By allowing them to share openly with us we have also worked to improve our

engagements to meet our objectives. Inspired by the cyclic process and seeing the community transformed, some champions even started their own placemaking projects in their communities!" states Philip proudly.

CONCLUSION

As the community goes through the cycle, the aim is to see a transformation in the community through a place. In this, a place merely acts as a catalyst for users to become empowered individuals.

DO'S

- **Gather a dedicated collective of stakeholders** to commit to completing the cycle as this would strengthen the outcomes when faced with external pressures. This also minimises the risk of the space becoming under-utilised again.

- **Explore opportunities with your local council members.** They are there to represent their community and could help connect you with the right parties.

- **Listen to the community in their natural environment** for insights and ideas by streetcombing.

- **Encourage participation of all age groups.** Children can be included through playful activities like kicking a ball to vote for a 'design outcome' goal of their choice.

DON'TS

- **Be afraid to explore unconventional routes to gain trust**, interest and feedback such as casual conversations.

- **Underestimate the influence of empowering others to act on local interventions.** It is contagious and can lead to individual change.

- **Overlook grassroots activation in top-down led projects**, as they represent the daily users of the space.

About Epic Communities

Epic Communities seeks to make it accessible for communities to participate in forming thriving and sustainable environments. The company had its origins in building shelter for the Orang Asli (indigenous people of Malaysia) using a participatory design process. Recognising the importance of this process in urban cities, the company was formed to tackle urban and built environment challenges.

CREATIVITY AS A DRIVING FORCE

CHAPTER 02

INTRODUCTION

Jia Ping Lee (Tempatico)

Cities have long been hotbeds of creativity, housing artists and artisans who migrate to cities to seek opportunities. During the Renaissance period, European cities such as Florence and Paris were places where your work could be seen and perhaps catch the eye of a wealthy patron like the Medici family, leading to commissions and, in the long run, economic security. In Elizabethan England, a time of peace and prosperity when the arts flourished, it was London you would head to if you were a struggling playwright in the hopes of your work being staged at the Globe Theatre.

Fast forward to the 21st century and little has changed. Sure cities have grown in numbers and in size, and the progress in architecture and engineering have altered some landscapes forever, but the *raison d'être* of cities remain: a place filled with opportunities, to build a career, to connect and to find or build your tribe.

But what has changed over the years, is the definition of creativity. As the service economy gained importance over a production one, cities whose growth was dependent on housing and attracting large multinationals were losing out to those drawing service-based companies. In 2002 Richard Florida wrote about *The Rise of the Creative Class*, a class of people that every city should attract if they wanted to have a vibrant city.

He posits that, "rather than being driven exclusively by companies, economic growth was occurring in places that were tolerant, diverse and open to creativity."[1] Florida continues: "Creative people don't just cluster where the jobs are, they cluster in places that are centres of creativity and also where they like to live."

At around the same time, the turn of the 21st century saw a new term called *The Creative Economy*, coined by John Howkins to describe the use of creativity throughout a nation's economy. In his 2001 book *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money From Ideas*, he writes that when combined, "creativity and economics can create extraordinary value and wealth."

Street art in the Samphanthawong district, Bangkok, Thailand.

Many local and federal governments in Asia have realised the importance of this, although some more than others. The creative and cultural landscape here is varied and diverse. No two countries are alike — culturally, socially or politically. Thailand is a country steeped in culture and one that has a long history and proud tradition of promoting and growing their artisans and cultural heritage. The Thai national cultural policy was set up in 1981 with "76 regional departments empowered to develop their own culture policy based on national guidelines, attuning activities to the local needs. With this organisation the Ministry of Culture (strives) to achieve one of the pillars of the policy determined in 1981: increasing appreciation among the population of Thailand for the country's own culture."[2]

Singapore, ever progressive, embraced culture and creativity in the early 1990s, setting up under The Ministry of Information and the Arts in 1991, the National Arts Council and the National Heritage Board, to spearhead the development of the arts in Singapore, create a museum precinct and construct a world class performing arts centre called The Esplanade (Lee, 2016). In 2008, upon its listing as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, George Town in Penang also used creativity in an attempt to boost the economy of an ailing city that was decaying and emptying out. Driven by various state and federal agencies such as George Town World Heritage Inc. (GTWHI) and Think City, the rejuvenation was implemented through a conservation and artistic platform via a series of grants and government funds. These grants enable conservators, artisans,

Creative architecture in Chanthaburi, Thailand.

Traditional art at Angkor Wat, Cambodia.

artistes and the civil society to collectively rejuvenate George Town back to its former glory via restored buildings, curated mural art, community placemaking and the introduction of the George Town Festival which would later gain international acclaim.

With the creative economy generating $71.8 million in 2017 and $78.9 million in 2018, Indonesia has aspirations to be a global creative economy player by 2030. This journey began in 2009, when then President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in an official decree, defined the creative economy as one that is based on creativity, skills and individual talent to create that which has value to both the economy and the nation. Building on this, the Creative Economy Agency (BEKRAF) was created in 2015, in response to President Joko Widodo's belief that the creative economy could be the strong foundation Indonesia needs to prosper. BEKRAF's mission includes incorporating all of Indonesia's creative assets, building a beneficial development climate, encouraging innovation, raising awareness of legal protections for art and innovation, and developing strategies that will advance Indonesia's economy (Metzger & Runde 2019). Two years later, using key definitions from United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, which cite Richard Florida as one of their sources, the country launched a white paper called *Kota Kreatif, Ekosistem Yang Mencipta* (*Creative City – A Creative Ecosystem*) that details this aspiration with key cities such as Denpasar, Bali and Bandung, West Java leading the charge.

Despite the progress made, there are some countries in Asia, plagued by unrest, that have fallen behind. For example in Sri Lanka, there appears to be "currently no formal recognition of the economic and social benefits of creativity and culture" (Caldicott 2020).

From a City at Eye Level perspective, many of these developing countries and their cities are facing large scale development that threaten both the tangible and intangible aspects of the cultural and creative economy. Without UNESCO Heritage Listing the built environment that has housed multiple communities over centuries may be destroyed. Thus, it is heartening to read about community-led projects that aim to showcase the beauty of the past and the importance of the human scale in keeping communities together.

> **"**
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> **Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.**
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> **"**
>
> JANE JACOBS

In an effort to give voice to many citizens who feel disempowered by the winds of change, projects such as the Lodhi Art District and the Slave Island murals not only unite communities, they empower them. The Maekha Canal project in Chiang Mai galvanises the community to be the solution in making a forgotten canal relevant again. No longer reduced to numbers on a data sheet, these placemaking projects highlight the power of place, in relation to the people living and working there. Using creativity as a platform to demonstrate the beauty of bottom up and contextual interventions, they are also a great vehicle for bringing about broader societal change.

'Living museum' by SCULPTUREATWORK
in George Town, Malaysia.

Art installation at Ophir Road, Singapore.

Moreover, the desired creative economy need spaces to flourish in, and it is precisely these types of initiatives that have the power to bring by back life to areas that are neglected. Creativity at eye level is a driving force sparking civic imagination and multiple values in rejuvenation processes.

At the end of the day, the case studies in the following chapters are powerful because they enable community voices to be heard with a scale and beauty that cannot be ignored. When governments speak of using creativity to drive economies, they should really take note of bottom up initiatives from local communities. Measures to ensure existing communities continue to thrive should take precedence over parachuting the latest hip or cool industry. For placemakers, real success is not worldwide recognition of a place, Instagrammed to death by throngs of tourists. Real success means creating local destinations that builds pride, leading to empowered communities, who together with the local government, are able to drive a vibrant economy. As Jane Jacobs once said, "Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody."

NOTES

1) It is important to note that Florida's theories are very controversial as they have been accused causing gentrification. Please read the following article by the Guardian titled *Everything is Gentrification Now: But Richard Florida Isn't Sorry*: https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/oct/26/gentrification-richard-florida-interview-creative-class-new-urban-crisis (Updated October 2017, accessed June 2020).

2) The provincial councils belong to the National Cultural Commission. This sub-division of the Ministry of Culture also runs the Thai Cultural Centre, a cultural and recreational mega-complex that was erected in Bangkok in 1987 with Japanese support. Another ministerial department is the Office of Modern Art and Culture, which strives to promote work by Thai artists. This department's activities focus on cultural industries and making the arts economically feasible.

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INSPIRING BETTER PLACES, ONE WALL AT A TIME

In conversation with Giulia Ambrogi (St+art India)

What started as a series of individual murals to bring colourful art to the streets of Delhi, has grown to become the acclaimed Lodhi Art District, between Khanna Market and Meharchand Market in Lodhi Colony. In 2014 St+art India was launched as an initiative to use public art as a tool to spark growth and imagination and to democratise society. The team found that though most Indian cities have an established art museum, there are hardly any galleries around for independent artists to exhibit their work. In the meantime, traditional art is a dying breed, as young people do not recognise its artistic and economic value. St+art India's primary mission is to bring art out on the streets, to change its perception, and to build alternative arts infrastructures in unconventional places.

SCALING UP CREATIVE IMPACT

Following St+art India's first successful public art intervention, more and more guided tours began visiting their murals. To deepen the project's impact on the urban fabric, the team decided to take on a more integrated approach.

They chose the former British Lodhi Colony as their area of focus, as they came across plenty of appealing blank walls around the district. As a welcome contrast to the majority of the cityscape of Delhi, the district is quite walkable, with great sidewalks, leafy trees that offer respite in the urban heat, good transit access, and an overall inviting human scale. Besides that, most of the buildings are owned by the government, which St+art India finds is a valuable measure to mitigate the risk of gentrification which might be the unwanted side effect of beautifying privately owned buildings.

In 2015 a team of young artists started with two murals in the community. It was a challenge at first to get the permits and convince the local government and heritage department of the idea's potential. But as the projects were delivered, they gained a lot of popular interest. When the local government saw the effects, including increased tourism in the area, St+art India was granted permission to take on the community as

a whole. The government even adopted St+art India's approach as part of its smart city strategy. For the first time, public art became part of the city's mission to create liveable places for people.

PLATFORM FOR CULTURAL EXCHANGE

In 2016 St+art India organised a two-month-long festival in which over 20 artists were invited to create public art all over the community. The project has continued to expand ever since. Lodhi Art District today consists of 56 murals by Indian and international artists. This mix is crucial to the project's success, as the focus on Indian artists is an important measure of the collective to increase local pride and overcome colonial trauma. On the other hand, the project is so unique in its scope and size that many renowned street artists from around the world are glad to contribute. Over time this allowed the Lodhi Art District to grow into a platform for cultural exchange and global diversity across 11 Indian cities.

Senkoe+Suiko at Lodhi Art District.

ART FOR PUBLIC INTEREST

St+art India chooses to work with government support as their primary financial foundation. The partnership helps the team accomplish their ambitions to have an impact on broader policy change, inspiring better places for people, one wall at a time. They don't take any direct funding from commercial interests, but work with paint company Asian Paints, who sponsors the material without any public display of logos. International artists are supported through cultural funds and financial help from several foreign embassies.

A VESSEL FOR SOCIETAL CHANGE

In recent years Lodhi Art District has been using its momentum as a vessel for broader societal change. The project has gained a lot of support from the local residents, who are positive about the

Community wall, Lodhi Art Fest 2019.

Community showcase, Lodhi Art Fest 2019.

improved aesthetics, safety and quality of public space, and the economic impact it brings. To spark more local participation in the project, St+art India circulated leaflets to gather the opinions and ideas of the residents from the district and surrounding slum areas. The input was collected and visualised as a word cloud on a central community wall. Then, Lodhi was inaugurated by the minister of urban development as an official art district during a festive community event. Activities included dance performances and upcycling workshops, with mixed groups across class and gender lines, divisions which are generally quite strict in India.

On International Women's Day the same year, St+art India had a female-centred artwork by a Polish artist inaugurated by the UN India and EU ambassadors. These events are exemplary of St+art India's approach of addressing societal challenges with art, while at the same time being sensitive towards the current state of affairs. In India, the caste system is still perceived as a commonly accepted form of societal organisation. While more people are starting to push back against such systems, income inequalities are still very much in place. St+art India wants to contribute to the creation of a more level playing field by making high-end art publicly accessible and treating everyone equally in the process.

A KINETIC CITY

Through the Lodhi Art District and other projects, St+art India has developed a more thorough understanding of the need for creative and hybrid solutions to address urban challenges in the ever-changing dynamics of South Asian cities. They never expected their tactical approach to be adopted as part of the smart city strategy, and they are happy that their patience and perseverance have led to success.

They believe that cities should be adaptive and creative towards change, referencing Harvard professor Rahul Mehrotra's notion of the fluid or kinetic city. For the future of Lodhi, they want to focus on activating the neighbourhood at night, as safety — especially for women — is still an issue in Delhi. Despite their mitigation efforts they have started to see that Lodhi is gentrifying because of the increased attention. They see it as an inevitable challenge for future projects, although the rent gap dynamic is beyond the scope of their work and a part of ongoing urban transition too.

DO'S

- **Spark growth and imagination** by using public art as a tool to create a democratised society.

- **Change the perception of traditional art** among young people and promote local artistic and economic value.

- **Use blank walls as urban canvases** and opportunities to promote walkability in your community.

- **Connect your initiatives to local government ambitions** to have a broader impact on policy change and to build partnerships.

DON'TS

- **Be careful when working to uplift an area.** Despite your mitigation efforts, it can be hard to prevent an overly quick urban transition, resulting in gentrification.

MURALS TO SAVE THE SOUL OF A COLOMBO NEIGHBOURHOOD

In conversation with Firi Rahman (#WeAreFromHere)
by Ester van Steekelenburg (Urban Discovery)

Colombo, Sri Lanka's capital, is undergoing a make-over. After years of civil war, the city is set to become a Singapore-like economic powerhouse. Chinese and Indian-fuelled investment has poured into the country to make this dream come true. But at what cost? Slave Island, an old neighbourhood in the heart of the city, is where the skyscrapers are going up faster than one can imagine. What used to be a unique and vibrant urban district is transformed beyond recognition. The quarter is quickly being swallowed up by the shiny new apartment buildings rising around it. Artist Firi Rahman has lived his whole life in Slave Island, and as more buildings in his neighbourhood are threatened by demolition, he has gathered up his artist friends and started a campaign to save its soul. #WeAreFromHere is a unique artistic initiative that maps stories of ordinary and extraordinary locals to highlight the unique multicultural community of Slave Island.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Slave Island — locally known as Kompannaveediya — has lived many lives. In the colonial days, when it was still an island in a crocodile-infested lake, the Portuguese and later the Dutch considered it the ideal location for a slave prison. The name stayed long after the slaves were set free, and the area grew into what it is today: a hub of vibrant activity where African, Indian, Javanese, Burgher, Moor and most prominently, Malay heritage are visible at every street corner. You can hear it in the music, see it in the colours and taste it in the food. No longer an island, it is a diverse community made up of people from all faiths and walks of life, which is unique in Colombo.

Slave Island is about to undergo another reincarnation. The location, just south of the city's Central Business District Fort, is triple-A, so the small alleyways have become valuable property. The eviction of residents in an area of approximately 160 acres in the heart of Colombo 02, began in 2012. Some 70,000 households are now being relocated to newly constructed apartment-style housing in other parts of the city. It is part of an ambitious $287 million 'City of Colombo Urban Regeneration Project' spearheaded by the Urban Development Authority. The scale and speed of the project is mind-boggling, with some streets being completely erased from the map, and with them their social fabric and memories of place. Java Lane is one of them. Here, the only thing the developers left standing is the green and white neighbourhood mosque, now surrounded by nothing but apartment blocks, disconnected from its community.

AN ARTISTS' INITIATIVE

Local artists Firi Rahman and Vicky Shahjahan started #WeAreFromHere in 2012, a visual project portraying the people that make up the unique neighbourhood of Slave Island. Their wall murals feature familiar faces from the community: sportspeople, street vendors, mechanics, musicians, actors and artists. Firi shares: "#WeAreFromHere showcases the people who make Slave Island a fascinating, unique and diverse place. There are many places that have been demolished or damaged already, like the popular Castle Hotel and the Java Lane mosque. There are many more places, of which we don't know whether they'll still be here in a few years' time."

But more than just the buildings, the project wanted to document the local community. They collected stories from ordinary and extraordinary residents and turned them into wall murals. Firi adds: "It's a time of rapid change for us, and we're all adjusting. I want to give people the feeling that this place — its heritage and culture — has value. With all

these new buildings they may feel that their land and their properties can be bought just like that. I tell the stories of the community, to make people feel proud of their place."

Firi started by recording voice cuts of the conversations he was having, and he was soon joined in his artistic journey by local artists Parilojithan Ramanathan and Vicky Shahjahan. Wanting to make it more interactive, the trio decided to draw portrait murals of the people around Slave Island. "We first wanted to make one big mural, but then decided to spread them through the neighbourhood to better blend in with the urban

fabric, create less disruption and get more traction," says Vicky.

One of the persons we 'meet' on the walls is Fazil, a respected member of the local society. His portrait tells the story of how here in Slave Island, funerals are occasions of togetherness for people, irrespective of their faith. We then meet 'the captain': a popular car repairman, Rifakath: a known rugby player and Milan: a street cart vendor, each with their own story that we learn through a set of accompanying cards. We later meet Milan in real life and buy a faluda from his cart.

"It's like a treasure hunt, but with people! You get a card of a person, and you have to find the respective wall mural. The idea is not just to get to know a person, but also to find out how they matter to the community."

"

The effect of the project was that Slave Island's many little laneways were uplifted and connected with an invisible artistic thread.

"

THE VALUE OF PLACE

The mural project proved a trigger point, an outlet for many concerned citizens and an opportunity for them to communicate the value of this place to others. What followed was a series of #WeAreFromHere walks, talks, exhibitions, gatherings and

celebrations. The effect of the project was that Slave Island's many little laneways were uplifted and connected with an invisible artistic thread. What started as an art project has become the face of resistance against the whims of big developers, and the voice of a unique community.

DO'S

- **Use art to amplify the voices of the community.**

- **Bring together different segments in a multicultural community.**

- **Generate interest from international agencies and festivals.**

- **Educate administrators and developers about the value of place.**

DON'TS

- **Don't stay away from complex and sensitive heritage.** When used correctly, art can reveal and connect different layers in your district.

THE ORGANIC RENAISSANCE OF BANGKOK'S CREATIVE DISTRICT

Thanan Lilaonitkul (Creative District Foundation) & Paul Schuttenbelt (Urban Discovery)

NEW BEGINNINGS FOR BANG RAK AND KLONG SAN

Neighbourhoods in Bangkok evolve rapidly. New developments often involve old structures being replaced by high-rise shopping malls, condominiums, and offices. However, the districts of Bang Rak and Klong San, associated with the older riverside history, have in recent years gone through a revival of a different kind. Two subsections of the riverside districts have experienced a creative and innovative transformation and have been repositioned as a single Creative District.

The two subsections, each located on opposite sides of the Chao Phraya River, are hotbeds of diversity, where east meets west and old sits with new. Here, traditional shophouses surround luxury hotels. Various houses of worship are situated only a few blocks apart. Both subsections, being part of older Bangkok, contain excellent footpaths that make them more walkable than other districts in the capital.

Each one contains ageing but quite active communities. Many new entrepreneurs were drawn in by the tangible and intangible assets of the Creative District and have established new destinations that make for an exciting scene. Galleries, cafés and restaurants have opened and boutique hotels have sprung up to make the area increasingly attractive.

Since 2015, various actors from different sectors have continued to come together to contribute to the area. They had one common cause: to re-energise the area without dramatically changing its physical and social fabric. Together and separately, these actors have introduced a new vibrancy to the neighbourhood.

COOPERATING ACTORS

There are three broad groups that have played significant roles in initiating a shared vision and maintaining momentum: 1) an informal network of individuals turned Creative District Foundation (CDF), 2) a former government agency (Thailand Creative and Design Center) turned Creative Economy Agency (CEA), and 3) individuals and organisations who submitted ideas.

CDF began with regular meetings to discuss the future of the area in 2015. Individuals who were operating businesses in the area but did not know each other started to see an organic movement in the area. Voluntary meet-ups fostered stronger bonds between them and allowed for a long incubation of the idea of a neighbourhood identity. In late 2015, the group began to spread the message

of revitalising the area. These conversations evolved into regular public town halls, which drew in many other interested parties.

Members of the government agency CEA began to attend the meetings of CDF. In these congregations, they shared their views, findings and future plans for the area. Acknowledging that their goals and visions were aligned, CDF and CEA began to cross-promote one another and agreed to the repositioning of the area as a Creative District. In late 2017, CEA opened its new headquarters in Bang Rak to the general public.

CDF and CEA also started searching for projects that could bring value to the district. Both parties understood that the key lies in evangelising the area and supporting others in their personal endeavours to contribute to a better city. Starting in 2016, a steady stream of projects began to debut in the Creative District.

PROJECTS AND IMPACT

Projects included the rebranding of a pre-existing gallery-hopping night after the new Creative District. Local galleries in the area arranged for their establishments to be opened late every few months to encourage the appreciation of art. The second BUKRUK Urban Arts Festival was launched in early 2016. As part of the festival, several neighbourhood walls were painted with street art. All of these walls were on thoroughfares that stayed out of residential areas. TedXCharoenkrung, run by civic-minded youths, premiered in late 2017 and engaged locals in the district to come speak about the future of the area. CEA launched its highly successful annual Bangkok Design Week in 2018, which saw the showcasing of design projects in venues spread throughout the district and thousands of visitors in one week.

These and other projects created a flow of media coverage around the Creative District. Increased foot traffic brought patrons to local businesses and a younger crowd began to flock the area. New galleries, cafés, and restaurants pulled in others to open similar types of businesses. Some older establishments in the area — spurred by this new energy and competition — began to step up their own promotion. Together, all of these changes helped revive the district's urban fabric, bringing with it renovated structures and upgraded public spaces.

DO'S

- **Create a shared vision, that is born out of a long period of incubation.** This will help the individuals and organisations who had the time, energy, and resources to implement the vision itself. Our vision helped to remove any competitive mindset and nurture a collaborative and supportive atmosphere.

- **Consistent evangelising of the area's vision and values can play a significant role in attracting a wide range of new players who adopt the vision as their own.** Place branding through social media, webpages, and media efforts can add to the interest. Match your projects with current trends. They can bring a large number of the general public to the area, especially young people. This has made the district itself more relevant and attractive to the next generation, who are much needed to sustain its continuous revival.

- **Make wise investments and tap into the right energy in the area.** There was no official budget allocated for the revival. Time and energy were given by those who saw the potential of the area, and projects secured their own funding. Several buildings were renovated by owners and renters and public spaces were upgraded through personal initiatives. Today, there is more economic activity in the area and increased interest in pre-serving existing assets such as heritage and food.

DON'TS

- **Avoid invasive installations; they might create resistance from local communities.** Instead, consider examples like street art initiatives which can be placed on main streets and which do not encroach on residential areas. Spread your different events throughout the area and do not confine them to the interior of one building.

FUTURE OF THE DISTRICT

The most valuable future projects would be those that are more permanent in nature, such as new organisations, businesses, or residents relocating to the area. Events, while essential, will only help temporarily. It is also important that visitors know how to find and navigate through the neighbour-hood and learn about the local community. Data for various purposes needs to be shared more effectively and used for wiser decision-making across multiple projects. For example, an innovative mobile appli-cation offering walking tours could not only guide visitors but also raise awareness about community issues. This would also be a useful tool to monitor the number of visitors while actively involving the local community.

REIMAGINING NEW CITY DEVELOPMENT IN MAEKHA

Thanawin Wijitporn (JaiBaan Studio)

Imagine Maekha is a campaign initiated by a group of architects, civic groups, and community networks along the Maekha Canal together with the Chiangmai Municipality in Thailand. The goal of this project is to use a participatory design approach to promote ideas for the revitalisation of Maekha Canal to the public and to related government agencies.

WHY MAEKHA CANAL?

Maekha Canal is a historic piece of Chiangmai City which dates back about 500 years. In the past, it functioned as an irrigation canal to serve rice paddies in the area and helped to protect the city walls from flooding during monsoon season. Nowadays the canal has been engulfed by rapid urbanisation, bringing pollution and transforming previously vacant spaces along the waterway from natural wildernesses into informal settlements. Some archaeological remains and ruins have even been encroached on by informal settlers, houses, and various other structures. Indeed, the relationship between human and nature around Maekha Canal and in greater Chiangmai City seems to be in disarray.

Over the last 30 years, there were many infrastructure projects initiated by the government to try to improve the area's quality of water, sewage systems, and canal-side development. But all of these projects failed; the canal is still dirty with trash and run-ons from sewage and greywater, and local communities living along the canal remain underprivileged. One reason why is that these projects lacked any participation from local residents and that they were implemented with little vision to integrate canal development into new urbanisms.

With the Imagine Maekha campaign architects from JaiBaan Studio and key partners are proposing a master plan to upgrade Maekha Canal and adjacent areas, which runs through the historic city for some 4.7 km. This master plan tries to integrate key elements of canal development into an urban design solution: improving water quality, solving the housing crisis with affordable housing, proposing non-motorised transportation options and green economics, adding more green public space, and revitalising the cultural value of the place.

In the past two years, the Imagine Maekha team organised various events and activities to raise awareness and public interest. Some activities focused on urban professional groups, such as a design service workshop with professional architects and urban planners, or a seminar on water management. Some focused on community engagement like an event for boat riding, art activities with children, and a series of community meetings to set up funding mechanisms to sustain the movement of the canal network. And some activities focus

on engaging local authorities to create a common platform to work together towards further canal development.

COMMUNITY BRIDGE

The community bridge was a project which started with a humble process. On Maekha Canal, there was an old bridge that connected the community to the rest of Chiangmai City. For years, people crossed this bridge to go to the market, local hospital, and the temple. When the old iron bridge nearly collapsed, people started collecting money to build a new one. During a monthly meeting, this news about the bridge was discussed with the Imagine Maekha team.

"We came up with the idea of building a new bridge that could put forward a new, positive image of the canal community. It should be creative in design and should involve the participation of the community in the construction process," tells Thanawin Wijitporn, co-founder of JaiBaan Studio. "With this rough idea, we organised a public space designing workshop to gain more ideas and contributions from local residents. Then we raised funds for the project through the Imagine Maekha Facebook page, which we used to top-up the money that people had already started to collect."

As more people heard the story of how this project was initiated by the community and the Imagine Maekha team, the project gained a lot of contributions and support from various groups. Today the bridge has been finished physically, and at the same time the social relationship between the community and the city has been bridged.
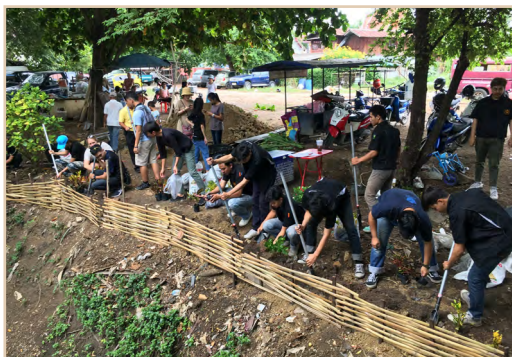
During the inauguration ceremony, many people participated, including local authorities, individuals, visitors, children — all proud of their contribution to the successful project.

DO'S AND DON'TS

As the project facilitator, Thanawin Wijitporn shares ten words of wisdom that they have learned from the working process with the community:

- **Participation is key.**

- **Work with people, listen to their ideas.**

- **Always co-create.**

- **Use many different kinds of tools.**

- **Don't think only about the place, but also about the people who use it.**

- **Be sincere.**

- **Respect and be respected.**

- **Think big.**

- **Go with the flow.**

- **Enjoy.**

WHAT NEXT?

Through the process, the community members who were involved in this small project have gained more confidence to enter in discussions and dialogue with local authorities. After the success of this small upgrading where local residents took the key role, a working platform among various local authorities with the municipality has been established. And now they are more active and interested to extend the project, looking to improve a 755 m long area on both sides of the canal to connect the inner community to the main road.

BUKATSUDO: A CLUB FOR CREATIVE CITIZENS

Yoichi Koizumi (About Your City) & Fumi Kawashima (ReBITA Inc.)

A businessman buys coffee and cookies at the stand next to the reception desk and chats with his acquaintances before going back to his seat at the work lounge. There are people giving yoga lessons in the large hall. In the evening, office workers on their way home gather at BUSHITSU, the clubroom. Meanwhile, a group of others are having a dumpling party in the large kitchen.

This is BUKATSUDO, a shared space located at the entrance to Minato Mirai, a developing office district in the Yokohama bay area. Yokohama was one of the first ports of call when Japan opened to the world in 1859, and has since grown rapidly as an international city. A shipbuilding dock built in 1897 was reborn as a commercial facility in 1983 as part of the city's massive Minato Mirai 21 redevelopment project. After being used as a game centre and karaoke box, the real estate company ReBITA opened BUKATSUDO in 2014 as a public-private partnership project with the city of Yokohama. It's not the usual drop-in co-working space, nor is it a rental room that only members can use. This is a place for adults to do what they love to do, an opportunity to realise a third place that is neither home nor office.

A SOCIAL OASIS IN A FORMAL OFFICE AREA

In Minato Mirai, where BUKATSUDO is located, there are 100,000 office workers. ReBITA, the operator of BUKATSUDO, believes that people who commute to the area for work need a place to leave their work behind in order to develop a sense of attachment to the city. Many office workers have little opportunity to interact with people from other companies, or even co-workers from other floors. BUKATSUDO was created as a space for people to connect and interact.

The main hall today (top) and the former shipbuilding dock (bottom).

The name 'BUKATSUDO' is a Japanese word that refers to the after-school club activities of students. In Japan, many kids join cultural or athletic clubs in addition to their classes. However, once they start working, most of these hobby clubs are abandoned. BUKATSUDO's 800 m2 space facilitates a mixed-use for all sorts of people, with a working lounge, a shared office (BUSHITSU), rental spaces, a kitchen, a studio, a booth, and a communal coffee stand.

Today, BUKATSUDO is used by programmers and businessmen as a workplace, by cooks as a filming space, by artists as a place for painting classes, and by a wide variety of people for creative activities. Some tenants use the space as an office on a monthly basis, others only come in once a month, and some just visit for coffee. Some people use the large room for events, while others use the small room as a private space to engage in their hobbies.

In order to create opportunities for people with similar interests to meet each other, BUKATSUDO organises a large variety of events that are easy for everyone to participate in. By holding them on a regular basis, the intention is that a community can be fostered and expanded. They also hold an annual festival for the whole community, providing an opportunity for people who belong to different clubs to meet and mingle. By multiplying the vertical and horizontal axes in this way, members are encouraged to encounter new interests and to deepen their own.

A SPACE FOR CREATIVE PERSONAL INITIATIVES

The 160-year-old city of Yokohama is a relatively young city, but since the opening of the port in 1897, many public buildings and industrial facilities have been tailored to Western culture. Today, plans are being made to preserve this typical Yokohama landscape, revitalise buildings and to add new functions.

The goal is to create an attractive city by encouraging creative activities in all genres of art and culture and to stimulate the residency and exchange of artists and creators. In particular, the BUKATSUDO team is working with the public and private sectors to create space for creative minds by converting historical buildings, warehouses and vacant offices. As a new development, the plan was to create a place where not only artists but all citizens could fulfil their creative dreams.

BUKATSUDO is run by ReBITA in collaboration with the Yokohama city government, the Arts and Culture Foundation and the real estate owners, and aims to be a nodal point where citizens can express themselves and enjoy a creative life.

At BUKATSUDO, there are a number of clubs such as the record club, island club and beer club. Most of them were set up by users, who initiated activities based on their interests and now hold regular events and parties. On Wednesdays, they have a 'Wednesday Social Hour,' an easy event for first-time visitors.

On the weekends, they hold classes with themes like photography, haiku, music, and film, which attracts participants not only from the neighbourhood but also from outside the district.

BUKATSUDO supports its users with their club activities and stimulates personal initiative, rather than taking the lead as the organiser for new events and programming.

WHAT MOTIVATES USERS TO GET INVOLVED?

The majority of people who now run activities at BUKATSUDO started off by simply seeking new friendships and looking for ways to contribute to the community.

In order to keep this spirit up, it is necessary to maintain an attractive venue. What's important is not only the beauty of the hardware but also the kind of people who work there and their mutual communication. Most of the staff working at BUKATSUDO are artists, dancers, and shop owners themselves. It is important that there are people who can talk to the BUKATSUDO team from the same point of view, rather than from the different positions of customers and staff. Having a creative staff attracts customers who like to be creative; this is how we built our mixed community. It's a place where you can work in a mix of public and private positions without separating them. That atmosphere makes the facility more appealing.
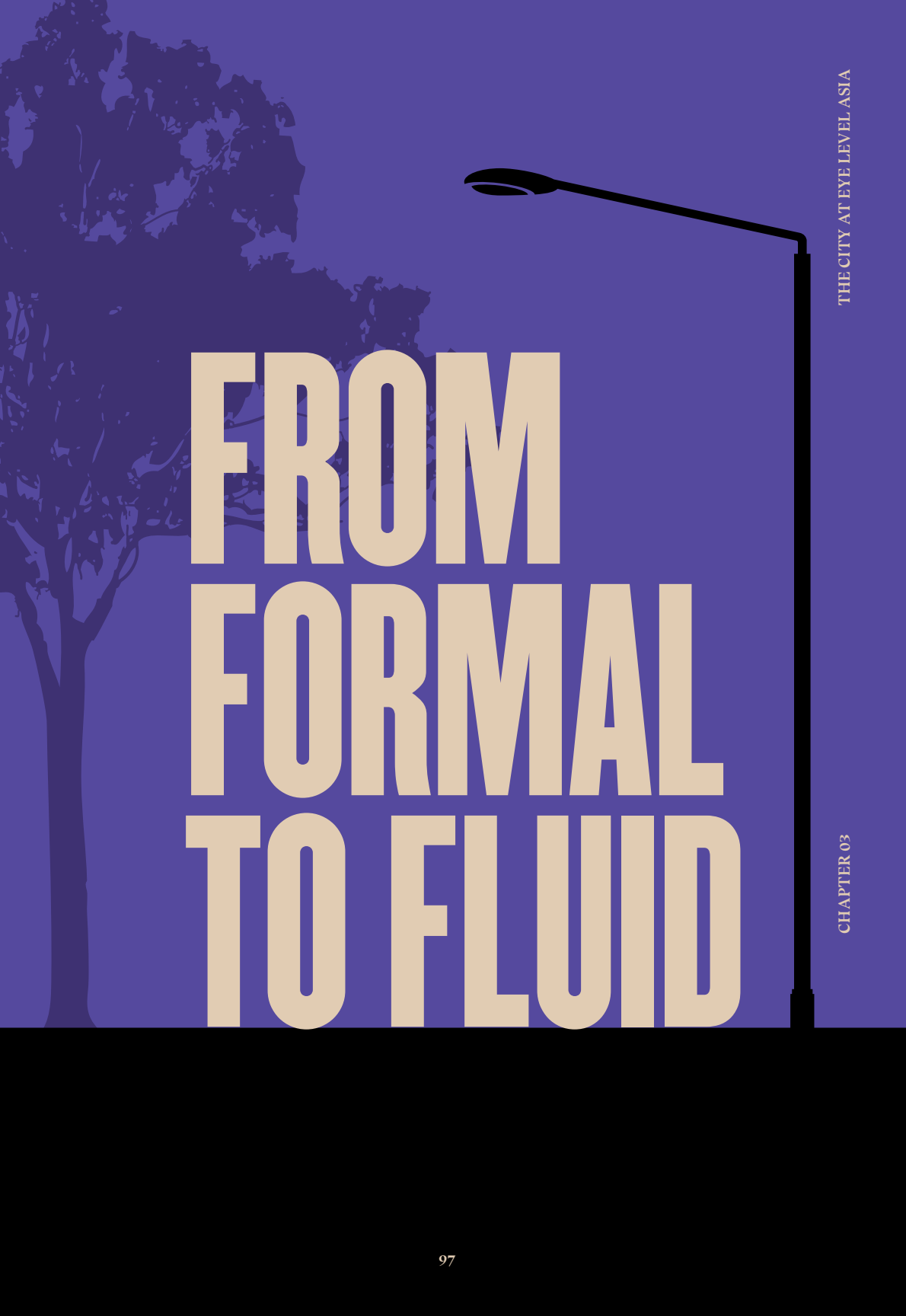
DO'S

- **Create room for spontaneity and co-creation in the programming.** Most activities at BUKATSUDO started off when new friendships emerged and started looking for ways to contribute to their community.

- **Create a place where anyone can express what they like, not just consume what is given to them.** Branches and head offices of various large companies are scheduled to move to Minato Mirai in the near future. BUKATSUDO aims to provide a safe space for self-expression for this growing community.

- **When re-developing a building, design for flexibility and diversity of users.**

DON'TS

- **Don't aim to just be a venue for events.** Instead, create a platform. Four years on, some of the clubs born at BUKATSUDO have had more opportunities to hold events outside of the facility, but they see BUKATSUDO as a place to come home to.

CHAPTER 03

FROM FORMAL TO FLUID

CHAPTER 03

INTRODUCTION

Stephanie Geertman (Living in Cities)

Over the last thousand years, Asian cities have grown into diverse urban settings. Today the region boasts both ancient, sacred cities and more pragmatic cities serving everyday habitats. It is here where the terms fluid and formal come into place. The fluid city we understand as being dominantly open, characterised by behaviours which may shape dynamic, unpredictable and non-linear processes. The formal city we understand as being dominantly closed, referring to planned interventions, which do not involve people but rather governments and their more linear policies and regulations. The fluid and formal city are both part of an urban setting; their relationship defined by the local contexts of each city.

The relationship between the fluid and formal city is a theme not limited to Asian cities. Richard Sennett makes the distinction for example between 'open' and 'closed' cities in Europe and North America. Drawing on French history, he explains how urban territories were once understood as comprising the open *cité* and closed *ville*. The term *cité* refers to the open city as "a collective place-consciousness" that is about "the character of life in a neighbourhood, the feelings people harboured about neighbours and strangers and attachment to place."

The open *cité* is fluid as it is "hard to read," "self-governed" and made of "dense human substance" and "crowds" (Sennett 2018, p. 52). The closed *ville*, presenting the overall formally planned city, is on the other hand a place where "national states, international business and ubiquitous bureaucracies rule" (idem, p. 60).

FLUID / FORMAL CITIES

The open fluid and closed formal are thus opposite ends of a spectrum. The fluid city predominantly presents open spaces (improvised buildings, flexible use of public places, crooked streets) that unfold due to the 'tactics' people develop for their everyday use of an urban space. In contrast, the formal city predominantly existing of closed spaces, (urban new towns, central business districts, green belts, ring roads), is created by 'strategies' for intentional planning. In the notion of Michel De Certeau, author of The Practice of Everyday Life, 'tactics' differ from 'strategies', as they "do not presume control and self-reference" (idem, p. 35). The tactics of everyday lives are what creates the open, fluid city, and it is in its continuous resistance to formalisation where the unique identity of the City at Eye Level in Asia unfolds.

FLUID / FORMAL IN ASIAN URBANISM

In Asian cities both the fluid and the formal city are rooted in the regions' pre-modern history, where urban settlements consisted of open market towns that grew next to closed citadels. This is illustrated in the pre-modern Vietnamese word for city, *thành thị* (Thong 2001, p. 17). Similar to the distinction between *cité* and *ville*, the term referred to the built environment as existing of two parts: a formal citadel (*thành*) and a self-governed market city of the people (*thị*).

When the Asian region started to integrate into the world economy in the 1960s, Modernist urban planning models from Europe and North America were adopted. Slowly, the formal city overtook the fluid city as the model for development and economic growth. As the *cité* was divorced from the *ville* in Europe, a process of separating the *thị* from the *thành* also started in Vietnam. This occurred all over the Asian region, first during colonisation, later in socialist regimes and in globalising cities. However, the fluid city has never been completely tamed in Asia. There are three key aspects that illustrate how fluidity remains part of the character of contemporary Asian cities.

1. A Region of Opposites
First, the region is itself a clash of opposites between dominantly fluid and dominantly formal cities. Cities with more diverse religions and cultures (mixing Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Christianity) and more liberal / market-led economies (largely South Asian e.g. Jakarta, Bangkok) developed predominantly fluid urbanisms. In contrast, the so-called Asian Tigers (Singapore,

Hong Kong, Seoul, Taipei — cities that first and rapidly integrated into the global market economy) with their largely mono-cultural (e.g. Confucian) and state-led economies, developed predominantly formally. As a Vietnamese urban planner once told me: "The extreme differences in fluidity and formality have developed a distinct contemporary Asian urbanism, it is the position of an Asian city on this continuum which defines its character."

2. The Hybrid City

Secondly, in each Asian city, the fluid and the formal are often integrated into one hybrid urban fabric. For example, although today the Vietnamese word *thành thị* has faded, the distinction of fluid-formal continues in the contemporary word for city: *thành phố*. This word has its origin in the Chinese language, composed of 城 ('city') and 庸 ('street'). The syllable *thành* ('citadel') connotes the formal city and *phố* ('streets') connotes the fluidity of its people. Today the formal *thành* and fluid *phố* are not just two parts of the morphology of the pre-traditional city, it is also represented throughout all the layers of the contemporary extended hybrid urban fabric. An example from Vietnam that illustrates this is Time City (figure 1-4). The plurality of Asian cities is also illustrated in the cases described later in this chapter. In some of them, the existence of fluid structures is threatened by formalisation. In other cases, it is the formal system that is actively reviving the fluid city, aiming to bring people back to the streets and involving communities in the process.

The Ruralopolis

Another factor is the urban-rural relationship. When the urbanisation process in Asia entered the hinterlands, it created space for rural lifestyles and habitats instead of erasing them altogether. The Indonesian term *kotadesasi* ('town-village-process'),

introduced by Southeast Asian scholar Terry McGee, refers to the typical Asian hybrid rural-urban urbanisation processes (McGee 1967; Ginsburg, Koppel & McGee 1991) that produced the Asian 'Ruralopolis' (Qadeer 2000). Asian cities still maintain structures of old villages, complete with village temples, public spaces around these temples and rural activities in the streets. Additionally, rural lifestyles continue in Asian cities through the way people dress (figure 5) and the use of urban public space. This can be seen in the presence of street-hawkers, wet markets in almost all Asian cities and the way community gardening is gaining attention by being adopted into formal urban development.

Public Space "Inside Out"

The hybrid city is also characterised by the frequent appropriation of public space for private activities. This is a habit of rural lifestyles, yet it is also related to the high density of Asian cities and the subsequent lack of domestic space. In urban Vietnam, for example, public spaces are used for domestic activities like cooking or washing and for commercial operations such as repairing motorbikes or selling food (Söderström & Geertman 2010). This plurality of public space in Vietnam has been conceptualised as public space "inside out" (Drummond 2000). The use of public space for commercial activities relates to the long tradition of Asian trade quarters with shop-houses. In these areas, the commercial / private / public use of a given space often fluctuates over time (see figure 6). The hawkers which are so characteristic of Asian cities, are of course an example of this dynamic.

3. Fluid-Formal Negotiation

Third, the hybrid urban fabric in Asian cities is enabled thanks to regular negotiation between formal planning and the fluidity of people's self-governance.

EXAMPLE OF THE FORMAL AND FLUID CITY IN
COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT 'TIME CITY' IN HANOI

Figure 1. View from 21st floor residential apartment inside Time City (2016)

Figure 2. View from ring road passing by Time City (2016)

Figure 3. Use of public space inside Time City (2016)

Figure 4. Use of public space just next to the walls outside of Time City (2016)

EXAMPLES OF PLURAL USES OF SPACE IN THE CITY IN THE ASIAN CITY

Figure 5. People walking in the park in their pyjamas in Hanoi (2010)

Figure 6. Park temporary used for "bird singing contest" in Hanoi (2013)

LENIN SQUARE, HANOI

Figure 7. Base of the Lenin Square used for leisure activities

Figure 8. Youth rollerblading at the Lenin Square (2013)

EXAMPLES OF NEW GATED COMMUNITIES, MALLS, HIGH-RISES

Figure 9. Shopping mall inside Vinhome Riverside Hanoi (previous farmland and villages) (2016)

Figure 10. Kids playing in a protected environment like playgrounds in shopping malls (2019)

Figure 11. Vinhome Riverside promotion banner in Hanoi (2016)

Which one dominates the other depends on the room different actors have to negotiate over the use and design of urban spaces.

The Asian 'Grey Space'
Since the 1960s, urban researchers have been looking at rapidly growing cities trying to understand this room for negotiation using terms such as 'illegal' or 'informal' as opposed to 'legal' and 'formal'. Ultimately, the parameters are related to local governance, which varies per locality. Where there is limited tolerance for "grey space" (Yiftachel 2009) or "zones of exception" (Ong 2006) the formal city will dominate (e.g. Singapore, Seoul). Where there is more tolerance, the fluid city will unfold (e.g. Manila, Jakarta, Bangkok). To return to the Vietnamese example, Hanoi's urban fabric is predominantly characterised by a fluid urbanism that, like water, adapts to the formal developments in the city. Although the intention of the Vietnamese Communist State was to construct a primarily formal city, due to the long years of war combined with a Post-Socialist institutional system in transition, "grey spaces" provided a lot of room for a self-built urban fabric to develop (Geertman 2007, Geertman & Kim 2019). In addition, it allowed private and commercial activities in public space, as well as recreational activities in what is considered in Vietnam as "political" public space (Thomas 2001). Figures 7 and 8 illustrate how this results in a merging of formal and fluid: leisure activities are tolerated at the political Lenin-Square, where it is (in theory) prohibited by law to use space for play (Geertman et. al 2016).

TOWARDS ASIAN CITIES FOR PEOPLE OR BY PEOPLE?

State-led urban planning, privatisation and commercialisation and people themselves have transformed Asia's cities since the 1960s. First, State-led developments demolished many places in the (local) fluid city: e.g. shopping malls replaced many wet-markets and high-rise towers replaced low-rise, self-built vernacular houses. Second, a rising middle class increasingly chooses to move from the fluid (informal / vernacular) to the formal areas (gated communities, high-rises, suburban row houses / villas). By doing so, their lifestyle choices change as well: visits to the wet-market are exchanged for the shopping mall, street badminton is exchanged for indoor gyms and playgrounds (figure 9, 10). These choices are compounded by increased international cultural integration, and Asian States associating formal building typologies with economic success. In some cases, governments spread banners with new town visions (figure 11) to actively propagandise a 'civilised society' as a formalised city (Harms 2009; Schwenkel 2012).

Although some of Asia's distinct character was lost during the first phase of modernisation (1960-late '90s) many Asian urban governments have been reorienting towards what makes Asian cities 'Asian': its people and the liveliness of its streets. Many renovations and reconstructions have now taken place: river-fronts have been restored (in Seoul, Shanghai, Tokyo) and wet-markets,

"

Many Asian urban governments have been reorienting towards what makes Asian cities 'Asian': its people and the liveliness of its streets.

"

shop-houses, street-vendors are being brought back to Asian urban agendas (in Singapore, Beijing, Hong Kong, Vietnam). Within this process, however, local residents are displaced. It is a process similar to gentrification as witnessed in other cities around the globe (Choi 2014; Shin & Kim 2014; La Grange & Pretorius 2014; Geertman 2016). This means for example that renovated shop-houses and wet-markets, previously used by local residents, have now become overtaken by tourists and the upper class (figure 12, 13). It's clear that "grey-spacing" also enables a process of increased segregation — in Yiftachel's words, an "urban apartheid"— to emerge (2009).

THE FLUID RESISTING THE FORMAL

Compared to the purposeful divorce of the *cité* and *ville* in Europe, it seems unlikely that the *thành* (formal) and *phố* (fluid) will separate in this region. The return to a focus on people is not unique for the Asian region, it is the key driver behind the whole placemaking movement, which is developing rapidly in many cities around the world. Yet the key reason why the fluid has such a strong presence in the Asian region might be the strongly embedded collective culture: many old and new networks of local self-governance exist. It explains the self-organising structures in streets like the 7th Avenue Green Street in Asahikawa and Toyohashi as sustainable management models.

Interconnection between public space and public life is of great importance of creating places for the community, yet this requires a change in perspective of modernised food culture by local governments. The examples from Kuala Lumpur and Hanoi show the importance of street food, hawkers and wet-markets as nodes for society. The Laneway Improvement programme in Kuala Lumpur and the Park(ing) Day initiative in Japan show the kinds of mechanisms that create self-organising / fluid networks that can reclaim spaces and places in a city for use. More often than not, these places work upon informal regulations, but at the same time need to understand how to work with the rules. It is precisely these surviving 'tactics' of various urban subaltern groups that are resisting and challenging the intentionally planned 'strategies' of urban authorities and planners. Asef Bayat has called this in his research in the Middle East the "encroachment of the ordinary" or "low politics" of the street as these fluid networks can gradually transition the urban environment even leading to transitions in formal decision-making in cities (2010).

With all this in mind, it's important to empower and train future designers to understand both sides of the puzzle. The Design Trust Futures Studio in Hong Kong sets up programmes with young designers and mentors to come up with solutions for spatial issues in dense cities like Hong Kong.

Figure 12. Shop-house in Kuala Lumpur repurposed to exclusive (expensive) chocolate store, displaced original residents in China Town.

Figure 13. Hanoi: Inner-city building renovated and repurposed for exposition on traditional architecture, displacing original residents (2016)

During the process they make sure to set up private-public space partnerships to ensure the sustainability of these spaces. "You should build relationships to open up the right doors. If the local government is collaborating, they can smooth out the process by helping to 'bend' the rules," explains Marisa Yiu of the Design Trust. That 'low politics' on Asian cities at eye level can also easily transform into real political movements is witnessed in the examples of Hanoi's *Tree Hug Movement* in 2015, Hong Kong's *Umbrella Movement* (2014) and in the recent *2019-2020 Hong Kong Protests* (Geertman & Boudreau 2018).

TOWARDS OPEN CITIES

In conclusion, although the fluid city remains under pressure of formalisation in Asia, architects and planners in this region — as in other parts in the world — are increasingly shifting attention back to what Sennett called the "Open City." To realistically do so, however, Sennett proposes that we might need an "ethical code" for city development. A code in which there is "an ethical connection between the urbanist [the planner, the formal] and the urbanite [the people, the fluid]." For Asian cities, this would mean protecting and designing not only tangible Asian heritage (as is often done at present) but also giving space for Asia's intangible (socio-cultural) structures — which would include giving more voice to the people and their capability towards self-governance. It is this more tactical urbanism by the people, which will both contribute to more equality in cities, as well as provide more meaning to urban places and spaces in this region and elsewhere in the world. As Richard Sennett puts it: "the open city is not created for people but by people."

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A GREEN STREET THAT BINDS THE COMMUNITY

In conversation with Sakura Hachisuka (7th Avenue Green Street Merchant Association) by Kazutaka Nomura Paterson (Nomura Architectural Design Company)

Japanese non-cosmopolitan cities seem different on the surface, but all share one common issue: the decline of shopping streets. Lifeless streets with closed storefronts have become expected in many cities that were once thriving hubs of economic growth. The town of Asahikawa is the second biggest city in Hokkaido with a population of 330,000. The city is proud to have legalised the first pedestrian-only street in Japan, nicknamed 'Kaimono Koen,' translating literally as 'park for shoppers'. The 1.5 km long thorough-fare was once filled with patrons, but gradual changes in the economy have made the street obsolete. But despite the nationwide pessimism towards shopping streets, in recent years a thriving community has formed around the 7th Avenue Green Street, a tree-filled footpath that runs between the city's shopping district and its cultural facilities.

A HAND-MADE NEIGHBOURHOOD

In 2013, a small group of local residents gathered together with a sense of impending crisis. After a series of discussions, the group formed a non-profit organisation to realise their ideas into actionable initiatives. "We re-evaluated the charms and strengths of the community and united to start the 7th Avenue Green Street Redesign Project," explains Sakura Hachisuka, a non-profit town developer and member of the merchant association. "The focus was simply to switch our perspective on the shopping street from a mere economic area to a place that promoted true emotional well-being. We took surveys and hosted forums to encourage people's participation in developing a clear vision for Green Street."

First, the merchant association proposed ideas on how passersby could better enjoy their time. In one effort, they set up wooden tables, chairs and parasols to create a public communal space, next to the trees that have overseen the Green Street for the last 40 years. Slowly, the street became a place for parents to read picture books to their children, for business people to eat their Bento lunch boxes, and for the elderly to chat with their fellow residents. The success of this people's action drove the city of Asahikawa to implement the same concept throughout Kaimono Koen. During this time, the team worked closely with the city while they provided the project with the public funding it needed.
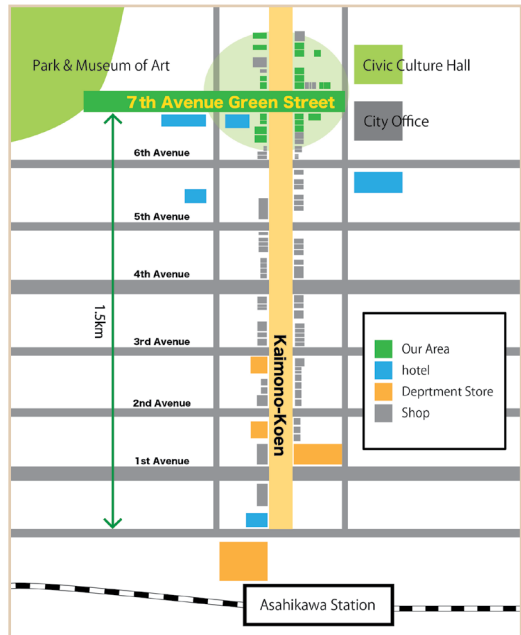
Since then, foot traffic on the street has slowly recovered and young business owners have shown interest in opening new shops. The active group of residents also looked up the owners of unoccupied buildings and negotiated to either rent or buy them. Unfortunately, the properties required significant and costly repairs. Another obstacle was the reluctance of older business owners in the area, who found it difficult to picture the street regaining the liveliness of the past. In response, the group hosted a series of symposiums and tried to articulate a common vision. This led to an uptick in supporters from the local government and the Shinkin banks who resonated with their vision. This collaboration subsequently made it easier for young entrepreneurs to receive support from the local credit union for the launch of their ventures. The merchant association responded to these actions by easing the admission

requirements and even welcoming non-merchants to join. The group had proven that they were driving a movement for the whole area, and not just for individual profit.

GALLERIES AND GARDENS

Gradually, the 7th Avenue Green Street came to be recognised as the 'Culture Art Street'. "We now have a gallery, a few coffee shops, and a small cheese factory, in addition to the existing children's bookshop and restaurants," says Mr. Hachisuka. "These hand-renovated shops were previously unoccupied, solitary storefronts, so this is great news in terms of the utilisation of properties. Now, these business owners gather regularly to exchange visions for the next decades."

At the same time, a new city agreement from 2015 called the Adapt Programme has encouraged people's participation in the management of the city-owned properties and lands. One popular idea was to plant regional plants in the surrounding areas, creating green pockets that appealed to the five senses. A professional botanist and a landscape architect collaborated with a local agriculture high school to plant our gardens. This was Hokkaido's first case of the Adapt Programme and the story was quickly picked up by the media. Nowadays, people of all ages treat the street-side garden as if it was their own. Every year, the community gathers to decide which plants should be added in the coming spring.

In 2018, the group started the Eco Museum Project, in which local students would elaborate on the culture and history of the Green Street to passersby. One of the students then had an idea to install a series of monuments display-ing short stories that people can read as they walk. A nearby technical college partnered up with a local children's book author to complete this project in June 2019. This kind of engagement has helped the participating families to develop stronger ties to the neighbourhood.

A building on the Green Street before (left) and after (right).

LESSONS LEARNED

Thanks to these efforts, the association has managed to create a community where everyone's ideas are celebrated. Although this is one of the aforementioned shopping streets in decline, the close, positive community has managed to drive more people to visit the area every year. The initiative continues to provide a platform where citizens of all ages are encouraged to think and act on town planning and propose ideas on the usage of public space. The belief is that these processes will bind people across generations and ultimately create a better future for the city.

This writing should be concluded with a piece of advice for fellow placemakers. There are signs on both ends of the Green Street that read: "The Green Street is where people who love this street create a cozy communal space for the future city residents." It is critical for placemakers to create autonomy among stakeholders. Although the Green Street project is still in the middle of this transformation, the team is convinced that nurturing a cross-generational attitude toward area development is a key driver for the successful unification of community in any city.

DO'S

- Besides the core group, **try to involve a larger group of community residents and business owners at an early stage.** Their ideas and insights can massively impact the direction of a project, and the earlier this happens the better.

- **Respect the existing community.** Be aware that some conservative and cautious local residents might not cooperate with you, regardless of the positive promises of your ideas. Listen to their challenges before presenting your solutions.

DON'TS

- **Don't think that money is the problem.** The most effective solutions are often free. Start your projects by reevaluating existing social and physical assets. Financial concerns will unwind themselves as you become the master of fun and free public space initiatives.

STREET FOOD AS COMMUNITY ANCHOR

Joanne Mun (JM Urban Design & Planning)

Walking down the bustling streets of Downtown Kuala Lumpur (KL), one occasionally finds street hawkers selling food and beverages in their makeshift carts. Street hawkers are preferred eateries for Malaysians as they serve local favourites at generally affordable prices. Eating in an outdoor or semi-shaded environment can also offer respite from stuffy and non-air-conditioned eateries.

Street hawkers that operate in the laneways of Downtown KL are an inextricable part of the city's intangible heritage. Away from busy main streets, these hidden gems are located on pedestrian laneways between low-rise traditional shophouses. This preferred typology of hawkers has given the city a unique place identity and an important anchor for its local community.

Street hawkers on Lebuh Pudu, Downtown KL, March 1989.

STREET HAWKERS AS NODES OF SOCIETY

Kuala Lumpur, like many of its peers, is slowly being transformed into a safer, cleaner and less chaotic city. In the last two decades, the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (KLCH) has been working hard towards resolving the city's social problems, including the regulation of illegal street hawkers. In 1997, it was reported that there were 36,500 petty hawkers and traders in Kuala Lumpur (Nazri 2019).

KLCH understands the importance of retaining some street hawkers as part of intangible heritage with cultural and touristic value. Old establishments, transformed into familiar landmarks, also offer a form of wayfinding, a tool to navigate busy streets. These eateries also serve as nodes of society, by giving locals a place to hang out without needing to spend much money. As far as KLCH is concerned, it does tolerate some irregularities as long as there is acceptance from the local community.

Still, KLCH has embarked on a drive to clear the city's sidewalks and major roads from street hawking, to improve walkability, traffic flow, and to create neater-looking public spaces. While necessary, this has inadvertently pushed some street hawkers to cease operations altogether, or to move to food courts, wet markets, or other approved locations. This has an immediate impact on the social value of the city, as regular customers lose a familiar place to meet and hang out. These processes fracture good community relationships, as it takes time for locals to find another eatery they are comfortable with.

Cluster of street hawkers on laneway off Jalan Hang Lekiu, December 2019.

> "
> ## Street hawkers in the laneways of downtown Kuala Lumpur form an inextricable part of the city's intangible heritage.
> "

Over the years, enforcement activities, coupled with natural attrition from retirements or the lack of successors has led to a decrease in the number of street hawkers in Downtown KL.

It should also be noted that in the past, hawker stalls were mostly temporary arrangements. Today, many of them have become somewhat semi-permanent or permanent institutions, with KLCH itself now taking the lead to provide licensed hawkers with permanent stalls at specific laneways, complete with utilities.

The laneways of Downtown KL continue to draw office workers, passers-by, and people in search of good food. The cluster of hawkers located at Lebuh Pudu and Jalan Hang Lekiu, nestled between rows of traditional shophouses that typically open for breakfast and lunch only, regularly serve up to 50,000 office workers. Over the decades, they have developed into a tightly-knit community. These disparate stalls have created an ecosystem where culture, race, and socioeconomic classes mingle in a distinctly Malaysian way.

WARUNG MEK KELANTAN

Location: Laneway off Jalan Hang Lekiu
Years of operation: 38
Best seller: Curry *Ikan tenggiri* (mackerel)
Cuisine type: Malay

"My husband (Syukri) learned to cook from his brother. We were both from Kelantan and came to Kuala Lumpur 40 years ago. We started off sharing a stall with another vendor. We eventually took over the stall when she retired. Our stall has no signage, but we are known as Warung Mek Kelantan," says Kak Ramlah.

SISTER NGOR WANTAN MEE

Location: Laneway off Jalan Hang Lekiu
Years of operation: 32
Best seller: *Wantan* noodle
Cuisine type: Chinese

"This is my father-in law's noodle stall. He taught me the recipe and I took over the stall when he passed away 22 years ago. My customers are mostly college students and office workers. Life as a street hawker is difficult. I wake up at 4am every day to prepare. My kids aren't interested in the business, so I hired staff to help me out," said Sister Ngor.

MR. YEONG CURRY PUFF

Location: Laneway off Jalan Hang Lekiu
Years of operation: 40
Best seller: Egg curry puff
Cuisine type: Southeast Asia

"My husband and I started off on Jalan Hang Lekiu. Eventually KLCH eradicated street hawkers there, and we ended up on the laneway. We've been here for so long and have good relationships with other hawkers like Kak Ramlah," said Yeong.

FROM SANITARY LANES TO F&B HOTSPOTS

The rapid growth of Kuala Lumpur into a major urban centre took place in the late 1880s when the British Colonial administration moved the administrative capital for the state of Selangor from Klang to Kuala Lumpur. By 1887, there were 518 brick and tiled roof buildings in the city (Gullick 2000).

Each new city block was approximately 150m long and 40m wide with predominantly two-storey Neoclassical and Art Deco style shophouses. Narrow laneways of 3 to 5 m wide were designed between the rows as sanitary lanes to allow bullock carts to collect night soil and to provide emergency access.
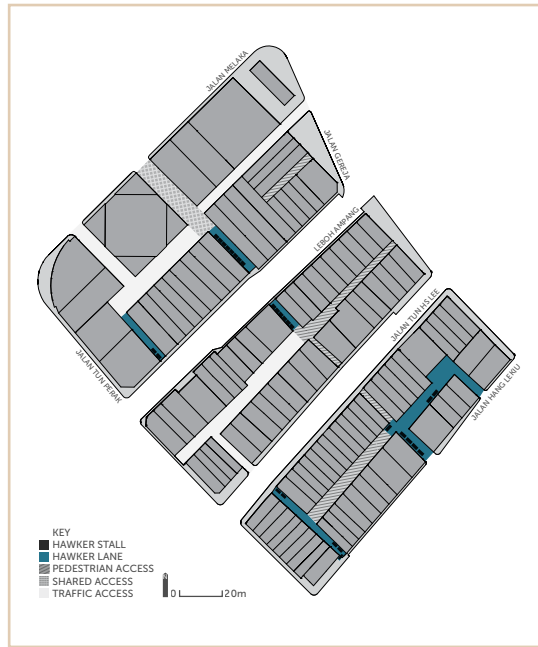
Typical city blocks with laneways for street hawkers in Downtown KL.

As development intensified, some low-rise shophouses were demolished to give way to modern high-rise buildings, resulting in an eclectic mix of architecture styles. Even with the advent of modernisation, laneways remain an integral part of Downtown KL's identity as it offers much more than a path for pedestrians. With established eateries, the provision of food and shade in a compact space offers a unique environment that is attractive for both locals and tourists.

FUTURE OF HAWKING
DO'S

- **For street vendors –** Other than ensuring food quality, building good relationships with customers and providing a clean and comfortable eating environment are also crucial to sustaining business. To widen the pool of potential customers, vendors can consider tapping into online marketing and improving food packaging for corporate clients.

- **For local communities, NGOs, and customers –** The local community, along with the 'Eat local movement' and heritage advocates, must do more to promote good hawkers across all platforms, while continuing to provide constructive feedback.

Makeshift eating area on laneway off Jalan Hang Lekiu, December 2019.

- **For local authorities –** Regulators and planners must provide infrastructure support by allocating proper operating locations, and continuously pushing for higher hygiene and sanitation standards. At the same time, authorities must engage hawkers so that there is genuine dialogue, rather than practising top-down management styles. Elsewhere, KLCH can consider providing financial assistance such as through the Small Business Grants Scheme.

DON'TS

- **Lack of hygiene and sanitation** – Laneways are limited by the lack of utility services. Hawkers don't have electricity, water or common (underground) bins. In addition, leftover food waste attracts pests, causing public health issues. Assigned hawker laneways should be transformed for basic needs.

- **Obstruction to pedestrian flow** – Some hawkers build permanent structures on the laneways like metal roofing attached to shophouses to create shade or mount kitchens that obstruct pedestrians.

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A NEW VISION FOR WET MARKETS IN HANOI

Stephen Davies (Project for Public Spaces & Place Solutions Group) & Tran Thi Kieu Thanh Ha (Livable Cities & HealthBridge)

As a public health NGO, HealthBridge cares deeply about the condition of public wet markets in Hanoi. They provide affordable, fresh and nutritious food to urban residents, especially the poor. In 2011, there was a decision made by the Hanoi government to replace all markets in the inner city with supermarkets and commercial centres, which were considered more 'modern'. In response, HealthBridge conducted a 'Save the Markets' campaign and was successful in overturning the government's decision.

Still, the question remains: what *should* happen with the 350 wet markets in central Hanoi and surrounding districts? How can you 'modernise' these traditional markets while still retaining their authenticity and core reason for being? Leaving them in their current, often decrepit, condition is not an option.

Motorbike rides through Chau Long Market (left); a well-designed vendor stall, Ngoc Lam Market (right).

Markets are too important to the future of the city. Their trade areas cover the urban core of the city, and statistics show that they remain the preferred place to shop for fresh food, because of their convenience and low prices. Thousands of people — urban and rural — depend on these markets for their livelihoods, and it is these personal relationships between vendors and customers that bring people back day after day.

THREATS TO WET MARKETS IN HANOI

Hanoian wet markets are challenged by a perfect storm of issues: modernisation in a country that has one of the fastest growing economies in the world, with one of the youngest populations; a lack of understanding the value that markets bring to the city; rampant, homogenised development; poor maintenance and food safety standards; and the fact that people now have choices ranging from entrepreneurial street vendors to an ever-increasing number of supermarkets, hypermarkets, and even online shops.

Another curious problem: shoppers are convinced that they must be able to drive their motorbikes right down the market aisles and stalls. At one market surveyed, 70% of customers arrived by motorbike and only 4% parked them. This presents a different kind of challenge: customer safety!

DEVELOPING NEW DESIGN APPROACHES

HealthBridge invited Stephen Davies to Hanoi to assist local architects in developing design concepts to revitalise the wet markets in the city. The collaboration took place over three fruitful weeks and involved studying local needs and generating design concepts to meet the expectations of market operators and stakeholders — and to make markets better public spaces. Other key partners included the Hanoi Architects Association and a new design centre, AGOhub, who gathered over 20 young architects to volunteer to participate in our process. They based their project in part on policy work already completed by the city's think tank, the Hanoi Institute for Economic and Social Development (HISDED), which had prepared a lengthy report outlining recommendations for future action.

Their goal with this effort was to develop new design approaches to revitalise three wet markets in the city — Chau Long Market, Ha Market, and Ngoc Lam Market — as models for other markets. All had stakeholders who were interested in renovating the market in the near term, with varying levels of funding available. The plan was to put ideas into action as quickly as possible, so that the group could demonstrate each market's potential.

These projects could also be laboratories for identifying policy changes — and the changes in operation and management — that would be needed to make investments more effective.

"Leading up to the design workshop, we met with the management and key stakeholders for each of the markets; conducted customer and vendor surveys, and carried out extensive analyses and audits," explains Stephen Davies. "Following the workshop, the designs were presented to these same stakeholders and later to a larger group of policymakers. In general, the response has been largely favourable, including some 25 articles in local media, all of them positive."
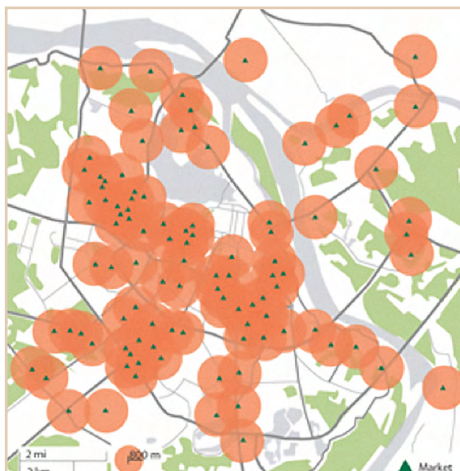
A map of Hanoi showing the location of wet markets and the walking distance (in orange) to them, demonstrating how they serve most of the city.

KEY DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR WET MARKETS

During the design process, the team sought to develop practical solutions to a series of specific problems:

- **Signage and identity:** How can a market's signage and architecture be designed so as to give it an iconic presence in the neighbourhood, while supporting the historic neighbourhood context?

- **Roof structures:** How can roof structures better protect the market from the weather (heat, rain) while still allowing natural light and ventilation?

- **Entrances and exteriors:** How can markets be designed to connect to surrounding districts? How can indoor markets have vibrant and active exteriors at the same time?

- **Circulation:** How can circulation be improved to create easy access to all vendor stalls and minimise dead areas in the market?

- **Floor and drainage:** What materials and design details could be used to enable floors to be more attractive as well as easily cleaned and drained? What interesting aesthetic features could be added (e.g. tile patterns)?

- **Vendor stalls:** How can vendor stalls be better designed to display products, improve sanitation, add storage, and attract more customers? How can these stalls be made flexible to accommodate different types of products and made affordable for vendors? How can food safety be enhanced?

Chau Long Market today.

- **Waste facilities and recycling:** How can markets better manage trash systems, including recycling and separation of organic materials? How can service areas be kept cleaner and more sanitary?

- **Fire safety:** What materials and fire safety systems should be incorporated into the design to bring markets up to modern standards?

- **Parking:** How can we minimise the impact of motorbikes on the interior of markets? Can more parking be provided so that customers can be 'weaned' from riding directly to vendor stalls?

- **Placemaking and public spaces:** What are strategies to add more public seating and gathering spaces in markets? How can the areas around markets become better public spaces?

This last question inspired great creativity in the designs. Markets are public spaces in themselves, but seating and recreational spaces are often limited. Interior public spaces can be the focal points for markets and communities. Furthermore, markets can anchor any public space around them and create opportunities to enliven these spaces as community destinations. Designs developed showed how markets could help create new public spaces in districts where space is limited (such as a waterfront esplanade next to a market, or a rooftop park on top of one). Public officials in Hanoi had not thought of their markets in this way before and found these ideas especially exciting.

EXAMPLE DESIGNS

The design ideas that emerged from this project are just that: ideas. They are intended to stimulate interest and demonstrate the potential that Hanoi wet markets can achieve with the right kind of reinvestment, management and operations, and policy support.

As the design of the three model markets were developed, important lessons were learned that will be applied as HealthBridge and the Hanoi Architects Association move forward with this project.

DO'S

- **Maintain the core functions and traditions of wet markets.** Markets need to be improved while still retaining their core functions as markets, not as second class tenants of shopping centres.

- **Engage vendors, customers, and key stakeholders.** People are passionate about their markets and have great knowledge about them.

- **Identify phased approaches to market renovations.** Sometimes simple changes can be made at first that are less expensive but that can be the first step towards major renovations and additions.

- **Support vendors to improve their businesses and design of their stalls.** When people shop at markets they focus on the products, and if these products are well displayed on clean, well-lit, and well-functioning stalls, with adequate storage not visible to customers, sales should increase.

- **Make markets 'more than markets' with other complementary uses and public spaces.** The concurrent improvement of public spaces can be an important motivator to the city government.

- **It is important to address broader city policies regarding market investment, in addition to upgrading Market Design and Infrastructure.** Engage new partners, and modernise the operations and management systems of the markets.

DON'TS

- **Don't forget to carefully plan for the private investment and management of markets.** The experience of markets in Hanoi, where private operators have not always been consistent with maintenance efforts, demonstrates that it is important to carefully plan and execute future private investor involvement, which is currently the preferred government policy.

- **Don't try to reinvent the wheel. Create knowledge exchange, share design and management innovation more widely, and create a more unified system for all markets in Hanoi.** Learning from cities such as Barcelona, London, and Hong Kong, which have established different forms of city-wide policy, Hanoi can shape its vast, largely untapped treasure of markets into a more coordinated systems.

NEXT STEPS

Although challenges remain, there are some very positive signs that have emerged from this project. Vietnam is now working on a new policy for wet markets to be adopted in 2020, and is collaborating with HealthBridge on this effort. The goal is for them to recognise that the recommended principles described above should be considered when approving any project to rebuild or improve wet markets. The 'New Vision for Wet Markets' project was also nominated as a finalist in the For Love of Hanoi Awards in August 2019, which honours significant contributions to the capital city. The awards are organised annually by the Hanoi People's Committee and sponsored by the *The Thao & Van Hoa* newspaper and Bui Xuan Phai Fund.

Finally, HealthBridge is continuing to work with local authorities in the districts of the three markets to discuss, plan and pilot the improvements of each market, taking into consideration the proposed design concepts.

A version of this article was originally published by HealthBridge on January 8, 2019 and Project for Public Spaces on March 1, 2019.

One design concept for the renovation of Chau Long Market included a public park on the roof and a new mezzanine for cafes and cooking demonstrations (top), proposed Improvements to Ngoc Lam Market (middle), and proposed public space, Ha Market (bottom).

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO PUBLIC SPACE DEVELOPMENT

Hiroyoshi Morita (Nippon Engineering Consultants Co., Ltd.), Ryuzo Hasegawa (Japan Society of Urban and Regional Planners) & Ogawa Naoya (Toyohashi Machinaka Conference)

The city of Toyohashi is located in the Chubu region of Japan, with a population of approximately 380,000 people. Its city centre is in transition, as are those of many other Japanese cities, and is gradually shifting toward the revitalisation of areas where people live, work, and socialise. Geographically scattered public facilities, redevelopment facilities, and public spaces are becoming interconnected thanks to the development of several important streets. Each activity, supported by a deep sense of civic pride, is now being developed into a series of advanced place-making initiatives.

The authors of this article are participating in this effort as designers of the 'Street Design Project' and as advisors and secretariats of the Toyohashi Machinaka Conference.

HISTORICAL SITUATION

Toyohashi is home to the Port of Mikawa, which is famous for being the leading automobile port in Japan. Until the 1980s, the city centre was always crowded with people. On weekdays, office workers came and went on and many shoppers lined the streets, while at night and on holidays, port and factory workers visited the town from the harbour to enjoy a meal and some entertainment. There were many facilities supporting civil

Figure 1. The pedestrian paradise in 1970.

and cultural activities, such as movie theatres, department stores, bookstores, and audio shops. In addition, a pedestrian paradise was created on the main street during the holidays and a summer night market was held for a month in a park near the city centre.

However, like most Japanese cities, the city sprawl, the location of large stores in the suburbs, and the relocation of some public facilities gradually reduced the number and consumption of visitors in the city centre. With time, the number of commercial facilities also decreased. Various events once held in the city centre were forced to choose between shrinking or seeking economies of scale, and some events moved to parks away from the city centre. Even though the traditional tram service was maintained, the number of passengers gradually dwindled.

FIRST EVOLUTION: REVITALISATION OF PUBLIC SPACES

In Japan, the Central City Revitalisation Law was amended in 2006 and, as a result, local governments made various efforts to revitalise their city centres. In the city of Toyohashi, the local government and local estate company began redevelopment projects in the central city area in the early 2000s. For example, they installed pedestrian decks and plazas in front of the station and developed an art and cultural theatre and a childcare support centre. However, these facilities are geographically dispersed and could therefore not be expected to be used as a network.

However, in Toyohashi, concurrent with these improvements, several activities including existing public spaces were brought back to life simultaneously by various departments of the local government and the private sector. Public screenings were staged at annual film festivals, held by citizens, and the local government revived the pedestrian paradise, which had not been utilised for a long time. Local shopping streets with buildings built on the water in the

1960s started to hold art events and 'rainy-day markets' that make use of their unique cityscape. These movements were implemented as the public and private sectors each independently discovered the value of public spaces and started moving on their own. There was no overarching initiative to encourage these ventures during this period; it was the accumulation of cultural and civic pride that encouraged each subsequent activity.

SECOND EVOLUTION: INTERCONNECTING PUBLIC SPACES AND PUBLIC LIFE

The local government, local shopping streets, and local businesses welcome these movements but share a sense of apprehension concerning their sustainability. Accordingly, two projects have been launched.

One is the Street Design Project. This project is a redevelopment project for the streets that connect public spaces, which have been individually developed and are geographically dispersed. The other is the Toyohashi Machinaka Conference. This is a place management organisation that was formed in response to the new redevelopment project and public space development.

Rainy-day market.

The Street Design Project is an initiative that has been active since 2015. Led by the local government, it is a project to reconfigure the district's main streets into safe, pedestrian-friendly spaces. Having selected several routes that connect public facilities and bases, they aim to improve the quality of these walking spaces to increase the convenience of movement around downtown areas.

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> **It was the accumulation of cultural and civic pride that encouraged each subsequent activity.**
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During the design process, there were various opinions offered up by concerned citizens, such as how to handle the trees on the street, where to ride bicycles, and the safety and use of the sidewalks. In response, the planning team adopted a workshop process centred on dialogue between citizens, conducted field surveys with citizens, explained and improved the plan using models, and adapted the landscape through mock-ups. To date, some sections of the new walking area have already been constructed. The texture of the pavement was changed, bicycle lanes were implemented, and new benches and activity spaces were installed.

The Toyohashi Machinaka Conference is a place management organisation that was established in 2018. This organisation consists of representatives from major local companies, residents' associations, and universities.

Kayamachi Street.

Social experiment of public space use (square market).

The mission of the organisation is to visualise the future of the area and to promote various initiatives to improve the value of the area. One of their investigations concluded that there are many public spaces in the city that were not being used effectively. They challenged themselves to collect as many examples as possible, including empty courtyards, sidewalks, private sites, vacant buildings, etc., to organise new rules for using each space, and to connect the places with interested stakeholders. In an experiment in 2018, various programmes, such as a lunch mall, a limited-time rest area, and an automobile exhibition were implemented, showing the potential of each public space.

By simultaneously promoting the connection between public space and activities, a mechanism was created to establish a sustainable and autonomous network of individual activities. Neither the connected public spaces nor the initiatives that support activities would work without the enthusiasm of each individual player, and the communication between them. Placemaking organisations and local governments have cherished the opportunity to carry out the dialogues we need to build sustainable structures and spaces that take advantage of the diversity of people.

Together, these initiatives are starting to create a virtuous cycle that is fostering a new sense of civic pride for the citizens of Toyohashi.

DO'S

- **When revitalising city-centres, make sure to link different activities together** as a network for a bigger impact in the city.

- **To secure the future of an area it might be wise to create a place management organisation**, consisting of representatives from major local companies, residents' associations, and universities.

DON'TS

- **Don't assume that all good place-making initiatives should be kick-started from the bottom-up.** As a local government, make sure to always work intensively with citizens and to hear their concerns. Organise workshops centred around dialogue, conduct field surveys and adapt these ideas through mock-ups.

Social experiment of public space use (street calisthenics).

LANEWAYS: TRANSFORMING SPACES INTO MEANINGFUL PLACES

Daniel Lim & Eke Omardin (Think City)

Laneways are often underutilised assets and their true potential is over-looked. They act as service routes for sewage, provide fire access and drainage, but can also act as secondary connectors and spaces for informal activities. However, in Malaysia, laneways are often viewed as the private backyard of a property, typically very likely to be neglected, resulting in spaces that are perceived as dirty, unsafe, and unsanitary, as well as potential hotspots for antisocial and illegal activities.

As part of Think City's mission to make cities people-friendly and resilient through catalytic renewal, one of our initiatives involves the transformation of laneways into healthy, shared community spaces.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

The Laneway Improvement Programme was established after conversations with various stakeholders crystallised a need to transform dilapidated lane- ways into vibrant community spaces with opportunities for healthy living. The programme aim was to create greater awareness about the management and maintenance of public spaces with community involvement, and play catalyst to an urban solution movement.

The ongoing programme provides an opportunity for community cham- pions to work with civil society partners to implement urban solutions and programmes relevant to the needs of selected community groups including homeless people and migrant workers.

The intended effect is that these laneway programmes would help change the negative image of cities and arrest the emptying out of local residents in the downtown areas of Malaysian cities, and in the process, develop a stronger sense of community and belonging.

THE PENANG PILOT AND MOVING BEYOND

The Laneways Improvement Programme kicked off in George Town, Penang as part of the Little India Improvement District (LIID), seeking to improve the underutilised laneways, which were often subjected to antisocial behaviour such as urination or informal disposal of trash, and for vice activities such as drug use.

The project was a success for the first six months but soon afterwards faced challenges in terms of community ownership, leading to a more sustainable intervention. The lesson learned was that a project such as this should not be purely dependent on community commitment. Tenants move, stakeholders change, and without the local city council's active participation in implemen- tation and maintenance, there was no feasible ownership of the programme.

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Conversations with various stakeholders crystallised a need to transform dilapidated laneways into vibrant community spaces with opportunities for healthy living.

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Left and right: The Yap Ah Loy Laneway before and after upgrade works.

Left and right: The Johor Bahru Laneway before and after upgrade works.

From the learnings of the pilot laneway project in George Town, the programme expanded as Think City extended its reach to other cities in Malaysia: Butterworth, Kuala Lumpur and Johor Bahru. The Laneway Programme was also championed by other drivers such as Penang Island and Kuala Lumpur city councils, and even found its way into other cities as Ipoh and Kluang.

PROCESS AND KEY LEARNINGS

With a community-driven, bottom-up approach, the participatory processes were instrumental in the preparation and development stage of the Penang pilot. Indeed, this is true for any pop-up in that it demonstrates the possibilities and sparks ideas. Think City's engagement methodology featured resources to inspire and support residents, community groups, businesses and other stakeholders in imagining the improvement and better use of the laneways. Necessary by nature, engagement is the key to understanding existing users of a space and their current problems and needs. This provides a holistic approach in understanding the space before initiating demonstrative projects or implementing amenities.

Top: The Bandar 13 Laneway before intervention. Bottom: Upgrade works.

Top: The Bandar 13 Laneway Space Activation Demo during World Urban Forum.
Bottom: The Bandar 13 Backlane Cinema.

The process is as follows:

1. **Stage 1: Site Selection**
   Site reconnaissance is conducted to understand the historical and social fabric of a space. Prior to any intervention, identifying sites, informal discussions with local communities and authorities are carried out. A simple opportunity-cost analysis is conducted to maximise outcome.

2. **Stage 2: Observation and Investigation**
   To better understand how different stakeholders use the space, the team are to observe the site on various days at various times, because data collected may differ on the weekends, evenings and early mornings. During these site visits, the team will be able to gather an initial understanding of who are the potential champions, generate a simple SWOT analysis and gauge the impact of the project. Documentation of this process is critical as it provides evidence and maps out the stakeholders.

3. **Stage 3: Understanding the Site**
   Using an evidence-based approach, a baseline study of population and land use is conducted. Once data has been collected, preparation of cultural mapping is to be initiated. Cultural mapping safeguards cultural diversity and uses a wide range of research techniques and tools to 'map' distinct peoples' tangible and intangible cultural assets within a local context.

4. **Stage 4: Stakeholder Engagements**
   Multiple tiers of stakeholders are usually part of the engagement strategy, including those working directly within the project, and those associated with the project. Stakeholders would typically consist of the immediate community, relevant partners, individuals or institutions, and the general public who may be interested in the project. These engagements prioritise participation and insightful dialogue.

5. **Stage 5: Demonstrative Project**
   Once the four previous stages are complete, it is crucial to test out proposed interventions with a temporary demonstrative project to see how it works and how it's perceived by the community. The aim is to avoid jumping straight to implementing permanent solutions at a great investment, only to discover that the solutions are ineffective for the community.

6. **Stage 6: Implementation**
   After the demonstrative project has been tested for three to six months, observations and feedbacks are compiled, and the interventions are reviewed. During construction, monitoring is conducted daily to mitigate any issues the surrounding community might face. Place management is discussed with local authorities to get buy-ins and to ensure a maintenance plan is considered.

7. **Stage 7: Post-mortem**
   Monitoring the project site from time to time is important as cities are consistently evolving. Sometimes all it requires is a simple nudge to the relevant stakeholder to address a certain issue. Learnings are carried forward to future projects.

KEY LEARNINGS

The overall learning from the Laneway Improvement Programme is never to underestimate the importance of understanding the local context and the community, in order to have a comprehensive and well-thought-out project brief. Being on the ground provides first-hand knowledge and understanding of the requirements before embarking on an improvement project, and finally, to enter into all of this with an open mind — to learn, experience and grow.

In order to ensure participation and sustainability, it is also critical to have collaborative partnerships. For example, the communities, the local authorities, the politicians and also the people working in the area should be united under a common vision. This provides a positive and successful outcome and it allows opportunities to advocate and get buy-ins from other stakeholders.

Another key observation is that community commitment can change. For example, when the Penang pilot project first kicked off, Think City banked on the surrounding community's commitment. But during the process, some of them eventually relocated, which affected the project significantly. Depending solely on place management is insufficient, and multiple layers of participation and commitment are required, such as buy-ins from the city council and different community groups as well as SOPs for place management and maintenance.

DO'S AND DON'TS

- **Discover, demonstrate and implement the project through an inclusive, participatory process at all levels**

- **Approach the project with an open mind** and avoid prescribing solutions to problems that have not been fully understood and researched.

- **There needs to be personal investment in placemaking projects.** Placemaking is not just a vocation but requires personal commitment and genuine passion for making cities people-friendly.

- **Failure is part and parcel of the process.** They are lessons learned and provide on-ground intelligence.

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FROM THE STUDIO TO THE MICRO-PARK

In conversation with Marisa Yiu (Design Trust Hong Kong) by Siënna Veelders (STIPO)

"As an architect, I see myself more as a community designer," tells Marisa Yiu, co-founder and Executive Director of the Design Trust in Hong Kong. "It's important to activate communities, to design participatory processes and to curate shows that add value for the community," she adds. Hong Kong Ambassadors of Design (HKAoD) was established in 2007 as a non-profit and registered charity by a group of creatives in the city. Marisa explains that they started out with the aim to stimulate exchange between local and international design communities and the public, through a series of imaginative and unconventional projects, channelling creative energies from both the street and the studio. In 2014, in an effort to raise design excellence, they started to involve content building for designers in training and research initiatives. The idea arose to create a grants platform to stimulate these activities. The Design Trust was founded in 2014 and has since expanded to include Design Trust Futures Studio (DTFS) in 2017.

DTFS 2017 — 'Small is Meaningful' — MobilePark by Wendy Wu (urban designer and researcher), Ricky Lai (graphic and branding designer) and Xavier Tsang (industrial and product designer). Mentor: Sam Jacob. Lead Curator: Marisa Yiu.

There's a lot of creativity in Hong Kong, but not much space for experiments, deeper research and ideas. How to connect design with different stakeholders, from the grassroots to the government level, and between the public and private sectors? And how to make sure designers' voices are heard? Marisa was previously involved in teaching at several universities and sought ways to link their foundation work to student alumnus projects. "After observing the needs of the community, the DTFS programme became a platform to connect young graduates with new opportunities and with established designers as mentors," she explains. Diversity was important to the team, and they sought to mix different disciplines and perspectives, for example by having a writer and an architect work together with a local district council. "In this way, we wanted to make a stronger social-cultural impact and to catch the attention of investors. The project-studio concept grew into the Design Trust Futures Studio, a cross-disciplinary initiative and long-term flagship programme."

SMALL IS MEANINGFUL IN A CITY WITH LITTLE SPACE

At first, DTFS focused on 'Small is meaningful': a series of concepts to work with the high-density living conditions of Hong Kong. "We wanted to seek designs that stimulated smallness and sharing, the phenomenon of micro-housing and the future of micro-parks. In seven months the group hosted several workshops, conducted field trips and researched various ideas. The outcomes were presented in a public exhibition and a documentary."

After this project was completed, DTFS continued with piloting the micro-parks. Four practical yet playful micro-parks were realised in different

locations around Hong Kong to create multi-functioning resting gardens, playgrounds and sitting-out areas. Marisa remarks: "An important part of the process was to prototype and test ideas through social experiments in open space. Also, the hashtag #addyourmicropark was launched to have people vote for their favourite micro-parks and to be part of the design archive."

LONG-TERM IMPACT AND ENGAGEMENT

DTFS exhibitions have a fixed structure. Every programme is approximately one year long but is designed to have a long-term impact. As a naturally curious person, Marisa believes that the programme should be continuously evolving, and should function as a platform to address different urban issues every year. "In 2019, we started with discussions and design workshops. Through the process, we saw the importance of engaging with the community. Since then, it has become obligatory for all of our design groups to do so. This results in a deeper understanding of the needs of the local community and more hu-man-centric designs."
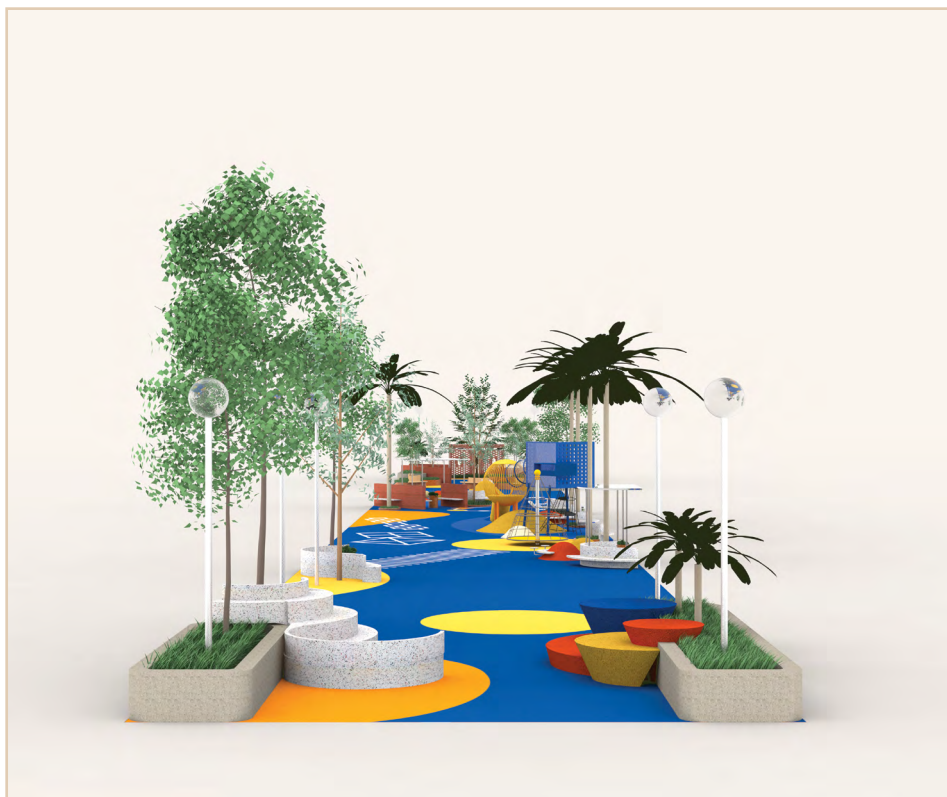
DTFS 2018 – "Play is for the People" - Yi Pei Square Playground , Tsuen Wan – Communal Living Room by Stephen Ip (Architecture and Landscape), Kay Chan (Industrial and Product Design), Christopher Choi (Architecture and Landscape) and Jonathan Mak (Graphic and Branding). Mentor: Mimi Hoang. Lead Curator: Marisa Yiu

SHOULD GOOD PUBLIC SPACE BE PRIVATE, PUBLIC OF A MIX OF BOTH?

Elaborating on the considerations that drive their process, Marisa explains: "75% of Hong Kong's actual land is green — that's a lot! There are many urban pocket parks, but how can we ensure they are designed for the needs of the community? For the Tsuen Wan park, we questioned the existing exercise equipment for the elderly. Nowadays kids from the neighbourhood also play on them, which was not anticipated, but the community makes use of public space as it fits their needs. This showed the team the necessity of designing and building by neighbourhood assessment."

Construction site of Yi Pei Square Playground, Tsuen Wan. Going beyond conceptual ideation, the aim is to transform the micro-park designs into reality.

The Design Trust explores ways to develop private-public space partnerships to ensure the sustainability of these spaces. This is the first pilot programme in Hong Kong where design concepts are designed with and for the community, instead of using the traditional top-down approach. For their 2019 exhibition, DTFS collaborated with different companies and foundations, allowing for investment on different levels.

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> **If people fall in love with the park, we hope that they'll take care of it.**
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LESSONS LEARNED

Today, the small DTFS core team is still committed and involved in all locations. Marisa's main concern is how to make sure that the local communities are committed enough to the long-term care and maintenance of the micro-parks. As such, the team is working on proposals for a management model that can build upon a strong sense of civic ownership. Marisa observes: "At the completion of each design, there is only so much we can do; the rest is the responsibility of the local government. If people fall in love with the park, we hope that they take care of it." She feels that the government should be included in this model as a continuing factor that engages with the community for the future of these parks, adding that: "It is our responsibility to build knowledge from within so that we can extend the community experience."

DO'S

- **Always work in a collaborative effort.** "Our programmes take a lot of energy since public stakeholder management can be exhaustive, and one has to be persistent in order to yield empowering and positive results! Work closely with communities in order to build momentum and trust."

- **Always learn by doing and question the process.** "Every time we start with a new park our ambition is to do better."

- **Build relationships to open up the right doors.** If the local government is collaborating, they can smooth out the process by helping to 'bend' the rules. For example: normally, playground equipment can only be ordered from standard catalogues that are government-approved, but in these collaborations, the designers have the opportunity to work with the constraints and to customise the designs into more site-specific, culturally sensitive models.

DON'TS

- Never assume you are done after finishing the project. **If you want to create sustainable impact you must plan long-term.** When you complete a project or a prototype exhibition, make sure to record and document the process you've created. Think of a good management model and connect the right parties to ensure the sustainability of the project.

- **Never think you're too old to learn.** The mentor-mentee programme is not a one-way process, both parties can learn from each other. In order to have this model work, it's important to spend time recruiting the right participants to the programme.

DTFS 2019 – "Heritage is Innovation", Feature Carpet design by Elaine Yan Ling Ng, in collaboration with Tai Ping, Mentor: Lyndon Neri & Rosanna Hu. Lead Curator: Marisa Yiu.

A MOVEMENT TO REIMAGINE THE STREETS OF JAPAN

Rui Izumiyama, Yuya Ishida, Yohei Ikai
& Koichiro Tamura (Sotonoba)

Sotonoba is a community media platform focused on outdoor and public spaces. It was launched in 2015 with the concept to "change outdoor spaces to great places!" As of 2020, there are more than 600 articles on the platform introducing case studies and topics on public spaces in Japan and the world. In addition, as an incorporated association, Sotonoba also participates in projects such as pilot projects, research, process design, and scheme design, applying principles of tactical urbanism and placemaking. In 2019, The Guardian described Sotonoba as the next generation of Japan's urbanist community.

Sotonoba launched Park(ing) Day Japan to promote the movement in the country and implemented Park(ing) Day in Omiya (Saitama City) in 2017 and Numazu (Numazu City, Shizuoka Prefecture) in 2018. In 2019, Sotonoba organised a Tactical Urbanism Class at an actual site in Miyamasuzaka (Shibuya-ku, Tokyo) in an effort to train more practitioners in the know-how of Park(ing) Day, based on the results and experiences of the past two years.

WHAT IS PARK(ING) DAY?

Park(ing) Day refers to efforts to convert on-street parking spaces into small parks for one day only. It is practised by volunteers in cities around the world on the third Friday of every September.

In 2005, the first Park(ing) Day emerged when an artist group called Rebar turned a parking lot into a small park on a street in San Francisco by inserting coins into a parking meter and bringing artificial grass, planters and benches to occupy the space. Photos of this urban intervention spread quickly on the Internet, and the following year, Park(ing) Day became a movement with volunteers practising actions in various cities around the world. Now, when you search for #park-ingday on social media, you'll find many examples of these interventions around the world.

Parklet, a permanent version of Park(ing) Day, was launched in San Francisco in 2010.

What both Park(ing) Day and Parklet have in common is the use of an on-street parking lot. But where the former is a one-day event, the latter is an open-call programme in which an installer (such as street-facing restaurant or café) applies for the permanent use of a parking space, renewing it annually.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PARK(ING) DAY IN JAPAN

Even though Park(ing) Day had become widespread in many countries since its initiation in 2005, it was not implemented in Japan until some 15 years later. One of the reasons for this is the language barrier, which limits access to information by Japanese speakers.

The other is how difficult it is for citizens to take action on the streets of Japan, especial-ly on carriageways. In recent years, special provisions for legislation, such as special provisions for road occupancy permits for sidewalk cafes, have become available, but citizens and private companies are still

unable to obtain permits on streets managed by the government, municipality, or police. Access to such provisions is limited to organisations accredited to the region, such as national / local governments, main street associations, and area-based management organisations.

This is partly due to the historical context. Traditionally, streets in Japan are not regarded as places where citizens take action. In such circumstances, Sotonoba believes that the practice of Park(ing) Day is meaningful in providing opportunities for citizens to take action on the streets, developing human resources equipped with practical skills, and fostering a movement to better use the streets in Japan.

WHAT IS NECESSARY TO MOVE FORWARD?

There are several factors that should be considered while implementing Park(ing) Day in Japan.

1. **The first is a level of familiarity with the legal procedure of obtaining a permit.** Sotonoba's community of next-generation urbanists have accumulated practical knowledge including understanding of legislation and issues on the ground which has been learned from research and experimental projects.

2. **The second is the implementation of the project, with a partner who can acquire permission.** As mentioned earlier, only governments, main street associations, and area-based management organisations are currently allowed to occupy street spaces. Thus, Sotonoba alone cannot obtain street permits. To address this, the project partnered with a municipality and UDCO (Urban Design Center Omiya) in 2017 and with municipalities and main street associations for Numazu in 2018 and Shibuya Miyamasuzaka in 2019.
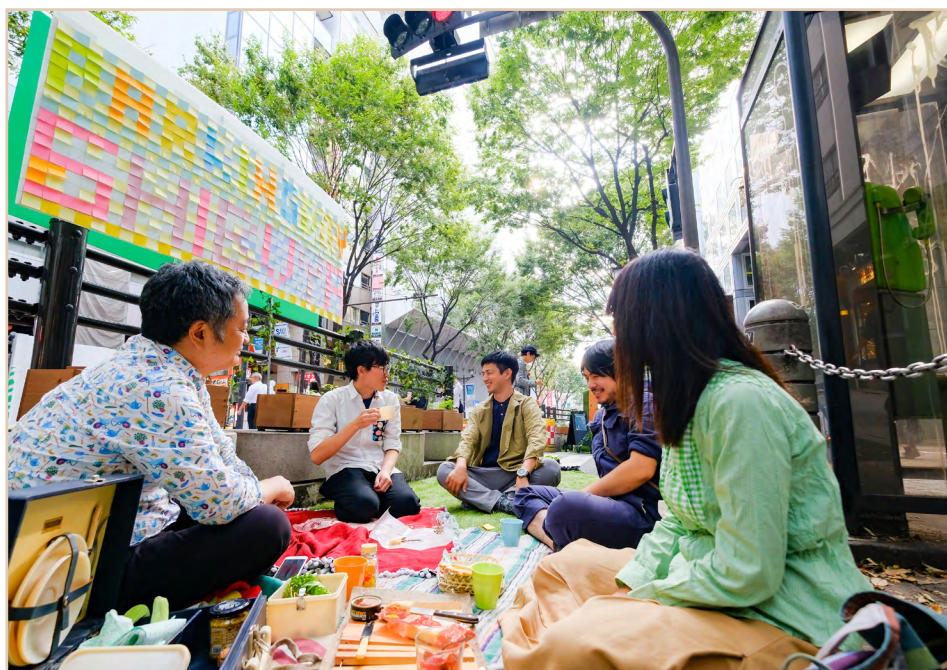
3. **The third is the design knowledge to put the planning into practice.**
Even with a permit, you have to deal with the logistics of everything from
furniture to tools on the day of the event. Sotonoba has professional
members in urban design, architecture and landscape design. They have
the design knowledge needed through their projects that are already
in practice. Also, Sotonoba can systematically support practitioners by
sharing design knowledge and advice.

DO'S

- **Start with small actions.**

- **Research the laws and systems necessary to take action.**

- **Find the partners you need.** Cooperation by the government, main street
associations, etc. is essential to use the streets in Japan.

- **Observe and ask questions** about what citizens and users want and need.

- **Formulate a concept and design a space to realise it.** Consider the reali-
ties of cost, transportation, storage, etc.

- **Publicise the action.** In addition to press releases, post them on
Instagram and Twitter with hashtags.

DON'TS

- **Do not make it just an event.** Awareness of short term actions for long
term change is important (i.e., tactical urbanism).

- **Do not design selfishly.** Listen to the needs of citizens, users and partners
to understand what they want.

- **Do not leave items on the site**. Plan for storage and tidying up.

THE FUTURE OF PARK(ING) DAY IN JAPAN

Some visitors who experienced Park(ing) Day 2019 in Shibuya Miyamasuzaka
said, "I want to do this next year in a main street in my hometown." In the future,
the Sotonoba team would like to share the know-how that was acquired so
that Park(ing) Day can be expanded horizontally to other regions in Japan. The
next Park(ing) Day is set for September 18, 2020. Let's meet on the street!

REIMAGINING HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

Johannes Widodo (National University of Singapore)
Margaret Brooke (Heritage Hong Kong Foundation)
Ester van Steekelenburg (Urban Discovery)

PEOPLE AND PLACE

People and place are inseparable; a two-in-one. A place without people is dead, and people make spaces into places through their attachment. There are many ways for people to be attached to a place — from a mere glimpse, or a brief visit, to inhabitation. The longer one stays in a place, the more intense the interaction with the local community, and slowly attachments to the place form and grow into love. This process requires time; there are no quick fixes.

The intangible traditions and tangible forms carry the memory and the identity of a place. It is the 'DNA' of the place that needs to be preserved and nurtured amidst inevitable changes along the historical timeline. The management of permanence and change is the essence of heritage conservation.

The built environment reveals layers of the unique history of a city and its inhabitants. Placemakers value the soul of a city, and love to bring back life that may have gone missing over time. Old buildings and places have stories to tell, and placemaking has the power to reinvigorate that in new ways. Often historic parts of a city have unique and existing human-scale qualities that tend to get obscured by the longing for modernity in development. How to care for our heritage while moving ahead?

Placemaking comes with challenges and opportunities in any urban setting. However, Asia's historic city centres present a particularly complex environment — with a complex and a continuously shifting multi-ethnic population that have different values of identity and place, often beleaguered by complicated or even contested ownership of properties. Immense pressure on space and competing interests for the use of that space between different segments in the community may result in tensions between long-time residents and newcomers, old and young generations, and also between residents and visitors. Each of these groups may have different locational preferences. They may benefit from rising property prices, or not, they may use public facilities or not, they may use the space at different times of the day or year (day, night, seasonal), they may have a different sense of place (for some a temple, market or tree is a daily necessity, for some just a nice backdrop) and they may have a different sense of ownership and belonging (collective identity).

STORYTELLING

The story of a place is the story of the people and the community who love it. One person tells the other of the love stories about the relationship between people and place. The story is then handed down from generation to generation, fostering the memory of place.

The internet and social media have helped to spread and to perpetuate these stories. Dynamic social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, etc. help to spread information and attract interests across the globe, beyond static portals like Websites and Blogs. Travel Apps that work on multiple platforms help to connect local communities and places to global individual travellers and visitors.

PLACEMAKERS

To deal with this complex landscape, both the outcome and the process of placemaking should respond to the specific challenges of each historic district. Moreover, today's planners and place-makers need to do so with urgency. From Bangkok to Beijing, urban development takes place at such a fast pace that the soul of the city can get lost within one generation. In striving for modernity, old neighbourhoods are being demolished to make way for modern infrastructure and skyscrapers, often with little reference to the architectural or historical significance of the place. Gentrification is a global phenomenon, but in Asia, often the speed and scale ruthlessly disrupts the existing social and cultural urban fabric. It is not just buildings that are demolished to make place for taller structures, but whole streets which are erased from the map. And with the disappearance of the tangible, the intangible values comprising collective identity and memories of place also vanish. In Asia's historic districts, we see many examples of lost heritage, uprooted communities, and damaged streetscapes.

Compared to well-resourced municipal governments in the West, often local or district governments in Asian cities have limited resources or budget to manoeuvre or to make significant scale investments in the renovation and upgrading of buildings, infrastructure, or public space. With some notable exceptions, the local tax base is usually limited, political leverage constrained, and therefore it is typically property owners and developers that dictate development. In Asia's competitive land and real estate markets, a meaningful discussion about city planning boils down to economics. In older neighbourhoods, demolition and newly built is the norm, and one cannot simply blame property owners or developers. Without incentives, co-investment or a district-wide approach, it is difficult to build the business case for preservation. Their financial advisors will insist that by preserving a historic property, their return on investment is compromised, and while others may benefit, they carry a disproportionate financial loss. As a result, not all concepts that are successful in 'the West' may work in 'the East'. Solutions need to be tailored to the country and city context and the challenge is to look for creative and innovative ways to involve and entice multiple stakeholders, in particular, the ones that drive development.

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STRATEGIES

The examples in this book show a variety of ways in which different parties in historical inner cities have found common ground to upgrade, revitalise, and reenergise their districts with an emphasis on the public space component. The cases presented here select a broad range of interventions and partnerships and highlight specific and contextual complexities. What we can learn from these cases is:

- **Start at street level —** Streets are the most common public space and typically the most accessible. People of all walks of life come together on the traditional street, it does not discriminate, it is an inclusive and democratic space, and it forms a neutral location for encounters between

people from all walks of life. In dense inner-city districts where more and more shared space in and beyond buildings is privatised or commercialised, the risk is for spaces to become introverted and exclusive. Therefore it is imperative to protect the street level and keep it open, walkable, extroverted, and inclusive for all. The cases show convincingly how simple initiatives like street sign improvement, storytelling projects and pedestrianisation schemes can have a big impact.

- **Expand to district level —** To make real change happen in historic city centres, there needs to be a district-wide approach. Some streetscapes are so unique — architecturally or historically — that they even have a value beyond the district they are in, often thanks to their distinctiveness, identity, and sense and spirit of place. These places, therefore, merit protection and investment not just from those that own or develop the properties, but also from the residents, entrepreneurs, and visitors that directly or indirectly benefit from the value of its uniqueness. The direct financial return of upgrading these places (both the public and private components) may not always make short term fiscal sense, but the long term economic, social, environmental, and cultural impact is undeniably positive. The cases from Jakarta and Penang show that area-based schemes, with a clear vision and fair rules, can create attractive value propositions, whereby developers, public or private, are keen to participate.

- **Embrace public, private, and people partnerships —** The public sector may be able to take care of master planning, setting regulations, and making public space accessible, but private developers, homeowners, and community caretakers are needed to co-invest. Not just in maintaining and renovating their properties concerning the historic urban fabric but also to co-invest in the design, programming, and maintenance of public spaces that connect them.

- **Appreciate historical narrative —** In historic districts, placemaking without storytelling is meaningless. For the (re)designing and programming of a public space, it is essential to understand its narrative and unveil the different historical layers of place; the geographic location may be the same, but its use, its architectural style, and its story may have changed over time. Multiple times perhaps. Only by putting a place into its historical context, can it contribute to a sense of continuity, and give identity to a place. Storytelling encourages people towards place attachment and can provide an inclusive anchor for people in the community (from residents to street vendors) to connect and relate to a place. It can also uncover the strengths and assets within communities — including skills, associations, and cultural resources — and mobilise these for future development. sociations, and cultural resources - and mobilize these for future development.

- **Understand layers of place identity —** Collective identity in historic cities is not uniform, it is layered. The multiple layers are defined by socioeconomic status, ethnic background, education, religion, age, and other factors. The identities of specific communities are unique and exclusive, and so are their perceptions and values of a place. So for successful and inclusive placemaking, an intimate understanding of these local communities is required. Cultural mapping is a key tool to build trust and create inclusive processes and, in turn, inclusive public spaces. This cannot be a one-time engagement exercise but rather, a continuous process throughout the whole journey, from conceptualisation to implementation. Only then, can the design of public space accommodate the different layers of time and place.

- **Heritage is more than just buildings —** In many Asian cities, 'heritage' has long been associated with monuments, referring to publicly owned or 'listed' buildings. However, heritage is much more than that; it is streetscapes, open squares, bridges, tunnels, ordinary buildings, small shops, narrow streets, and the memories, recipes, customs, crafts, trades, and festivals that live in these places. Buildings have no meaning without their context, so the preservation of tangible assets has no real impact without also tackling the intangible aspects. When it comes to management and programming of historic streetscapes and districts, the job of city planners, placemakers, and urban designers becomes intertwined with the domain of cultural officers, archaeologists, historians, conservators, educators, and creatives. They complement the technical expertise needed to comprehend, articulate fully, and interpret the value, significance, and relevance of historic buildings and streetscapes in today's urban context. Public spaces offer great opportunities for storytelling, to keep memories and identities alive that may no longer be there physically, and make them relevant for today's dynamic urban environment.

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Buildings have no meaning without their context, so the preservation of tangible assets has no real impact without also tackling the intangible aspects.

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- **The community at heart —** Voices from various communities play a crucial role in creating inclusive, friendly, and meaningful spaces. In the vastly diverse melting pot of co-existing cultures in Asia's historic districts, it is essential to acknowledge and realise that community representation

is of the utmost importance and goes beyond what one would typically assume it would entail. Placemaking is not a product, it is a process, and the community needs to be at the heart of it. The cases in this chapter show that to create loveable places; conversations need to go beyond the superficial level of meeting community leaders and dive deep to discover the intricacies of the inner connective tissue that makes up the urban fabric. The approach needs to include ordinary individuals, shopkeepers, and street sellers and allow them to champion and lead the process of urban change for their favourite streets and squares, developing a new way towards community-led placemaking.

A PARTNERSHIP THAT REVITALISED KOTA TUA JAKARTA

Angeline Basuki (Konsorsium Kota Tua Jakarta)
& Ester van Steekelenburg (Urban Discovery)

Jakarta's historic city centre is undergoing a transformation. Overlooked for years, Kota Tua (Old Town) is once again a hub of vibrant activity. The key to success has been a partnership between the City of Jakarta and a consortium of private parties. The government triggered the revival process by pedestrianising the historic streets, creating new public spaces and cleaning up the canals. Meanwhile, a group of passionate like-minded individuals saw the potential in the properties, which date back to the Dutch colonial era. They started using empty spaces for pop-up galleries, shops and cafes to bring life back to the neighbourhood. Now established as Konsorsium Kota Tua Jakarta, this group helps owners of dilapidated properties to renovate and repurpose their buildings and to find suitable tenants. In just a few years they managed to do what no-one thought possible: make the old city more than a tick on your tourist itinerary, but a destination that you want to come back to. In fact, Kota Tua may one day become a UNESCO World Heritage town.

KEY PROBLEMS

- Lack of pedestrian areas. Sidewalks were damaged, misused by cars for parking or used by street vendors, making it difficult for people to walk along them.

- Lack of accessibility. Situated in North Jakarta, it is difficult to reach in the traffic-blocked city.

- About 85 buildings (out of a total of 134 colonial-era buildings in the area) are vacant, in bad shape and require renovation.

- Few residential lots. The neighbourhood mainly consists of museums and public buildings, restaurants and cafés; no living heritage.

- Old Kali Besar canal is not an asset. The water is polluted and new road infrastructure blocks the old connection with the sea, resulting in frequent flooding in some areas.

- Limited wayfinding and heritage interpretation in public spaces.

KEY INTERVENTIONS

Public Sector: City of Jakarta DKI - Regional Management Unit

- Enacting regulations to prohibit motorcycles and cars entering Kota Tua core zone.

- Connecting all streets to the square in a pedestrian-friendly manner to improve the overall accessibility of the area.

- Installing new bus stations in the vicinity of the historic square to improve accessibility. A transit-oriented development (TOD) approach will be conducted as the second phase of MRT Jakarta connecting the new city centre to the old is planned to be finished in 2024.

- Regulating street vendors (hawkers) and improving facilities in designated spaces in the Kota Tua area. Taman Kota Intan (a public park to the north of Fatahillah Square) was built in 2017 to accommodate 350+ street vendors with facil-ities such as a Musholla (mini mosque) and parking lots for

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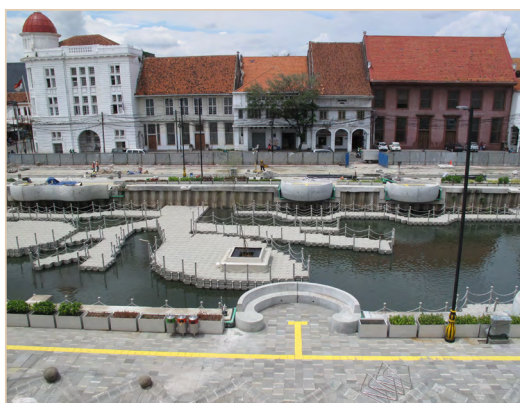
buses and cars. However, a lack of directory and accessibility meant that this space barely attracted any visitors.

- Cleaning up Kali Besar canal and improving the landscaping. The newly revitalised Kali Besar opened in 2017 as a new public 'Water Tourism Park'. To keep the river clean, the flow has been blocked, instead of looking for solutions to filter the water.

- Demolishing parts of the old fishing village, Pasar Ikan. It is currently under revitalisation; a new market is planned which will be connected through pedestrian pathways to Fatahillah Square.

Private sector - Konsorsium Kota Tua
A consortium of nine companies, among them property developers and the Railway Company managing an endowment fund of $5 million, took the following actions:

- Taking over and renovating 13 historic buildings [1] and keeping them economically and culturally vibrant under a Build Operate Transfer (BOT) model with 20-30 year leases.

- Promoting adaptive reuse: attracting new tenants that bring different audiences to the old city: restaurants, backpacker hostels, marketplaces, retail shops, co-working spaces, offices and also venue hires for photo and film shoots.

- Organising cultural events, exhibitions and performances such as the Kota Tua Creative Festival to stimulate attachment of place.

- Establishing a street vendors' cooperative.

- Connecting with users and local communities to organise recreational and educational activities and street clean-ups at different times to attract different target groups.

DO'S

- **Pick the right time to act!** After decades of deliberation, it was the UNESCO World Heritage candidacy that became key in creating the momentum for change.

- **Secure ownership of the historic buildings** and allocate a budget for renovating and maintaining the properties.

- Complex situations like these call for **strong management and cross-sector collaboration.**

DON'TS

- **The local government doesn't always have be the initiator of a new masterplan**. In this project, the public sector took the lead in creating a masterplan, and making the public space accessible and attractive.

- **Don't assess only the current use of a place.** When it comes to redesigning a space, it is key to understand its historic narrative, the memory of place and how people use the space. This approach allows for the community (including street vendors) to be involved and share their vision.

TIMELINE

- **1973:** Jakarta's City Governor Ali Sadikin issued a decree to protect the historic city centre

- **1975:** Kota Tua was made a 'restoration area' and historical buildings were turned into museums

- **2004:** JOTRC – Old Town Revitalisation Company – a collaboration of NGO's and property owners agreed to revitalise the old town

- **2006:** Pedestrian zone enacted around Taman Fatahillah square

- **2011:** Kota Tua designated a 'National Tourism Destination'

- **2014:** Kota Tua Master Plan established

- **2018:** Kota Tua designated as Candidate for UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List

NOTES

[1] Komunitas Historia Indonesia, Ontel Batavia Bicycle Community, Batavian Ontel Batik Community, LWG Community, Barata Kecapi Community, Cultural Exploration Community, City Tram Community, Cakra Community Buana, IRPS Community, Old Town Guide, Browse Community, Old Town Ontel Community

STARTING FROM STREET SIGNS

Szu-Ju Wu (Vision Union) & Tsai-Her Cheng (THC Artech)

The North Gate of Taipei (Beimen) was hidden under a bridge for years. The Taipei West District Gateway Project made this historic site visible to all once again. Through the Beimen Street Sign Project, the surrounding area received an upgrade, revealing the street's original historic fabric, and transforming its street signs.

What was unique about this project was the level of community participation in the design process. Local consultant firm Vision Union used the topic of street signs as a starter to involve residents and businesses in discussing public space; the interface between public and individual life. A bottom-up approach was used to decide on a new streetscape and to create a new design method for the future management of the street and its advertising.

COMMERCIAL SIGNS DISTORTING HISTORIC BEIMEN STREET

In Taiwan, almost all urban areas are a mix of residential and commercial properties. Therefore, business activities exist in almost every block and street. Shop owners try their best to attract customers by using bright and flickering neon signs. This makes Taiwan's urban street landscape seem disorganised and adds to citizens' eye fatigue.

To solve this problem, Taipei City government published a series of sign-setting regulations in 1996. Beimen Camera Street was one of the areas that was subsidised by the government to renew all its commercial signs. However, it soon became apparent that there was a big gap in perception between what the government and the local residents thought commercial signs should look like. Regulations were poorly executed, and the street landscape failed to improve.

In 2016, as part of the Taipei West District Gateway Project, the Zhongxiao Bridge approach was dismantled. As a result, the North Gate of Taipei (Beimen), which had been hidden under the bridge for years, could finally be seen by citizens. It revealed the original urban landscape, connecting Beimen to other historic sites such as the Beimen Post Office, Mitsui House and the Qing Dynasty Arsenal.

Phase 1: reforming the image
Vision Union, a consulting firm dedicated to building up sustainable relationships between humans and the environment,

proposed a community-led process to transform the image of commercial signs in Beimen Street. The aim was to educate and empower the community to propose alternative designs and to set up a practical regulation for commercial signs that can improve the urban landscape.

- First, the firm built up a database of commercial signs, using site analysis, professional opinions and by studying similar cases from around the world.

- Second, they held several workshops and events in the local community, inviting designers and commercial sign makers to have conversations about subjects like scale, positioning, lighting, colour, font, and material.

- Third, they matched six designers with six different shops to redesign their signs.

- Finally, they held an exhibition to reveal the process and the results to the public.

Phase 2: finding common ground

Based on existing regulations and discussions with the designers and makers, Vision Union introduced concepts of active and passive control. Active control involves setting up restrictions and limitations, including sign position, scale, measurement, and lighting, while passive control chooses to avoid extreme situations and provide recommendations, including colour and fonts. The community decided on the passive control approach and proceeded with collective design discussions.

Phase 3: expanding the imagination

After the series of workshops, it was time to attract local shop owners and extend conversations. In this phase, they gathered the community's ideas and visions for the future. Issues on the agenda during the workshops included: local lifestyle, development, landscape, and street signs. Together they voted on the most important and urgent aspects.

Through this process, Vision Union found out that issues like 'Aesthetic education,' 'Pedestrian Flow' and 'Sign restrictions' were what mattered the most to the community. Following this, they invited professionals of urban planning, urban design, architecture, landscape, marketing, and advertising to discuss ideas with the shop owners that participated and to help them understand the value of design for the overall urban street landscape and development.

These workshops helped break the ice between designers and shop owners and made the redesign action easier to complete.

STREET SIGN EXAMPLES: NEW AESTHETICS FOR A HISTORIC STREET

The project redesigned nine commercial signs of long-time family-run businesses in the street. Each design was based on the shop's history, iconic items or style:

1. Vintage collectibles shop: The designer and owners decided to use old coins as the sign's main image. The sign's colour and texture were inspired by the setting and the architecture's façade materials.

2. Camera shop: A bold black colour was used to emphasise a professional brand image.

3. Tailor shop: A traditional sewing machine was chosen as the icon. Its colours were neutral black and grey to reflect the shop's commitment to traditional suiting.

4. Shoe shop: The aim was to create a simple and recognisable brand. So, they decided to let the architecture become part of the commercial sign design, and used a low chroma colour to create a revival style.

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Vision Union hopes that these processes can gradually improve public aesthetics, connections and lifestyle, so we may have a more friendly and unique public life, not individually, but collectively as a community."

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Tailor shop before (left), and after (right).

Car Parts Retail Founding Store before (left), and after (right).

Electronic shop before (left), and after (right).

5. Automobile company office: This company has been a significant presence in the community for years. Ultimately the design scale expanded to include the building's façade. They decided to change the façade back to the original version as when the company first started.

6. Electronics shop: A simple circuit diagram was used as the main image. Eventually, the designer and owners decided to redesign the building's whole façade to go with the new aesthetic.

DO'S

- **The key is to gather residents and business owners to have conversations and reach collective decisions.** This means that the new rules weren't decided by any one person but collectively agreed upon by what was deemed most urgent and important.

- **Use minimalism as a visual strategy.** This choice helps to simplify the historic street's entire landscape and to create a more coherent aesthetic. This new look may result in other shop owners buying into the idea and replacing their own signs.

- **Create momentum for your discussion on street signs, public space and façade design.** Having a master plan for the area would make it easier for shop owners to participate and articulate the public and individual benefits for the entire street landscape and district development.

DON'TS

- When persuading residents and business owners of the importance of city aesthetics, **don't forget that ownership status is a deciding factor.** It is often easier to execute ideas with property owners than with tenants.

PLACEMAKING IN THE HISTORIC HEART OF CHENGDU

**In conversation with Christopher Law (Oval Partnership)
by Ester van Steekelenburg (Urban Discovery)**

Located in the historic heart of the city, Sino-Ocean Taikoo Li Chengdu (Taikoo Li) is a large-scale urban rejuvenation project built around the ancient Daci Temple. It's an ambitious project, responding to the vision of the municipal government's plan to revive the old centre of the city and use its historic assets to establish a new commercial and cultural landmark in Chengdu, one of the fastest-growing cities in the world. Taikoo Li is much more than a shopping centre; what makes the project unique is the low-rise, lane-driven project design that acknowledges the history and character of the city, while simultaneously creating attractive new places for visitors to eat, shop and play.

THE PROJECT VISION

The Daci Temple has a lineage going back more than 1400 years. During the Tang dynasty, Buddhist monks from Japan, Korea and India came here for lectures and theological debates. Like many places of worship, the significance of place was more than just a religious one. The temple was also a social and cultural landmark; a vast complex with open squares, marketplaces, artisan workshops and meeting halls. However, as Chengdu developed, the urban landscape around the Daci temple changed beyond recognition.

What was once the commercial and cultural heart of the city had become a solitary structure surrounded by non-descript open spaces and parking lots. When the government decided to redevelop the vacant sites in the area, it provided a unique opportunity to unveil the temple's historical layers, restore the original footprint and bring modern vitality to the neighbourhood.

KEY PROJECT CHALLENGE

The first challenge was to recreate its scale and atmosphere while making it suitable for today's aspirations. The second was to pay homage to the craftsmanship of the thousand-year-old Daci Temple while incorporating modern urban planning. Last but not least, the project needed to honour the local spirit, subtly reflecting the details and language of the traditional Sichuan style, but without simply replicating the old.

Responding to these challenges, the planners put the conservation and adaptive reuse of six courtyard buildings at the heart of the project. They carefully considered the historic, architectural, and social significance of the site before exploring its future development. Working closely with a team of temple guardians and eminent scholars they studied old maps, paintings and manuscripts to reconstruct the ancient pattern of narrow, pedestrian laneways and generous open spaces around the temple.

The historical fabric also dictated the scale and dimensions of the new buildings. Respect for Sichuan architecture can be seen in the choice of building materials, the subdued colour palette, understated wayfinding elements, subtle greening and shapes of roofs. As a result, the new structures blend in harmoniously with the heritage structures, adding a new layer to the urban fabric.

Five years after completion, the success of the project shows in footfall, sales revenue, customer satisfaction, retail growth, length of time spent, and perhaps most importantly, in the pride of the locals.

Site plan of Sino-Ocean Taikoo Li Chengdu and Daci Temple

1 Daci Temple

Retail
2 Temple Plaza
3 Tower of Entombed Writings
4 Gao House
5 Majiaxiang Ashram
6 Guangdong Hall
7 Xin Lu Courtyard
8 Metro Plaza

Hotel
9 Zhanghuali Courtyard
10 The Temple House
11 No.15 Bitieshi Street

Office
12 Pinnacle One

••••• Heritage Corridor
••••• Slow Lane
••••• Fast Lane
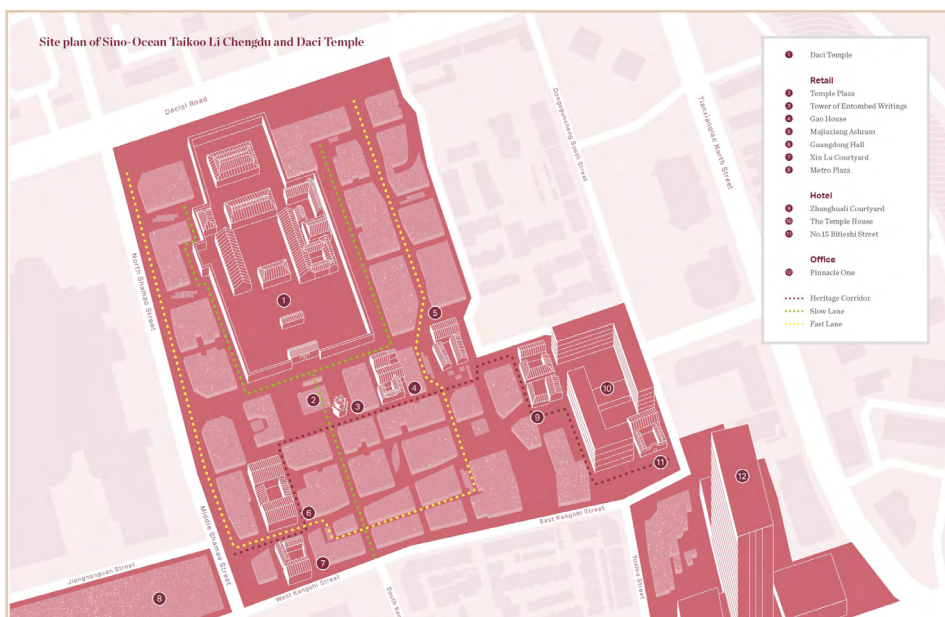
PROJECT COMPONENTS

Generous Public Space: One of the key features of the plan was an 'open-city concept' featuring naturally lit and ventilated streets, gardens and squares. These are open spaces with great atmospheres, always connected to an architectural point of interest, like a pagoda or a piece of art. The Daci Temple provides a sense of identity for the community while the streets and squares create a strong urban enclosure.

Heritage Architecture: The six courtyard buildings were retained and restored with historical details — grey bricks, carvings, columns and delicate tiled roofs — intact. They now house the hotel's spa, lobby, a teahouse and a place for cultural and community events.

Historical Footprint: The thousand-year-old Chinese tradition of building laneways and intimate courtyards provided the basis for the masterplan and design principles, creating a village-like atmosphere by adopting urban typologies of streets, alleys and squares. The site density was deliberately kept low with ample open space. As a tribute to the historic context, the 30 new buildings were mainly two- and three-storeys high, with one exception to meet the required site efficiency: the 47-floor Pinnacle One office tower.

DO'S

- **Capitalise on the unique qualities of historic fabric.** Making use of the historic pattern of laneways and squares, the masterplan created an attractive human-scale open-air shopping environment, including 'fast lane' and 'slow lane' retail streets for different visitor experiences. The fast lanes accommodate the bustling traffic of the high street, while the slow lanes and open squares respect the more tranquil pace of the temple. Different users can be accommodated at the same time and this is reflected in the development's commercial success.

- **Involve the patrons of place.** The project wraps around a temple that is still an important pilgrimage site and active place of worship, so the temple custodians were closely involved in the planning process. The developer also provided technical assistance for renovation of the temple complex and no efforts were spared to help restore an ancient pagoda to its former glory.

- **Consult your future clients.** A mandatory requirement for development projects in China, the public consultation process allowed for residents to voice their opinion on the future development of the site. A time-consuming but very useful process as it gave the planners more insight into the end-users' requirements and sensitivities which has made Taikoo Li the popular leisure destination it is today.

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Chinese zoning is vertical rather than horizontal — we have the zone of the roof, of heaven above and we have the ground, a space that can be employed for all uses.

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- **Create a pedestrian-friendly environment and street-level access.** The parking facility was moved underground, and the entire complex is easily accessible on foot, by bicycle or through public transport via the nearby mass transit station.

- **Invest in community art & programming.** The project's generous public spaces boast specially commissioned artworks that take their inspiration from the historical surroundings. The event programming is diverse and carefully curated to create continuous footfall while respecting the spirit of place.

- **Build tenant's awareness of historic sensitivity.** A 'Tenancy Design Guide' provided tenants with information and principles for a heritage-sensitive design and use of space, especially for those operating in historic buildings. At the same time, the tenants were encouraged to be creative, and to capitalise on the uniqueness of place as part of their branding strategy.

- **Embrace the values of intangible heritage.** In the old days there were specialised markets in the streets around the temple. There was a farmer's market, but also stalls selling silk, fabric and even artisanal lantern making.

These traditions have been recaptured and enhanced in new commercial offerings.

DON'TS

- **Don't expect a quick gain.** Heritage projects require a deep understanding of the site, its users and their sensitivities. This process takes time, but in the long run produces a more satisfying result for all stakeholders involved. As a client, the local government expects developers to create not just a commercially successful project but also deliver social, economic and other public benefits. The unique system of urban governance in China brings about the opportunity to effectively realise an urban regeneration project of this scale and ambition.

- **Don't be afraid to add new layers to a historic site.** Authenticity is key to create a timeless neighbourhood. Taikoo Li has empathy with the genius loci, tailoring the scale and integration of streetscapes with the site's cultural heritage. At the same time, it embeds bold new elements to meet the needs of the developer and the end-users.
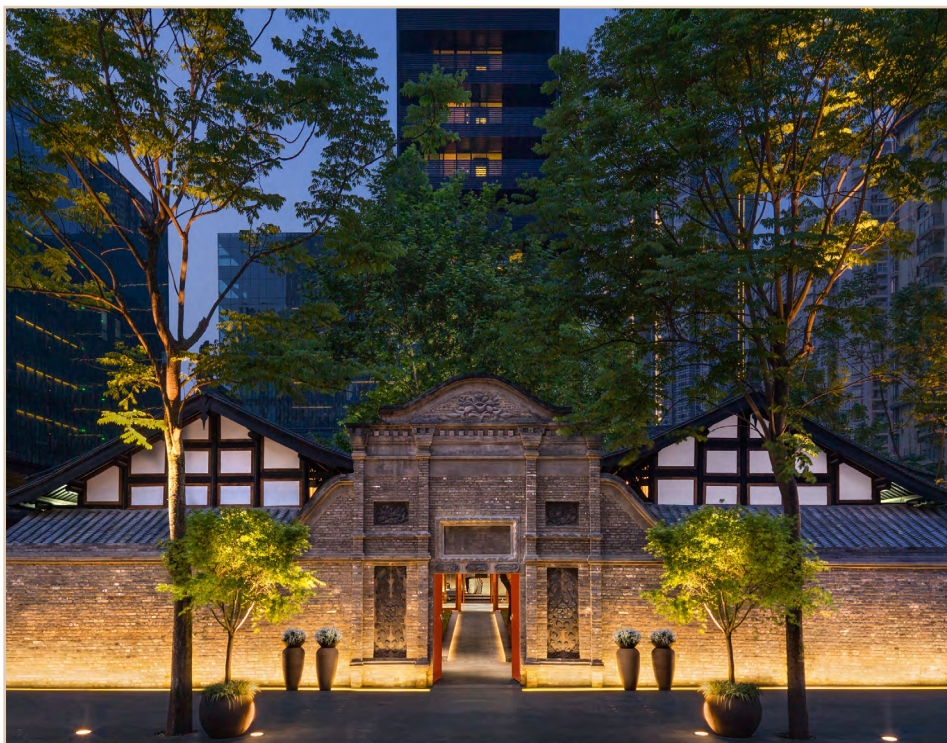
THE RED DOOR: A GATEWAY FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS & CULTURE

Anuradha Parikh (G5A)

In the 1960s, the textile mills that had once given Mumbai its pioneering identity as India's commercial centre had started to close down. The sprawling mills that provided employment for thousands, and nourished a unique cultural fabric, began to see a decline that was consolidated in the 1980s. The socio-cultural geography of the city was changing, and with it, the opportunities, the people, and their relationship with the city.

Mumbai found itself giving in to the insidious yet overwhelming mainstream. By the late '90s, the kind of Art Cinema that had probed and challenged society and its politics had all but disappeared, and the mighty voice of Bollywood took over. Non-mainstream art became even more marginalised. Finding herself at a complete dissonance with everything around her, Anuradha Parikh, an architect and filmmaker, responded in the only way she knew how.

FOUNDATION OF G5A

Anuradha believed it was vital to create a physical space within Mumbai's evolving cultural fabric that could be a safe space for expression, dialogue, and imagining the contemporary — a landscape that bravely confronted the present, envisioned a promising future, while also providing a kaleidoscopic view of the past.

A warehouse in the Shakti Mills Lane at Mahalaxmi provided just this opportunity. Positioned in the heart of Mumbai, it was well-connected by railway and road and embodied the perfect narrative as it lay metaphorically and literally at the fulcrum of the city's cultural conversation.

The blueprint for G5A was germinated in 2008: its DNA, its programmes, and its architecture. A social mapping scheme involving a diverse group of stake-holders was conducted, bringing to light several older neighbourhoods and icons, along with the symbols of the new commercial world.

On one end of the spectrum was the Worli Koliwada community (the fisherfolk and original inhabitants of Mumbai), the ex-mill workers' residences — the *chawls*, the *dhobi ghat* (the washermen's enclave), the cinema halls, reading rooms, and pockets of open spaces. On the other, the rapidly rising residential complexes, promising vistas of a bright new future with corporate parks, malls, restaurants, all steadily erasing vital elements of the earlier ecosystem. This left little room for sustaining or rebuilding a coherent neighbourhood, let alone public spaces for art, culture and recreation. At this stage, Anuradha brought together a core Working Group of architects, artists, writers and professionals from theatre, film, media and business to help define the nature of G5A.

THE JOURNEY

- **2008-2012:** Ideation phase

- **2010-2012:** Design and planning phase

- **2012:** Building permissions received

- **2012-2014:** Development phase

- **2013:** Section 25 Company incorporated (not-for-profit)

- **November 3rd, 2015:** G5A Warehouse opens

Visitors in the G5A Study.

G5A's black box (left) and the PORT Café (right).

G5A FOUNDATION FOR CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

The new architecture of the warehouse was designed to retain the original vocabulary of its architecture while gently bringing in new materials, a minimalist aesthetic, and a welcoming ambience. The name 'G5A', refers to the original unit number of the warehouse, retained as an homage to its history as an erstwhile mill neighbourhood. An iconic red door serves as a portal to the calm, safe and experimental world of the warehouse; bringing in myriad audiences, from cultural practitioners to environmentalists, government figures and other collaborators, both local and international.

The G5A Warehouse now hosts a Black Box theatre, a Study, a Terrace, and a PORT Kitchen and Bar. The intention was to create an active, creative lab, and an accessible 'Third place' for artists to share and develop new ideas. All the spaces allow for flexibility and experimentation, while also encouraging

pauses between immersions into artistic experience: be it a performance, film screening, concert, or political discussion.

TAKING THE G5A MODEL TO THE CITY

In fast-moving Mumbai, independent projects working for the betterment of the city often run parallel to each other. Rarely do these well-intentioned dialogues intersect, resulting in infrastructural and emotional strain upon their key beneficiaries: the citizens.

The G5A cityLAB was established to lead conversations on art, culture, and architecture in spaces across the city. Through its initiative 'Living Neighbourhood Forum' it brings multiple stakeholders — the local government, community, institutions and corporations, artists, and domain specialists — together, encouraging a collective approach to resolving issues that plague the city.

Two current key projects are:

1. 'Reclaiming Shakti' (*Shakti* = female principle/energy) — a neighbourhood project led by the 'Shakti Mills Lane Advanced Locality Management' working to restore the lane to becoming a safe, accessible, and vibrant enclave. To not only recognise the memory of the brutal rape of a young journalist in the abandoned mill structure, but also to rebuild the sense of place for this cluster of once-bustling mills and workshops.

2. 'Swachh Worli Koliwada' — helping the local community to make Worli Koliwada, an urban village that houses 35,000 people, into a zero-waste neighbourhood through an arts and culture-based programme to build ownership, responsibility, and livelihoods, thereby aiming for a more sustainable ecosystem.

"Conversations around building more inclusive, participatory development pathways for the city continue, as we endeavour to work with communities to restore safe, healthy and culturally vibrant neighbourhoods," explains Anuradha.

BUILDING AUDIENCES

Given the stratified nature of the G5A public, engaging communities from different backgrounds has been a struggle. In the surrounding precinct, mills are being redeveloped into corporate plazas and malls, bringing an influx of new communities. Today, some communities from the informal sector still find G5A a little inaccessible, although the team has made it as inclusive as possible. By continuing to work with the community, they hope to ensure that at least the younger set will be able to dissolve these boundaries.

LESSONS LEARNED

Five years on, G5A is fast becoming the cultural hub for this geography and neighbourhood. Artists and cultural practitioners working in contemporary art have found a new home that is safe, resilient and supportive. New audiences are exploring novel and contemporary works in ways that inspire hope for the future.

Having said this, more than G5A being a template that should be replicated, Anuradha believes it is the process that should be retained. The organic, inclusive and responsive nature of the project has been critical to its evolution.

DO'S

- **Work organically:** have a strategy to stay in touch with your goal, but don't let it become a straitjacket.

- **Stay people-centred:** in terms of operations, strategy, and project frameworks.

- **Keep it process-centric:** so that the team can evolve the project with time.

- **Be responsive:** context and community is key to developing a resilient and sustainable project.

DON'TS

- **Don't look for quick wins:** commit to the long haul. In some cases, you might not achieve all the goals in your lifetime.

- **Don't look at the numbers alone.**

MANAGING A WORLD HERITAGE SITE: CHALLENGES & COMPLEXITIES

Daniel Lim (Think City)

Since its listing as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008, George Town, the capital of Penang, has seen its tourist numbers soar, with an influx of international visitors drawn to the city's rich multicultural heritage. However, with the rise of tourism came multiple challenges: gentrification, depopulation and dilapidating heritage.

Struggling to maintain liveable standards while preserving the outstanding universal values (OUV's) that put George Town on the World Heritage List in the first place, the city embraced a tailored management structure to kickstart the island capital's transformation.

A SPECIAL PLAN FOR A SPECIAL SITE

In 2009, a year after the listing, the state government of Penang installed a dedicated agency — George Town World Heritage Inc. — to manage the heritage site.

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The programme has yielded over 100 projects, from the renovation of the copper dome of a mosque to the set-up of a revolving fund for a row of 10 shophouses.

"

Charged with laying down rules and regulations, the agency was also mandated to educate and increase awareness, as well as to monitor and supervise conservation and renovation works.

In addition, The Federal Government allocated RM20 million to preserve and protect the city's status as a George Town World Heritage Site, sparking the birth of Think City, a social purpose organisation set up to oversee the urban rejuvenation of the city and a subsidiary of Khazanah Nasional Berhad (the investment arm of the Malaysian government).

As a neutral body, and apolitical organisation, Think City moved to fill the gaps, connecting the public, private and community sectors with a two-pronged strategy, implementing both bottom-up and top-down initiatives at the same time.

Operating in a city where 85% of the buildings were in private hands and 75% of the businesses were tenants, the strategy was to start at the bottom. To empower and incentivise the local community, Think City introduced the George Town Grants Programme, disbursing over 200 grants worth $4 million. The programme has since yielded over 100 projects, from the renovation of the copper dome of a mosque to the set-up of a revolving fund for a row of 10 shophouses.

Beyond physical impact, the projects catalysed support within the community, and likeminded urban rejuvenation initiatives. Capacity building, cultural mapping and content creation formed the backbone of the process. Understanding the history, identifying common ground, and building local intelligence, knowledge and networks formed the foundation for George Town's future planning trajectory.

THE MAKING OF A MASTERPLAN

Within the next five years, the collective experience led to more top-down policies and strategic projects. Learning from their experience with the community, the organisation shifted from a tactical crowd-sourced approach to a more evidence-based strategic approach. Supported by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), Think City worked closely with Plan Malaysia at the federal level, George Town World Heritage Inc. at the state level, and the Penang Island City Council at the local council level, to embark on a Strategic Master Plan.

This also led to the implementation of the George Town Conservation Development Corporation (GTCDC), a tripartite partnership established in 2015 between the Penang State Government's Chief Minister's Incorporated, Think City and AKTC. In collaboration with the City Council, the GTCDC implemented strategic projects to mitigate

the effects of gentrification, develop strategies to repopulate the historic core area, and drive large-scale master planning in George Town's Northern and Eastern Seafronts.

Interventions targeted three main areas:

1. Regulations and Guidelines for Development Projects;

2. Facilitation between different stakeholders; and

3. Demonstration projects: in upgrading the public realm and the programming of places

TRANSFORMATIVE PROJECTS

The Strategic Masterplan was significant in instigating operational projects that proved to be transformative for George Town. These projects not only set the benchmark for conservation work in an area of heritage significance and demonstrated how to design commercial development with sensitivity to its natural and cultural surroundings, but also convincingly showed how to include participatory processes in the preservation of monuments.

Examples include:

- The rejuvenation of Armenian Park — what began as a neighbourhood park became an area-improvement project including laneways and other surrounding areas;

- The conservation of Fort Cornwallis — the restoration of a historic fort, an archaeological programme with students, and the rehabilitation of open spaces; and

- The restoration of the North Sea Front — the drainage, resurfacing and landscaping of the esplanade, renovation and revelation of archaeological layers of a historic seawall, and establishing a network of cultural spaces, galleries and museums.

MANAGING CHARACTER AND CULTURE

Today, investing in quality public spaces and upgrading the public realm has become very important in George Town where, due to the rise of tourism, many spaces have become commercialised. It is essential, therefore, to have places that are inclusive and accessible, and which help to circulate crowds while connecting different locations. Different layers of wayfinding and heritage interpretation are also key components of this.

Programming is equally important. More than just for the branding of the heritage city, it is about using festivals, activities and events as tools to have the community participate and feel like they belong to the city.

Culture is also fluid in George Town. This increases the complexities of managing a heritage site and requires delicately managing the cultural identity of the place, particularly as the city is experiencing a time where the purpose and demographics of the place are changing. Understanding the perceived identities of the people living there and taking care of cultural sensitivities is specifically important as the multi-layered, multicultural and multigenerational communities embrace a plethora of different values and perceptions of place.

Cultural Mapping has also been a tool that has helped strengthen the sense of ownership and sense of place. For Think City this has not been a one-off exercise; urban regeneration in a heritage site requires continuous cultural mapping, constant comparisons and frequent tuning-in to residents, shopkeepers and property owners to regularly refresh the understanding of place.

DO'S

- **Start with a grants programme** to reach, incentivise and involve different communities.

- **Find a joint approach in collaboration** with the government to intertwine the bottom-up and top-down approaches.

- **Make a Master Plan** to get all government levels and different stakeholders on board.

- **Set an example by initiating transformative and demonstrative projects.**

- **Be sincere and modest about suggestions**, be courteous and build personal relationships. People who trust you are more likely to be honest with you.

DON'TS

- **Don't undermine the government's KPIs and limitations.** Try to understand them to be able to add value, and provide solutions, not complications.

ESCOLTA: REVIVAL OF A FORGOTTEN ART DECO BOULEVARD

Ester van Steekelenburg (Urban Discovery)

In Manila a group of young creatives and heritage conservation groups are trying to bring back the glory of what was once dubbed the 'Queen of streets': Escolta. In pre- and early postwar Manila, Escolta was flamboyantly called 'The Wall Street of Asia'. This was the territory of bankers, lawyers and shipping magnates; it was where locals would come to burn their money in cinemas, luxury department stores and fancy restaurants. World War II dealt a cruel blow to Escolta and the row of elegant art-deco buildings designed by notable architects of the day were left to deteriorate. For a while, they remained under the threat of demolition, bereft of any consideration for restoration, retrofitting or adaptive reuse with dreary currency traders and import / export offices as tenants.

The situation changed in 2012 when Marika Constantino, executive director of the art collective 98B COLLABoratory, persuaded Robert and Lorraine Sylianteng, the Chinese-Filipino owners of a dilapidated art deco building, to rent them a room on their fifth floor. The rest is history. Robert, a heritage advocate at heart, embraced the arrival of the artistic crowd and before he knew it, his building had filled up with architects, filmmakers, fashion designers and other creative co-workers.

It led to an unlikely partnership between young activists and a nearly retired couple. Together they revived the creative spirit of the place and made Escolta once again a place to be in Manila. They joined hands to open up the basement of the building and turn it into a marketplace with independent boutiques, an artisan coffee shop, a 'period' barbershop and a craft beer café. Today, the First United Building openly defies its 90 years of age. The face lift resulted in a soul lift; you can now find its hallways filled with creative activity and youthful spirit.

PARTNERS & TESTIMONIES

HERITAGE ACTIVISTS

Heritage Conservation Society

"Escolta's revitalisation can boost the morale of Filipinos because it will prove that it's not yet too late to love, value, protect and maintain the treasures of our past. The next generation will continue to tell the story of what was once the true repository of economic greatness in the Phillippines." — Romel Santiago

CREATIVE GROUPS

98B COLLABoratory, HUB: Make Lab (Hub),
all-in-one studio, workshop, retail space

"With everyone's help, we hope that Hub can be a makers' locale, a place where creatives can work, play and dream. We want it to be a place that inspires collaboration, motivates people to respect heritage, stimulates reveries, encourages new experiences and promotes sustainability." — Marika Constantino, artist / architect

"Escolta is a beautiful place and has a spectacular scene to offer. From food to photogenic buildings, it's worth a thousand shots from different angles. It is better to preserve these heritage sites, so we have something to look back on and appreciate the old life, the buildings, the environment." — Karlo Torio, fashion photographer

BUILDING OWNERS

Robert and Lorraine Sylianteng, proprietors of First United
Building (FUB) and Escolta Commercial Association Inc. (ECAI) a group of property owners which assures order & security in the district

"At first, United Building was a typical office building like many in the Binondo area, but when I saw that all these hip youngsters with their nice cameras were so interested in the building I decided to rent out a couple of vacant units to them… and it kind of took off from there." — Robert Sylianteng

INTERVENTIONS

1. **Finding new uses for old buildings —** renovate and maintain the old structures, and find new uses to engage a new generation to become stakeholders in revitalising the historic area.

2. **Creating a new public piazza —** opening a flea market in the basement of the building for creatives to sell their products, meet and collaborate. A deliberate alternative retail experience from the usual mall setup where buyers are not given the opportunity to get to know the people behind the goods they see.

3. **Calendar of street parties and cultural events —** Monthly events, such as Saturday markets and the regular Escolta Block Parties, created a buzz and brought young creatives from different disciplines to the district; musicians, filmmakers, cartoonists, etc. who helped jump-start a number of artistic efforts in the street.

DO'S

- **Revive artistic and artisanal spirit, encourage experimentation and educate a new generation to give rise to fresh ideas.** This is important to create new values and meanings for historical buildings that can seem irrelevant to most youth.

- **Create interdisciplinary partnerships to push awareness of heritage preservation** through different angles and messaging when it is not a priority in the administration.

- **Cherish the value of heritage and find inspiration in original design details,** family photographs, vintage items and memories of place. Bring old stories to life in and around the building to articulate the uniqueness of place.

- **Organise events and campaigns to communicate that Escolta is a safe, happening place** where you'd want to spend a weekend.

DON'TS

- **Don't wait for the government to take the initiative.** The National Historical Commission of the Philippines declared Escolta as a heritage zone, implying that the local government will be the major implementing body of all conservation works within Escolta, but the government is limited in both budget and manpower.

CHAPTER 05

TOWARDS PLACE-LED DEVELOPMENT

DEVELOPING OUR CITIES AROUND COMMUNITY AND PLACE

Hans Karssenberg (STIPO)

PLACEMAKING IN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

Today, we see more and more interest in using placemaking as a tool for real estate and area development. In this section you will find several examples of developers, investors and property owners engaging in placemaking because they see it as an investment, not a cost. The examples of Gamuda, Swire, Lendlease and Publika all reflect models that look at long term value. This also means engaging placemakers from the start, not only at the end of the development, and shifting from 'placemaking' to 'placekeeping'.

 In these case studies, the focus is not only on the buildings, but on its uses, activities and experiences too. The combination of 'hardware' and 'software' is key in their design, and dwell time is a primary objective. For the revived shopping mall Publika in Malaysia, the main drivers are art, a mix of 'fast and slow places' ('fast' are the places for fast shopping, 'slow' the ones where people linger), and a great diversity of incubators and start-ups.

They are forerunners in their field, but as Cistri is noticing, placemaking is mentioned more and more at property conferences, and Gamuda Land saw their approach followed by developers active in the adjacent areas.

An example of a place-led development project designed around healthy urban living that STIPO was involved in: the Beurskwartier in Utrecht, The Netherlands.

At the same time, the case of Hongdae shows how governments can take an active role to stimulate place-led development, also by single private owners. Regulations have a major impact on using the pressure on development for the benefit of better public spaces, turning fenced-off streets into human-centred places with active ground floors.

WHAT IS PLACE-LED DEVELOPMENT?

If we look at the larger Asian and international context, we see that when a new development needs to be put on the map, placemaking sparks the creativity and activates the place with temporary use. But unlike the good practices noted in this section, too often, when the area has become well-known and ready for development, the placemakers are kindly asked to leave. Now, the 'real citymaking' begins.

The best practices show that placemaking can bring much more to citymaking. Over the last 50 years, a deep body of knowledge has developed around placemaking on the mysteries of how to create 'great places'. It teaches us how to turn sterile spaces and areas into places that really serve as the heart of a community; where people want to linger, where a great diversity of users interact and feel at home.

This is where 'place-led development' comes in: taking the principles of place, human scale, social life and the city at eye level and using them as a fundament for the entire real estate or area development. After all, we don't only want great places at the start of the project, but also in the new part of the city that is being developed in the long term.
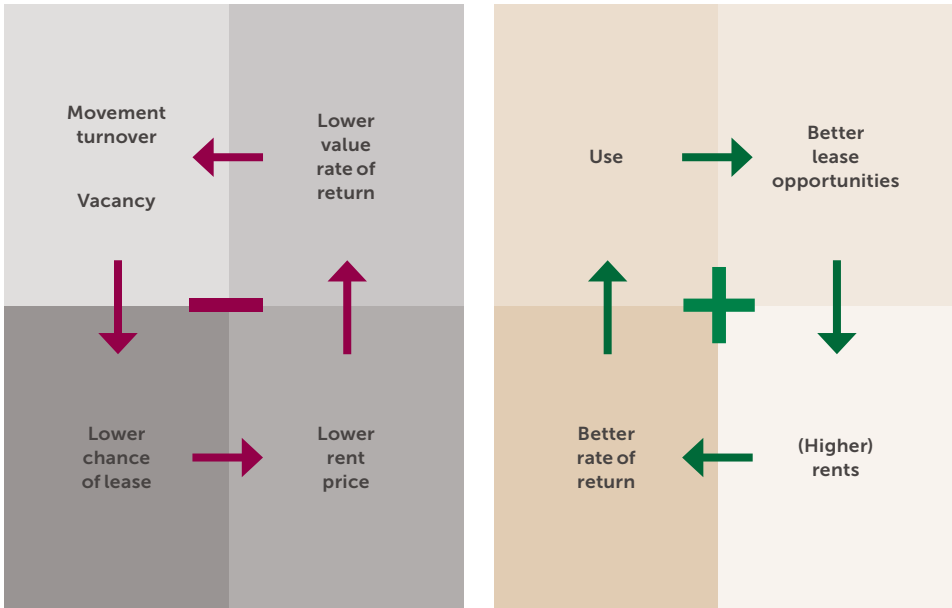
“

First life, then spaces, then buildings — the other way around never works.
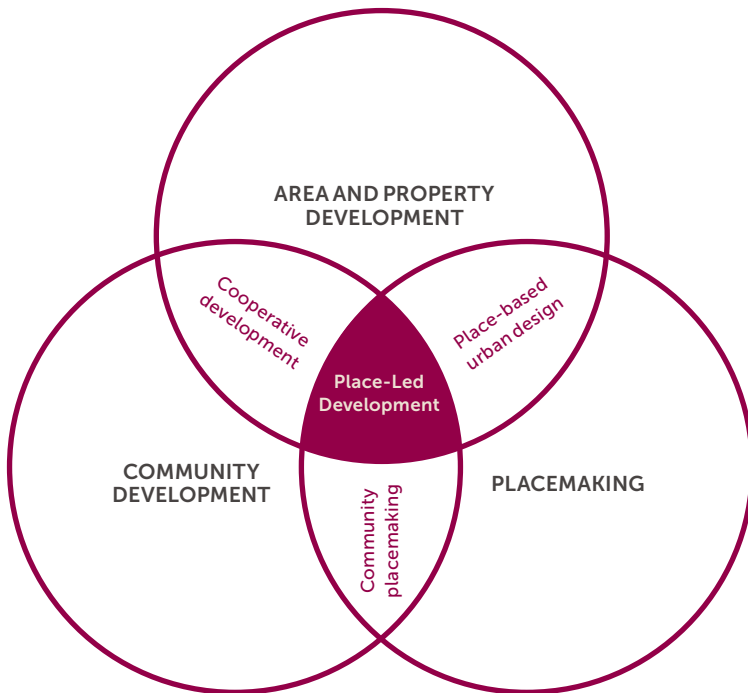
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JAN GEHL

When property loses life, it loses value. But it also works the other way around: bringing new life to existing property through placemaking will increase value.
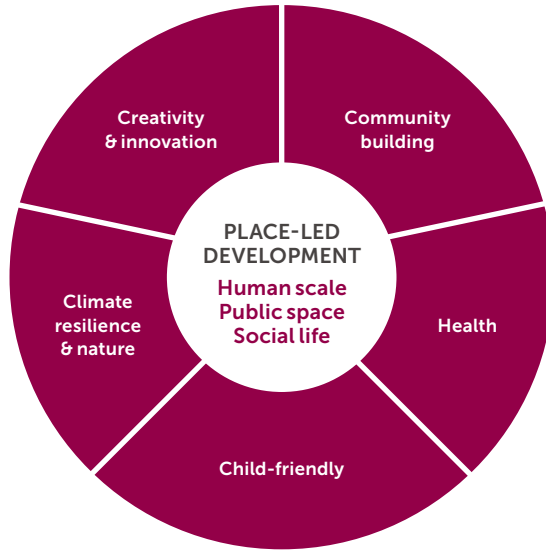
Defining place-led development.

Place-led development is doing development differently. It includes the integrated design of public spaces and buildings around the values of human scale, the active programming of public spaces with daily use and of ground floor units to feed the public spaces with social life, and the engagement of a varied community of users. Furthermore, these principles are maintained throughout the entire development process. From the first concept and design, to the development, and even to the management in the years and decades after the initial delivery of buildings. After all, great places take years to create; placemaking is an iterative process of constant testing and improvement. With the community's needs ever-changing, in placemaking you're never done — as is shown in the best practices in this section.

In short, place-led development is the full integration of citymaking, placemaking and community development.

WHY IS PLACE-LED DEVELOPMENT IMPORTANT?

Place-led development builds multiple values:

- **It creates more sustainable urban areas.** Multifunctional areas with an inclusive diversity of users and public space as the backbone of development are much more adaptive to social and economic change. Good public spaces keep the ever-changing city together.

- **It creates social capital and social life.** Great places foster social life, interaction between people, and allow social and economic networks to thrive. Community-building starts by engaging interested residents in the planning and development phase and continues into the management phase.

- **It creates green capital.** With summers becoming hotter, and rain showers becoming heavier, place-led development builds greener, softer, safer, more comfortable environments for users to live and work in.

- **It fosters innovation and creativity.** With the economy shifting, interactivity between people is no longer a 'nice-to-have' but a 'need-to-have'. Innovation increasingly happens between organisations, not within organisations; and for that places of interaction, nearbyness, measuring in footsteps, and permeable ground floor uses, are vital. Place-led development helps to build the city's future economy.

- **It helps create child-, family- and elderly- friendly environments.** With more and more families with children living in cities, it is crucial to embrace formal and informal play in public spaces. With more elderly living in cities as well, we also need more regular places to sit and rest in public space. Inclusive placemaking helps to cater for the desires of the most vulnerable users of public space.

Creativity
& innovation

Community
building

**PLACE-LED
DEVELOPMENT**
**Human scale
Public space
Social life**

Climate
resilience
& nature

Health

Child-friendly

Place-led development builds multiple values.

DEVELOPERS AND PARTNERS

+ Increased market value

+ Lower turnover rates

+ Faster lease up

+ Higher community & buy-in

+ Faster approval cycle

+ Market recognition

Gains in:

+ Tax revenues

+ Job growth

+ Public safety

Improved:

+ Health outcomes

+ Social cohesion

+ Economic outcomes

GOVERNMENT

COMMUNITY

A survey by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) shows the benefits that different stakeholders see in placemaking.

- **These social, cultural, economic, green and place values in their turn create property and land value.** In the short term, places with a vibrant social life are valued higher, and will help sell residential, recreational and workspaces, while helping retail areas perform better because of their experiential value. At the same time, place-led development helps to build more varied programs for ground floor use than retail only: for instance, spaces for production, creation and community amenities, as is the case in the Publika example.

- **It creates value in the long term.** By developing areas from liveable to loveable places, with active communities, a sense of place, a sense of ownership, great places at the heart of it, and a better flexibility through time, property and land value will increase through the decades. Of course, this is provided that there are mechanisms to keep growth sustainable and to avoid excessive gentrification, exclusion, overheating and emptying-out; making sure both owners and local communities can benefit at the same time.

Ultimately, place-led development creates social, economic, cultural, physical and property value, both in the short and long term. It requires a process in which every decision steers at human scale, social life, a great city at eye level and community engagement. A process that is organised in a way that generates quicker-lighter-cheaper results immediately, but from the perspective of a long-term strategy.

WHY IS PLACE-LED DEVELOPMENT NOT HAPPENING MORE OFTEN?

If we have all this knowledge, and if place-led development truly brings so much value, why does it not happen more often? Unfortunately, even though the momentum has changed in terms of policy and the international agenda, there are many mechanisms in area development that currently work against the practice. In order to embed placemaking and community-building more into the process of area development, it is important to be aware of these mechanisms, so that we can address them strategically:

1. **Cities and developers often lack good rules for human scale.** Change begins with embracing criteria and rules for human scale, sense of place and the eye level perspective, as the city of Seoul has done in the case of Hongdae.

2. **Human scale, social life, community and sense of place often come too late in the process.** We plan a lot, absorbed by the many technical and financial aspects of area development, and the vibrancy of an area is often only considered either at the beginning, or at the end of the process. The cases all stress how important it is to engage placemaking from the start.

Left: In the short term, it is cheaper to construct indoor parking on the ground floor, rather than under-ground. However, this kills the public space for the next decades. Right: International capital investment tends to lead to sterile development that is the same everywhere.

3. **Short-term profit versus long-term value.** There are many mechanisms in area and property development aimed at short-term profit.

4. **Standardisation of construction work.** With labour costs for construction rising, we are seeing a growing use of prefabricated façades that are made in factories. On top of this, we see more international capital investing in real estate development, which can lead to safe 'tick-the-box' type investments that are similar everywhere.

5. **Top-down planning leads to a lack of (mental) ownership.** Having only professionals designing an area is not acknowledging the expertise of the local communities that live, work or enjoy moments there.

6. **Lack of proper management for good places.** Creating good places is not only about the built environment (hardware), but it is also about under-standing and fostering diversified uses of a space (software) and organising its management with the proper coalition of actors (orgware). So, it is not only about 'place-making', but also very much about 'place-management', or 'place-keeping' as Swire calls it.

7. **Designs being made from the bird's eye view, without paying attention to the street.** Too often, projects take the bird's eye perspective — which is impor-tant to oversee the context — but they fail to include the perspective of the future users on the streets, sidewalks and squares, thus forgetting people's perception and experience of a place.

8. **Area development is thought of in silos.** The fabric of the city is not only fragmented because its different func-tions are not well-connected, but also because its main stakeholders are not integrated in a common creative pro-cess. The process of placemaking can help to bring these worlds together.

THREE KEY STRATEGIES FOR PLACEMAKING

How can we address these mechanisms? We see three key strategies emerge.

• **1: Approach the Area from Eye Level** Often, when we say 'public space', we mean the horizontal space that the city owns. However, when we walk down

the street, we look around us and have a three-dimensional, not two-dimensional experience. This three-dimensional environment includes buildings, their façades and everything that can be seen at eye level (see the diagram on page 18). Ground floors can be seen as a part of public space: the city at eye level. The ground floor may be only 20% of a building, but it determines 80% of the building's contribution to the experience of the environment. Research shows that if a place is safe, clean, relaxed and easily understood, and if visitors can wander with their expectations met or exceeded, they will remain three times longer and spend more money than in an unfriendly and confusing structure.

- **2: Climb in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**
  Abraham Maslow developed a classification system to demonstrate the universal needs of human beings. To move upwards in the pyramid, it is necessary to satisfy the needs of the lower levels first. In the light of place-led development, the same principles apply. The city is often seen as the primary steward of public space. They will make sure the public space is clean, safe and has basic maintenance. This only offers the fundamental layers of Maslow's pyramid. For a functional 'space' to turn into an attractive and welcoming 'place', co-creation with the community is needed. Cities and main area development stakeholders have an important role to play in co-creating qualitative public spaces to then help the local communities take ownership of the place.

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Place: social, active, fun, creative, healthy, inspiring – by and for the community

Space: clean, safe, basic maintenance – by the municipality

Self-fulfilment needs

Psychological needs

Basic needs

Self actualization: achieving one's full potential, incl. creative activities

Esteem needs: prestige and feeling of accomplishment

Belonging and love needs: intimate relationships, friends

Safety needs: security, safety

Physiological needs: food, water, warmth, rest
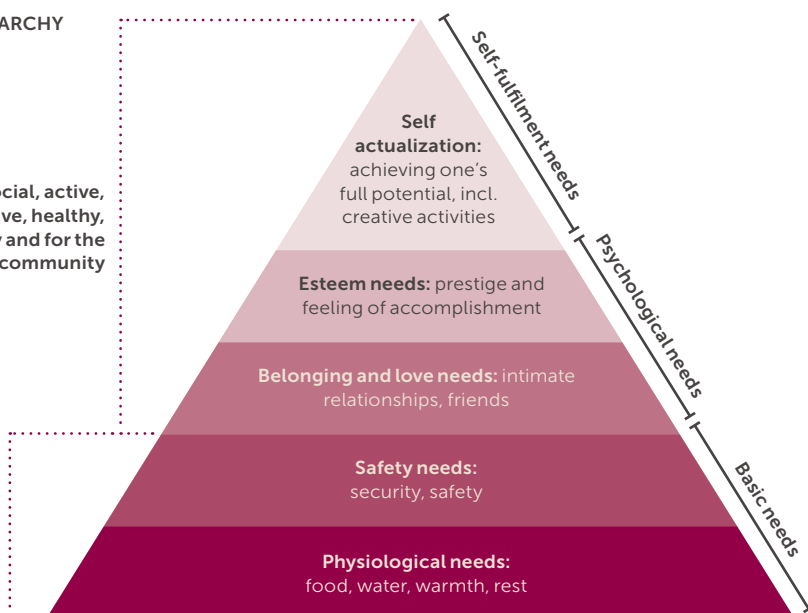
When a public space is clean, safe and maintained, it does not mean it is a place yet. Creating places requires co-creation with the community.

- **3: Combine Software, Hardware and Orgware**
  New or existing, street or city, shopping or residential; however different
  these situations are, creating a great city at eye level is always dependent
  on the triangle of use (software), built environment (hardware) and coali-
  tions, strategies and tools (orgware). The case of Gamuda land is a good
  example of how to do this at the level of an entire area development.

  The first and most important aspect is software. Social life, the local
  economy feeding the area with activity, the cultural patterns and use
  rhythms, the diversity of activities, the experience — they are all part of
  what we call the 'software'.
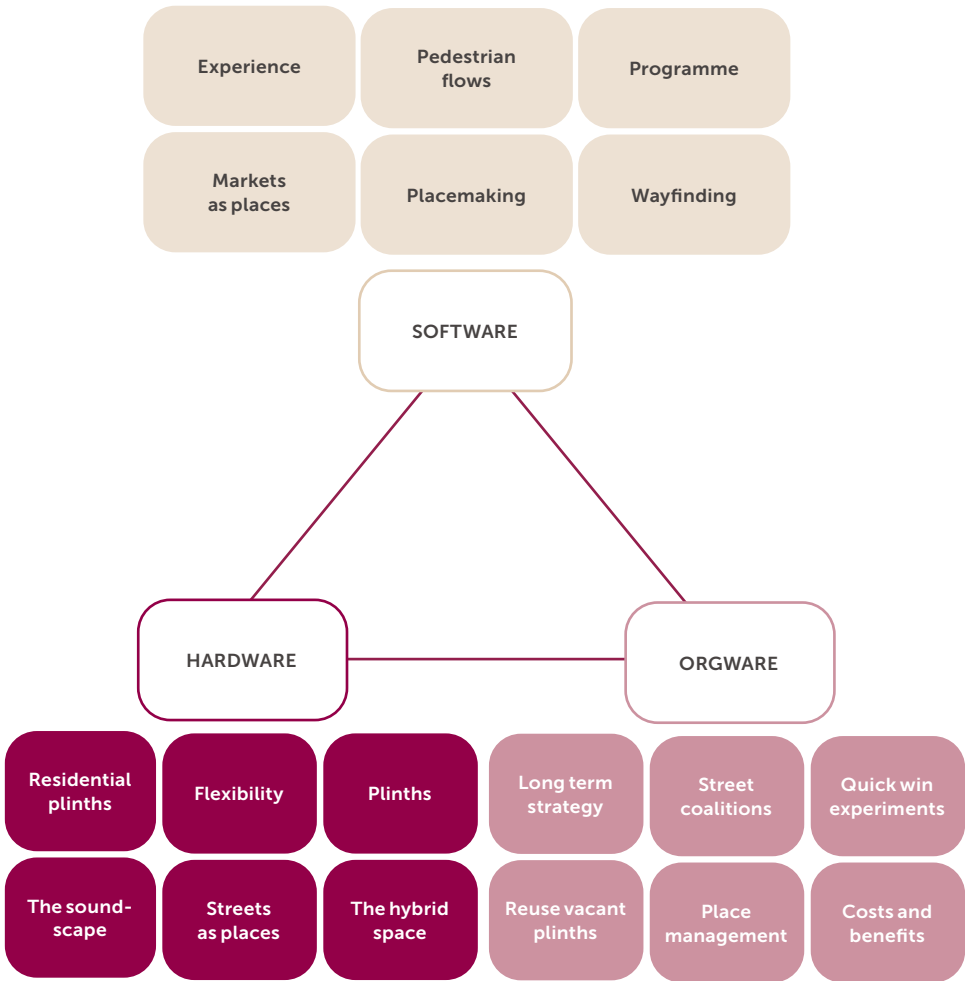
To create great places, the development needs to include both its uses and activities (software),
human-scaled design (hardware) and programming (orgware)

The second part is the hardware: the shaping of buildings and streets. These are important because, for instance, blank walls can impact neighbouring businesses and contribute to blight and anti-social activity; while the use of harsh materials can lead to a sterile or cold environment. In any case, the hardware needs to support the software. There needs to be a process of iterative testing and learning between the ever-changing dynamics of the software and the design of the hardware. In use, the social, cultural and economic demands are ever-changing. A neighbourhood's demography changes, retail patterns change, the culture of play changes.

The third crucial element therefore is the 'orgware'. This aspect allows places to maintain a good dynamic in the long term, and includes the organisation of functions; the daily management of shops, plinths and streets, and ground floor portfolio management.

In terms of area development, placemaking is important not only in the planning and the development phase, but during the management phase as well. Measuring impact is a crucial part of this 'place management' or 'place keeping'. Cistri shows a wonderful set of standards to measure these values with. In the end, it is tools like these that are needed to develop great places, and to keep learning and gaining new insights in the process.

PLACEMAKING — A DEVELOPER'S PERSPECTIVE

Mardiana Rahayu

The project detailed in this article was undertaken during Mardiana Rahayu's tenure as Head of the Project Development Unit within the real estate arm of Gamuda, a leading construction and engineering company in Malaysia. Gamuda Land, as an early developer of townships in the Klang Valley, made significant contributions to the area's growth, redefining how Malaysians could live their lives. They succeeded in turning land of little value in the suburbs into much sought-after satellite lifestyle townships. Gamuda had the first-mover advantage in many aspects. In recent years however, and in particularly sluggish market periods, staying best-in-class has become a challenge. More and more, the developer found themselves overtaken by smaller and more nimble competitors. Gamuda's once unique selling points had become commonplace and lacklustre, particularly to the eyes of younger, more demanding millennials.

THE GENESIS

As the head of Gamuda's newly formed unit, the onus was on Mardiana to look at several of the company's new acquisitions and current roll-outs and find ways to 'make them special', preferably without an increase in initial capital outflow. She explains: "Simply put, there was no room for any increase in the construction budget. As a team, we decided that the solution had to be more creative — something that would require a fundamental shift in thinking and perhaps in (re)defining value."

Diagram: Development projectin with Placemaking

- - - - - - - - - - - *Base without placemaking*
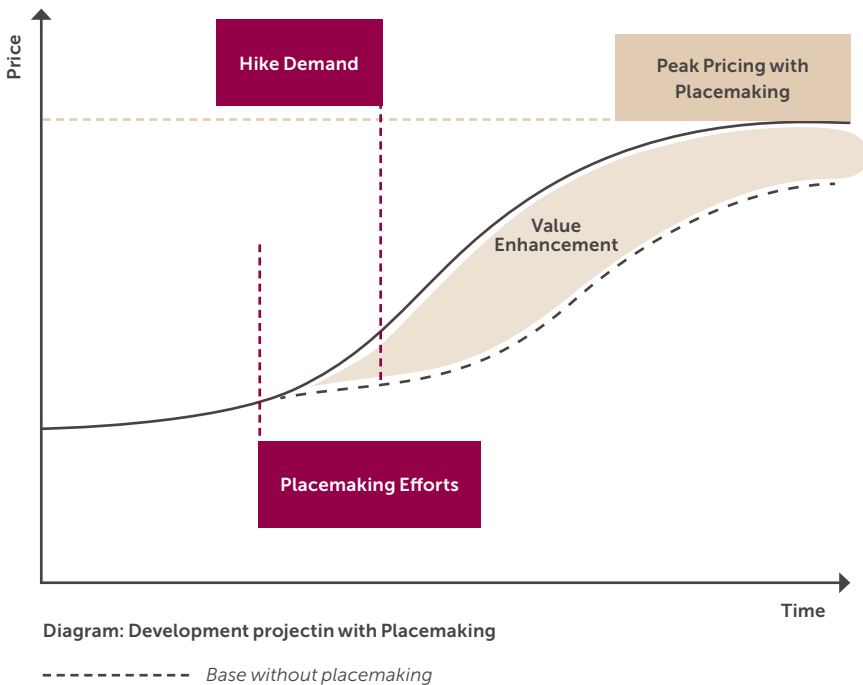
CHANGING APPROACH

In order to know what change could be effected, one would typically do a SWOT analysis to understand their market position. The findings, however, showed that none of Gamuda's developments were lacking compared to its competitors. In fact, this homogeneity itself was the very problem. It was concluded that a competition in 'hardware' — meaning in built-forms and infrastructures — would only mean that the next person could emulate and build the same. That would lead the team back to square one — of being one of countless other ordinary developments. Instead of competing to build more, higher, longer and bigger, the approach they had to take was of 'brand and identity creation,' more of a 'heartware' and 'software' that would 'tug' on the heart of the community and its users.

PLACEMAKING FIRST

This is where Placemaking came in. It helped 'breathe a new approach' into the way Gamuda's developments were delivered and how value is created and enhanced through the participation of the various communities and stakeholders. And where the developments are in new greenfield sites with no existing population, Placemaking was used to seed community creation.

"First, we had to align the various departments within the company as to what Placemaking actually entails. We had to collectively agree that Placemaking will consist of more than the typical 'marketing events' that developers are used to," said Mardiana. "Placemaking is by design and not by chance. It is not an afterthought and must be built-in at the onset of any development and sustained long past the launch date or point of sale."

Furthermore, the team acknowledged that placemaking should be used as a 'business tool' to unlock the future value of developments earlier, to help them react quickly to changes in consumer behaviour, trends and demands and to immediately capture value from these without having to build new infrastructure.

METHODOLOGY

The team understood that it is cardinal to build a business case around their Placemaking activities to ensure that it is treated as a long term endeavour, instead of a perpetual CSR. It must make business and economic sense, allowing for a win-win situation benefiting both the developer and the community.

Mardiana, together with her team, shortlisted what they termed as 'The Five Commandments of Placemaking' which are the five key guiding principles in choosing what sort of activities, brands, partners and priorities are incorporated into the 'Placemaking Roadmap' for each development. The five commandments are:

Community Creation	Destination Creation	Economic / Job Multiplier	Growing Industry	Value Ripple & Appreciation

They further distilled the above into five main themes, which, based on market research, are identified as up-and-coming trends amongst Malaysians with sufficient 'economic traction' to ensure long term financial viability.

At the same time, their implementation requires credible partners, preferably successful brands with followers or influence upon which the developer could leverage footfall. These themes are Urban Farming, Wellness, Animal Sanctuary, Adventure Trail and Creative Enterprise.

These themes are then applied at different scales depending on the context and target market of each development, using a Placemaking Roadmap that outlines which initiatives should be prioritised and who are the business ecosystem partners the marketing team could approach and 'deploy'.

The success story is clearly visible in one of Gamuda's smallest new developments, which was particularly challenged given it is surrounded by competitors five times its size, who have already had the first mover advantage. This development is called

Twentyfive.7, whose name is not accidental. As much as it refers to its 257 acres of land, it more importantly symbolises how "time is stretched an hour more" and reflects the "sleeplessness" and dynamism that the development promises to bring to this area.

As soon as one enters the development, there is a positive vibe and energy that greets all visitors, generated by the participative residents and communities themselves. From the award-winning waterfront, to the 'designer homes', to the regular pop-ups housing small businesses and entrepreneurs, Twentyfive.7 turned itself around from being the underdog into the talk of the town. Placemaking has now rippled throughout this entire new district, to the benefit of Gamuda, its neighbours and above all, the communities who will make Twentyfive.7 their homes for many years to come.

DO'S

- Plan on a continuous, tenacious series of **small activations.**

- Make sure they are **community-led and -driven.**

- **Choose a 'heartware' and 'software' approach** to engaging with stake-holders, investors and the communities they serve.

- **Carry out regular audits;** be nimble to changing and tweaking.

- Prioritise **initiatives which are commercially viable,** and financially self-sustainable.

- Treat placemaking **as an investment.**

- Produce **flexible and fresh activities.**

- Leverage on **collaborative partners.**

DON'TS

- Rely on **one-off events** with no traction.

- Allow plans to be imposed and curated by **'outsiders'.**

- Invest in **hardware only** – falling into the trap of 'build and people will come'.

- Display **a *laissez-faire* attitude** and refuse to make changes to original plans.

- Prioritise **initiatives with a high cost of implementation** with little or no return of investment.

- Perceive placemaking **as a cost.**

- Produce **repetitive and banal activities.**

- Avoid **'silo' executions.**

CREATING NEW LAYERS OF PUBLIC SPACE THROUGH ELEVATED WALKWAYS

Ester van Steekelenburg (Urban Discovery)

Home to Swire's operations for the last 100 years, Quarry Bay, located in the eastern part of Hong Kong Island, has developed from an industrial area into a vibrant business district that hosts more than 300 international companies in nine office towers. Taikoo Place is the name of this 7 million square feet commercial complex. When completed in 2022, the majority of its towers will be connected by a network of elevated walkways, providing over 30,000 office workers with a safe escape from Hong Kong's hot and humid climate.

By creating one of the largest privately-owned walkway systems in the region, Swire Properties — a subsidiary of Swire and the primary landlord of the area — has been able to make a bold place statement. Taikoo Place's system of walking bridges has created an additional layer of public space

to the city's urban jungle; an air-conditioned alternative to street level. The ingenious planning solution is also tailored to the context of Hong Kong where real estate is more expensive than in almost any other place in the world and public space comes at a premium.

FROM INDUSTRIAL DOCKYARDS TO OFFICE DISTRICT

The history of Taikoo goes back to the early 20th century when Hong Kong East was an industrial district with a dockyard, factories, a large sugar refinery and its own worker's village. In the 1970s, as port activities relocated to more remote parts of the city, the dockyards were replaced by tall residential blocks and a shopping mall, the Taikoo Shing (or 'Swire City') housing scheme. By the late 1980s, the district had become an ideal location for commercial real estate and Swire Properties began redeveloping the old, steel-framed warehouses and sugar refinery into an office complex. Together, Taikoo Shing and Taikoo Place have since transformed the eastern part of Hong Kong Island into an attractive, mixed residential-commercial neighbourhood.

Just like the dockyards were, in a way, a company town, Taikoo Place is designed to become a new urban community within the city. To achieve that goal, Swire Properties has put 'places' and 'people' at the heart of their prop-erty development approach. These P's are also two of the five key pillars of the company's 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy (the three others being 'Partners', 'Performance — Economic' and 'Performance — Environmental'). At Swire, placemaking is not an afterthought, but at the core of business, which is unusual in Hong Kong's competitive real estate environment.

In 2018, the company began exploring how to measure 'great places,' identifying key metrics and performance indicators and developing a framework for measuring and reporting on placemaking.

CREATING AN ADDITIONAL STREET LEVEL

The walkways have become Taikoo Place's signature, linking new and existing buildings with MTR stations, as well as giving a fresh identity to what otherwise would have been an anonymous commercial complex. Over 340 m (upon completion in 2022) of transparent air-conditioned space with amenities, art and seating makes it more than a place to get from A to B and creates a fluid transition between work and play. The capacity is impressive; during peak hour, the Devon Bridge handles an average of 7,000 people per hour, giving an important boost to walkability in Hong Kong's dense urban environment.

Although privately owned, the walkways are connected to public spaces and complement what happens at street level. Observing the pedestrian flows, they not only serve commuters going to their offices but also local residents doing their daily shopping or visitors who are attending an exhibition or event. The walkway system is accessible for less mobile people and connects to open office lobbies with public seating elements.

The company has similarly invested in quality public space at ground level. Thanks to a series of landscaping, paving and pe-destrianising efforts, Hong Kong East has a distinctly different feel to its surrounding neighbourhoods. It's visible in the funda-mentals, like the width of the sidewalks, the abundant use of greenery, the generous size of open spaces and the absence of intrusive barriers. It is also present in the details like the fluidity of form and the design of railings, wayfinding and street furniture. The result is an entire ecosystem of high-quality spaces both on the street and elevated level.

> "
>
> **More than a place to get from A to B, the walkways are a minimal and fluid ribbon in complementary contrast to the verticality and the mass of the towers they link together.**
>
> "
>
> **HUGH DUTTON,
> (NEW) WALKWAY ARCHITECT
> & CONCEPT ENGINEER**

FROM PLACEMAKING TO PLACEKEEPING

Taikoo Place is currently undergoing re-development. In 2022, when the project is completed, the complex will include some 70,000 square feet of new public space, un-paralleled in Hong Kong. The walking bridge will be extended, and even more open space will be freed up at ground level.

Placemaking matters not just at street level, but also in the connective tissue of the vertical urban fabric: in lift-lobbies, underground parking facilities and in walkways. By constantly reinventing space, Swire Properties is designing public spaces of the future, a firm commitment not just to placemaking but also to placekeeping.
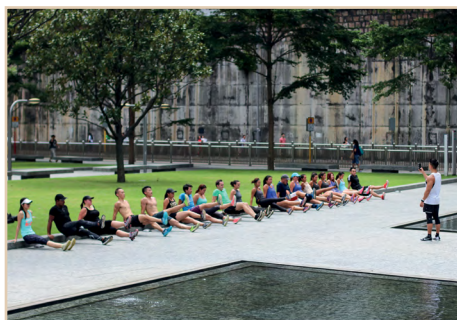
DO'S

What are some of the placemaking principles that make up Taikoo Place's design philosophy?

- **Design the walkways beyond its functional role:** when the refurbishment is complete, the walkway will appear like a floating, transparent promenade. Hanging gardens will act as natural wayfinding paths and provide connection to green space at street level.

- **Organise initiatives for community engagement:** 'Hometown Heroes' is a collaboration with cafés and restaurants in the district which hosts art and food workshops to give office workers a behind-the-scenes peek into the places they pass by on a daily basis.

- **Reserve ample space for functions that create footfall and bring in different audiences:** the 'new street level' at Taikoo Place offers both retail and café space. The office complex hosts a co-working space, a members' club and ArtisTree — a 7,000 square feet independent multi-purpose venue.

- **Host activities to bring life to the district on quiet days:** a year-round calendar of cultural activities and in- and outdoor performances keep the place vibrant. Examples include a weekly Sunday Market with artisanal products and street food stalls, and 'Project After 6', an event that brings art, sports and music events to the work environment.

- **Invest in quality public art:** In a city with limited infrastructure dedicated to art and culture, Artwalk, Taikoo Place's collection of indoor and outdoor public art provides a critical podium for artists. It also attracts passers-by and encourages spontaneous interactions.

DON'TS

- **Don't only focus on hardware:** the combination of hardware and software is key. For example, the bridges are designed for optimal pedestrian traffic flow, especially during rush-hour. Meanwhile, the use of curved forms and tactile materials bring human scale and originality.

- **Don't only invest in the present, reach out to a new generation for a more sustainable impact:** In 2019 Swire Properties launched 'I am a Dreammaker': a youth empowerment scheme that invites students from six local universities to design, manage and run the district's annual Christmas Street Fair. The students were mentored by industry professionals at the Swire Properties Placemaking Academy.

ABOUT SWIRE PROPERTIES

Established in Hong Kong in 1972 as a subsidiary of Swire - a highly diversified group - Swire Properties develops and manages a portfolio of large-scale mixed-use property investments across Hong Kong, Mainland China, Singapore and the US. Download the Places Impact Report for free from the website: https://www.swireproperties.com/-/media/files/swireproperties/publications/2020-places-impact-report.ashx.

THE VALUE OF PLACEMAKING

Jack Backen (Cistri Singapore)

Not that long ago, a visit to a conference focused on property development could feel a bit like a broken record. Speakers would focus on a small number of similar themes, like the growth of eCommerce, the rise of millennials, or the importance of good F&B and entertainment credentials.

Today, while these themes are still strong, much more focus is being given to placemaking. But until recently, most developers have found these principles more challenging to accept into their projects. How can a property owner justify providing high-quality places that cost money and don't pay rent?

WHAT IS A GREAT PLACE?

A 'Great Place' is an amorphous concept, one that is hard to define. Often, Great Places provide a wide range of benefits that flow from several sources and are often at the centre of any connected, inclusive and vibrant community. For example, a great retail place is more than a precinct of shops and parking, it is a destination for social connection and interaction.

Successful placemaking in mixed-use developments can also be evidenced by the depth and breadth of economic and social activity. Great Places enable and support a vibrant ecosystem of households, businesses and community services that are engaged and well-connected.

A further important aspect of Great Places is that they are dynamic and resilient, and this is supported by effective and proactive governance systems. Just as placemaking should not be seen as a set-and-forget process, their governance systems should be seen as well-informed and adaptable.

UNDERSTANDING VALUE

Cistri is a new type of consultancy based in Singapore whose vision on placemaking and value-creation is based on a holistic method that reflects the philosophy that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

Figure 1 presents an analytical framework for assessing the value of Place. It shows each of the key elements from which value is derived under four headings – Commercial, Economic / Fiscal, Environment / Sustainability and Social / Community. Value can flow from each of these elements, however, different audiences will focus on different aspects.

The hardest stakeholders to convince of the Value of Place are the landlords who have to pay for it. So, what value can a property owner expect?

A PRACTICAL APPROACH

With their analytical framework complete, the team at Cistri sought practical ways to use data to help communicate the potential benefits of Great Places.
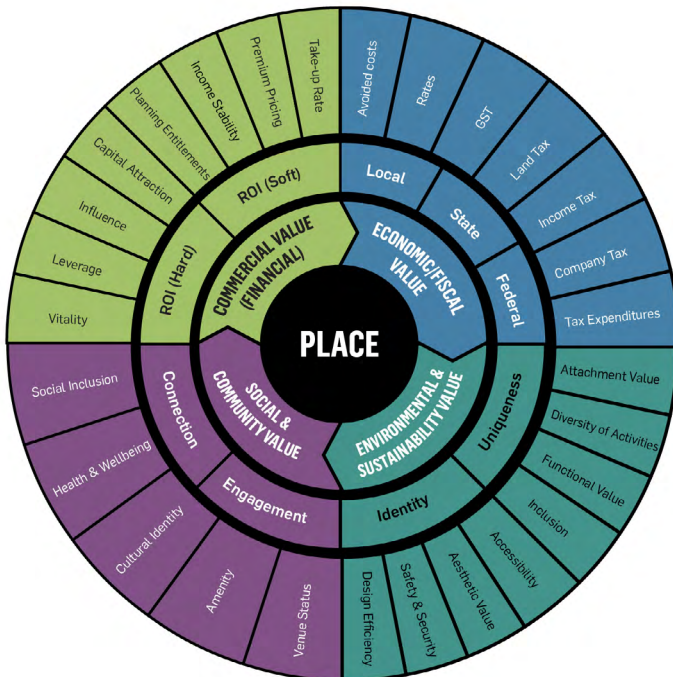

Figure 1. Source: Urbis Pty Ltd. / Cistri Pte Ltd.

First, the consultants defined the Places to be considered. They took a broad view and included a range of land uses that either:

- provided high-quality public space, or

- provided a public service but paid little to no rent

These Places were grouped into four categories:

1. Entertainment & Leisure Precincts (F&B)

2. Healthcare

3. Library / Arts

4. Outdoor / Play / Parks

Cistri then chose twelve properties across the Asia Pacific that contained one of these four Place categories. Using a mobile phone movement analysis tool the team were able to analyse the behaviour of visitors who use the Place in question, and ask two key questions:

1. Was the user of the Place more or less likely to come from the property's 'usual' catchment?

2. Did the user of the Place spend longer in the rest of the commercial precinct than a non-user?

The results (see figure 2) for the first question were quite mixed. It is quite apparent that a strong Entertainment & Leisure precinct can have a positive impact on a commercial property's catchment — people will travel further for a high-quality F&B precinct than a regular commercial precinct. However, for the other Place categories, the results were less straightforward.

For the second question, the results were far clearer. Users of each Place had, on average, a longer dwell time within the rest of the commercial property than non-users of the Place. For any retail property, improving dwell time is a key objective. And stronger retail can mean stronger amenity for other land uses.

SOME EXAMPLES

Westfield Chermside, Australia
This is a splendid example of the impact of providing a high-quality Place as part of a new F&B precinct. The precinct provided 25 additional F&B outlets as part of a regional mall. Stitching the precinct together was a lovely laneway with water features, greenery, and places to relax. The project achieved some impressive metrics:

- Visitors to the F&B precinct were 13% more likely to have come from beyond the mall's trade area.

- The cross usage between the F&B precinct and rest of the mall was 65%, making the precinct a strong anchor.

- Visitors to the F&B precinct had a 37% longer dwell time than other visitors.

So the F&B precinct is attracting people from a wider area, getting them to stay longer, and making good use of the rest of the property.

Jewel at Changi Airport, Singapore
One of the most impressive additions to any commercial property in recent years is Jewel's Rain Vortex. Surrounded by lush green terraces, it is becoming a must-see destination for Singaporeans and tourists alike.
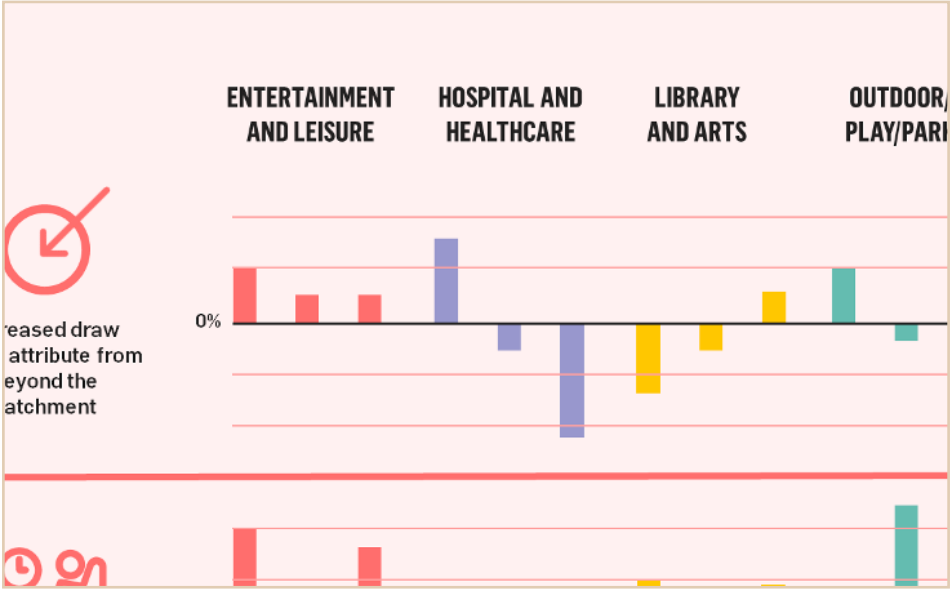
ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE   HOSPITAL AND HEALTHCARE   LIBRARY AND ARTS   OUTDOOR/ PLAY/PARK

eased draw
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Figure 2.

Westfield Chermside.

Jewel at Changi Airport.

As an airport mall, it is harder to determine the Vortex's impact on customer draw. However, our analysis has shown that people who do visit the Vortex have a 9% longer dwell time in the mall than those who only visit the mall. It is apparent that the Vortex is attracting a slightly different type of customer, one who has a bit more time on their hands, whose alternative might be to stay in the airport terminal.

A WORKED EXAMPLE

In 2019 Cistri worked with a shopping centre owner to help them understand the value of the placemaking elements they had put into a retail centre. The centre had two key Places:

1. A fabulous outdoor leisure area that included a kid's play area, family picnic areas and high-quality landscaping;

2. An outdoor entertainment and leisure precinct, which included a range of restaurants and entertainment tenants, stitched together by very strong placemaking elements.

The team undertook a detailed analysis of visitor and expenditure patterns for each of the precincts and used this to estimate their impact on the underlying value of the remainder of the shopping centre. Their analysis suggested the following findings:

*   The outdoor leisure area increased the value of the centre by between 1 and 1.5%.

*   The F&B anchored ELP (2) was found to have increased the overall value of the balance of the asset by between 3 and 5%. Probably not all of the value uplift can be attributable to the placemaking elements — the restaurants alone would have had some impact by themselves. But the success of the F&B precinct was driven by the placemaking elements.

DO'S

*   **Engage placemaking experts at the start** of a development process, not the end.

*   **Think about Place as a 'need-to-have'** in a development, not a 'nice-to-have'.

*   Treat Place as an ongoing feature of a property, not a piece of art or branding strategy.

DON'TS

*   **Don't focus on the costs.** Instead, focus on the benefits of Place.

*   **Don't treat placemaking as a box-ticking exercise.**

THE CARPET MAN OF KAMPONG GELAM

**In conversation with Saeid Labbafi (One Kampong Gelam)
by Serene Tng (Urban Redevelopment Authority)**

POUNDING THE STREETS TO KEEP THE QUARTER THRIVING

Kampong Gelam has its origins as a thriving port town and is one of Singapore's oldest urban quarters. In Malay, the word *kampong* means 'compound' or 'village' while *gelam* is often attributed to the *gelam* tree, which was found and used locally for boat-making, medicine and even as a seasoning for food. In 1822, Sir Stamford Raffles allocated the area to the Malay, Arab, Bugis, Javanese and other communities. It subsequently became one of the seats of Malay royalty in Singapore and developed into an urban area that was an important centre of trade, publishing, intellectual thought, fashion, education, and religious life for the Malay world. In the past four decades, it has evolved into a mixed-use multi-ethnic neighbourhood while retaining its strong Malay / Muslim heritage and character.

The historic core of the precinct, bounded by Ophir Road, Victoria Street, Jalan Sultan and Beach Road, was gazetted as a conservation area in 1989. It is home to iconic buildings such as the Sultan Mosque (a national monument) and the Malay Heritage Centre. It also boasts over 600 diverse shophouses and has many traditional trades and home-grown brands in food, retail and textile businesses.

STARTING FROM THE GROUND UP

In 2011, Saeid Labbafi, a permanent resident of Singapore, took the initiative to approach several shops to rally their businesses together. His family owned eight carpet shops along Arab Street and had been operating in the historic precinct for close to 20 years.

Seeing an opportunity to enhance the neighbourhood he loved, Saeid felt that more could be done if everyone banded together. In 2014, he founded One Kampong Gelam (OKG), a placemaking association dedicated to placemaking activities in the area. The association now has 70 members mainly made up of businesses.

KEY INITIATIVES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Because of OKG's efforts over the years, the area enjoys a warm and friendly atmosphere, with a strong community of businesses, institutions and stakeholders working together towards common goals. Kampong Gelam also comes alive with a wide variety of attractions and activities organised throughout the year. The following are some lessons gained from the efforts:

DO'S

- "**Start small.** I approached just ten shops to get initial support. And I chose to focus on three things of common interest to key stakeholders in the beginning: 1) improving the cleanliness of the area; 2) introducing relevant events and regular bazaars that will help increase footfall; and 3) working on enhancements that will help both businesses and visitors, such as ensuring sufficient car parking (during car-free zone events) and creating outdoor refreshment areas," says Saeid Labbafi, the OKG Chairman.

- **Listen to stakeholders.** To gain the support of diverse stakeholders, Saeid shares: "Survey, survey, survey — for every major event and enhancement we want to implement, we carry out many surveys with businesses to really listen to what they want and need. And very often, we walk door to door to stay in touch with stakeholders. I've made many friends along the way and the precinct now feels like a second home."

- **Celebrate rich heritage and culture!** Many of the OKG members and the communities within the precinct are passionate about the area.
  Sharing this sense of belonging, various individuals continue to find opportunistic moments to celebrate common values and identities.
  Various activities such as the annual Ramadan bazaars, regular events and neighbourhood sketches are themed to bring out the vibrant culture and heritage of the area, with OKG working in partnership with the Sultan Mosque, the Aliwal Arts Centre and Malay Heritage Centre. Businesses also come together to support the Muslim community during Ramadan to organise meals together following the breaking of fast.

  OKG members are also helping to support retailers in Kampong Gelam to go digital and omnichannel; the first of many neighbourhoods to undergo a digital revitalisation as part of the larger retail industry transformation led by the Infocomm Media Development Authority.

- **Make an impact.** Street closures are used strategically to showcase the culture and heritage of the area and to bring people together. OKG initiated

regular street closures starting from Haji Lane in 2013 and later extended its efforts to Baghdad Street and Bussorah Street. To sustain the vibrancy along these streets, OKG eventually took on a master lease for the outdoor dining and display areas, managing the renting of spaces to stalls and cafés and for events such as bazaars. OKG then uses part of the revenue collected to fund placemaking activities in the precinct.

OKG has also gone on to organise other street closures with specific themes. In July 2019, Arab Street was transformed into a carpet-lined fashion runway in an event called 'projeKGlam-way', paying homage to Arab Street's traditional textile businesses.

Such major events have made a big impact on the area, demonstrating the many possibilities of collaborations and how street closures can make the precinct more enjoyable for all.

Over the years, OKG has developed strong ties and good communication with key government agencies and major stakeholders in the area. This is crucial in gaining the necessary support to implement significant im-provements.

DON'TS

- To create a better traffic flow, **don't only create moments in the main streets of an area.** In smaller pockets and narrow lanes, there are many surprising spaces that will delight and engage visitors and residents. In this project, art murals can be found at various corners of the precinct, provid-ing Instagram-worthy shots. In quieter areas, there are swings and benches in a cozy outdoor space beside Kandahar Street. This was an idea mooted by business owner Johari Kazura in 2015, who was born in the area and now runs a perfume shop nearby.

THE NEXT STEPS

OKG, together with several other stake-holders in the precinct are also testing the viability of piloting the Business Improvement District (BID) model initiated by the Government in 2017, seeing the potential to leverage on BID to provide greater financial stability and certainty in carrying out more substantial improvements for the precinct over time.

As part of the BID, they are pursuing a four-year business plan (2019-2023), focusing on amplifying their marketing efforts for the precinct, expanding their range of events, supporting businesses and enhancing the environment with more art murals, better wayfinding and improved street closures.

Moving forward to sustain the efforts in the longer run, Saeid hopes more stakeholders in the area and others can come forward to support the BID plans and placemaking efforts. He shares: "Setting up the BID for Kampong Gelam is for the benefit of the neighbourhood. I hope more stakeholders can come forward voluntarily to offer their support. We also welcome others who are keen to help, to join in to make Kampong Gelam a memorable place with a rich culture and heritage. There is so much more potential to keep this wonderful treasure trove thriving."

PLANNING SEOULUTIONS FROM HONGDAE

In conversation with Bart Reuser (Next Architects)
by Charlot Schans (STIPO)

Hongdae today is one of the trendiest and most lively districts of the buzzing city of Seoul. The district is known for its thriving art scene, night clubs, galleries and student life. Bart Reuser, founder of the Dutch architecture company NEXT architects, lived in Seoul in 2012 and explored the planning dynamics behind the successful transformation of the district. He documented his findings in *Seoulutions*, a comprehensive guide for planning professionals and an ode to the dynamic city.

CITY OF FLUX

Bart became fascinated by the district's continuous change. Within the year he attempted to pin down a clear image of the city, only to find whatever he just got to know was changing in front of his very eyes. He lost his favourite coffee place, bakery, restaurant and his orientation, but gained a fascination for the ever-changing dynamics of the city in exchange. For Reuser, Hongdae became the representation of this continuum and proved to be an inspiration to rethink planning; especially relevant when perceived

from the Dutch context, where the comprehensive urban planning system — resulting in what Bart calls the 'conditioned city' — was losing momentum at the time. Hongdae's story is one a neighbourhood that accommodates the complexity of urban transformation through an approach he coined the 'city of flux,' where guiding rules are put in place to balance the unprecedented opportunities and progress, emerging from economic forces at play.

TRANSFORMATION

Hongdae was established in the 1960s as a sparsely populated residential neighbourhood, with villas mainly for higher government officials and other well-to-do residents of Seoul. The private lots were traditionally fenced off by high walls, separating the public realm from the private domain. But over the course of 50 years, the residential neighbourhood developed into a mixed-use area, gradually turning the district inside-out. The first spark that ignited the success of Hongdae today, was the growth of Hongik University, the most established art school of Korea, which attracted artists to locate in its adjacent neighbourhoods. This has left a permanent mark on the district as the habitat of the city's creative community.

INCENTIVISING REGULATIONS

Bart found that the appeal of the transformation of Hongdae lies in the effective combination of the planning schemes facilitating urban development in Seoul, and the entrepreneurial mindset of its residents. The Korean urban planning system — influenced by the Anglo-Saxon tradition — is guided by three main principles: zoning, building and bonus regulations. Zoning as a planning instrument globally dictates the area's program, and plans for residential, commercial,

industrial or green spaces, without being overly restrictive. While Hongdae is facing continuous transformation, it is still primarily categorised as a residential area. Within this category however, the Korean planning system allows for mix-use, and doesn't exclude functions per definition. There is therefore not much pushback for any residential neighbourhood to gradually develop into a commercial area with a great variety of amenities.

"

The appeal of the transformation of Hongdae lies in the effective combination of the planning schemes facilitating urban development in Seoul, and the entrepreneurial mindset of its residents.

"

As a second control mechanism, the building regulations define the boundaries of a building. In Hongdae, these regulations have made way for creative interpretations, like adding extra floors on the same footprint. The flexibility of the regulations dictated for instance that an underground floor may replace a parking lot if at least one-third of the layer added was above the surface. This then resulted in underground spaces with noticeably high ceilings, that turned out to be of excellent use as clubs or artist studios.

The bonus regulations, lastly, are among the most innovative control mechanisms. The regulations are based on New York's incentive-based planning system, and invite the owner of a building to invest in the

A property in Hongdae before renovations (top; 2009) and after (bottom; 2011).

quality of the built environment, in return for permission to add more quantity. Densification thus comes with a quality impulse. As Hongdae traditionally had narrow streets, the city's planning authority invited building owners to demolish the high walls around the estates and open up the façades. The result is a great city at eye level and an inviting public life.

FACILITATING AN ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET

The Korean planning system moreover perceives owner-occupants as entrepreneurs who are invited to seek new opportunities with their real estate, instead of residents that need to be protected against unforeseen changes. As most residents of Hongdae have invested in their real estate for pension
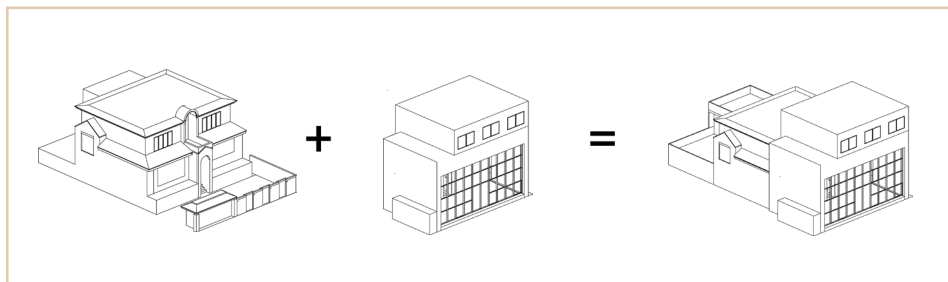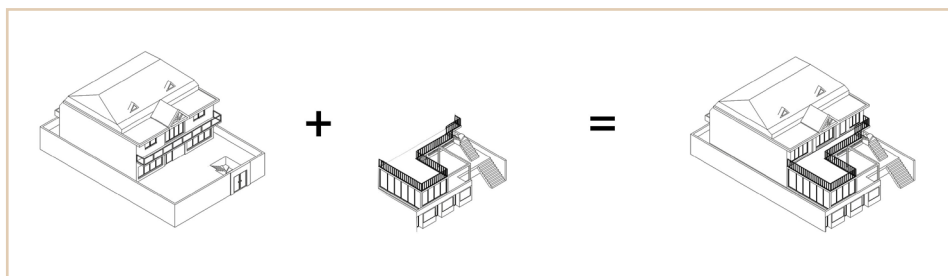
Visualisation of possible architectural changes.

purposes, they continued to make investments over time to adapt their build-ing to emerging demands. A floor was added here, a staircase was created to increase connectivity, or buildings were split between the original and ongoing residential function and a commercial amenity at street level. This gradual change has led to a great variety of materials used and a diverse and walkable district with a fine grain, and a surprise on every corner. Some may call it a mess for lack of architectural cohesiveness, but Hongdae clearly shows how such a flexible approach to area development creates multiple values, ranging from creative use to financial success and social benefits for its residents.

SEOULUTIONS FOR OTHER CITIES

Bart shows that even though the prevailing restrictive planning mechanism in European cities has its upsides, there are valuable lessons to be gained when observing how Asian cities accommodate development. Urban planning in the Netherlands, for instance, is a risk-averse system that is built around jurisdiction and protection, but it creates an unequivocal dependency on predictability and security. This may have worked for a long time, when urban development was synonymous with greenfield development. However, a more complex urban environment nowadays asks for a more dynamic set of control mechanisms. As urban development and transformation nowadays is often times set in populated urban areas, with an existing community of stake-holders, the planning system should be adaptive and flexible. Reuser pleads for a planning system that allows for spontaneity, private and civic initiative, gradual growth, alternative mechanisms and innovative business models to make our cities more resilient in continuous change.

DO'S

- **Build layers on top of what already exists,** meaning that the city is never finished. Always offer space for additions and improvements.

- **Scale down by creating small lots.** Hereby you create space for new players, initiatives from companies and collectives. That also means that you must dare to exclude well-known large professional parties.

- **Align instead of designate.** Programmatic change should become the rule and not the exception. This should resonate in new planning instruments.

- **Create incentive legislation,** a system based on rewarding a positive contribution to the city instead of excluding the unknown.

- **Consistency through growth,** which means we shouldn't try to control the city but steer it towards the right direction. This is possible if we start to value large diversity in scale, functions and shapes.

- **For the added value of buildings (social and economic),** we have to move to a new valuation system that is not based on specific but on generic use.

DON'TS

- **Don't always plan for inclusive urban design.** Distinctions per location means that we introduce the principle of inequality in urban planning; not all places will have the same rights and opportunities, but this will make a difference.

- **Don't allocate all spaces for use.** This means leaving and reserving open spaces for unforeseen development within an area as a precondition for future-proofing.

INVESTING IN PLACES & CITIES OF THE FUTURE

David Hutton (Lendlease)

Today's technology and changing lifestyles require us all to rethink our approach to cities. Nowhere in the world is this more evident than across Asia, where the scale, density and acceleration of urbanisation is happening at a rate unimaginable in the West: one million new people arrive into Asian cities every week.

To succeed, we must focus on ensuring that our cities are so much more than just centres for commerce. The leading cities of the future will be those that capture the imagination and passion of their communities.

Beyond the tragic human suffering and economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the compulsory social isolation we experienced in 2020 emphasised two clear themes:

- the power of technology in working remotely and staying connected;

- the fundamental human requirement for personal interaction.

Whilst it may take time to restore confidence in mass gatherings and international travel, the draw for human re-engagement in our cities is ensured. Everywhere people are awaiting the opportunity to re-engage and socialise.

The real estate industry can often forget it is in the 'people' business… The bricks and mortar, steel and glass are a means to an end, but not the ultimate purpose. The winning cities are those that focus on the wellbeing of their citizens, enhance people's lives, and contribute to social, environmental and economic outcomes.

In the past, the roles cities played were primarily based on function and transactions. Millions commuted to CBD workplaces to undertake tasks based on production, administration and access to goods and services. Technology has negated much of the requirement for people to meet in person to undertake business or exchange goods.

Tomorrow's cities face new challenges, primarily around environmental and social demands. There is an increasing realisation of the need to focus on talent, sustainability, social cohesion and liveability. 'Place' is imperative to achieving these outcomes.

CREATING THE BEST PLACES

A scan of the many current city ranking tools show that whilst there are a host of varying metrics, there is a universal alignment that the most successful cities in the future will be those which provide their residents, workers and visitors with great places.

This requires us all to shift our thinking about place, from 'cost' to 'investment'. A recognition that improved liveability underpins the success of a city and the wellbeing of its people. Like investing in quality, brand

and reputation, investing in place requires a holistic perspective.

There is a strong correlation between the value of real estate and the quality of place in which it is located. Whilst place creation has a cost of delivery and curation, like good buildings, well-delivered and managed places also generate returns and value. Smart business and smart Government are increasingly recognising the value of place and through collaboration and a shared vision, remarkable city transformations are being pursued and achieved.

CASES IN KUALA LUMPUR & SINGAPORE

Two current Asian examples where place creation is at the centre of major integrated development are at The Exchange TRX in Kuala Lumpur and Paya Lebar Quarter in Singapore. Both projects are based on a fundamental belief that the best mixed-use assets are founded in authentic and connected places that provide generous community and public benefit.

Paya Lebar Quarter (known as PLQ) in Singapore is a S$3.6 billion development that provides a distinctive, pedestrian-friendly destination for people to live, work, shop and visit while also contributing to the Government's policy to improve liveability and enhance major mixed-use district centres surrounding the CBD.

PLQ has a collection of offices, condominiums, and retail, linked by mass transit and providing public realm and community amenity. It is climate-responsive, energy-efficient and incorporates a new covered public plaza, green parkland, outdoor dining, playground, cycle routes and more. The site also includes three times more trees than the previous open land.

Social value has been delivered through respecting and celebrating the cultural history of the local Malay community in the design, which is orientated around a comfortable, people-friendly public plaza and linear park with generous public seating, shading and activated by F&B, public events

and pop-ups. The quality of place creation has transformed Paya Lebar into a highly desirable place to work, live, dine and shop.

The Exchange TRX is located in Kuala Lumpur and is the centrepiece of the Malaysian Government's 70-acre RM$40

Lendlease brings world-class placemaking to Paya Lebar Quarter in Singapore, which held its grand opening in October 2019 (top). The Exchange TRX in Kuala Lumpur is at the centre of the city's new financial and business district (bottom).

billion visionary transformation project, which aims to reshape the city and enhance its performance through the creation of a world-class business and financial centre. The Exchange TRX is directly connected to mass transit and will comprise a hotel, an A grade office, over 2,000 condominiums, the city's prime retail and leisure offer, and a new ten-acre city park. The development will significantly increase biodiversity in the city and include children's play facilities and cultural events. It brings to life the experience economy where the quality of place and focus on people is at the forefront of the design.

PLQ and the Exchange at TRX both represent a major investment in placemaking, redefining their respective city districts, contributing to shaping a brighter future for the city and its citizens.

EMBEDDING A PLACE VISION

Creation of place starts with a vision co-created from a deep understanding of the needs and aspirations of the city and its communities. The best projects always have both strong Government and Private sector champions committed to a bigger outcome.

Unfortunately, too often, place is thought of as a 'nice-to-have' if there is time and budget left at the end of a project. To optimise a project's long-term value, the place vision must guide and inform all aspects of its design and ongoing curation.

To help generate a greater understanding of the value of place, we must become better at articulating the drivers and results that will enhance a city. The identification of agreed metrics to assess place outcomes shifts the focus from cost to also measuring the benefits created.

A place vision that is embedded early and passionately implemented across the life of a major urban development will deliver transformational change and a material uplift in value for all stakeholders.

DO'S

- **Invest in a place with a holistic perspective in mind,** similar to making investments in quality, brand and reputation.

- **Design for authentic and connected places with mixed-use assets.** Providing quality places with a generous public realm and a community focus will increase value and provide a payback.

- **When designing new places, create value and loyalty through respecting and celebrating the local culture and history.**

DON'TS

- When working in real estate, **don't forget that the development of cities and buildings is so much more than bricks and mortar, steel and glass.** Always start planning from a 'people' perspective, understanding the needs and aspirations of its stakeholders and ultimate users.

FINDING THE BALANCE OF INCLUSIVITY

CHAPTER 06

INTRODUCTION

Daniel Lim & Tasnim Hadi (Think City)

As a concept that has been widely implemented around the world, placemaking has largely revolved around life in the Western world, with many examples and cultural contexts mainly taking into consideration the habits and seasons of the West rather than the East.

A classic example is the public field. Historically, urban green areas such as parks and fields have been characteristic of Western towns and cities, traditionally serving the functions of representation, wellbeing or urban hygiene.

While parks and public fields exist in many Asian cities, it is interesting to observe the differences in the way these spaces are used. In the West, people would gravitate towards the centre. Common activities would include playing games or laying blankets out for picnics during the day while people-watching and soaking in the sun. In the East, people would to flock to the periphery of the field, where there may be seating and trees to provide shade from the sun or tropical rains, only venturing out to play in the evenings. While differing weather affects behaviour, there are also cultural factors at work; in the West it is desirable to have a tan, while in the East having fair skin is the goal.

The learning here is that spaces mean different things to different people and culture plays a key role in determining how or if it is used at all. In the same vein, culture becomes an element that influences who uses a particular space and who does not. Armed with this intelligence, designers can therefore create spaces that are more inclusive.

Despite the Western influence on Asian cities, there are many great cases of placemaking in the East, with interesting variations based on location and the interpretation of inherent culture and identity, some of which we highlight in this chapter. What is evident is that culture and participation are the corner-stones of ensuring and even creating inclusivity in spaces.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITIES

Culture in Asia is dynamic and diverse, where even in the same ethnic group there exist multiple layers of different sub-ethnic groups, each unique, with their own sense of individuality and identity. For placemaking in general, it can be dangerous to assign blanket assumptions on how people perceive their culture, and this is particularly detrimental in Asia where forces such as urban migration, education, and globalisation have shifted and shaped the way indi-viduals perceive and uphold their own cultural identity.

While there may be a collective identity ascribed to the wider society, com-munity identity consists of multiple layers, defined by various factors such as socio-economic status and psychographics. The resulting combination of both society's collective identity and the identity of specific communities is a uniqueness, an exclusiveness of identity and behaviour that needs to be decoded and built into the design of a space.

INCLUSIVE / EXCLUSIVE

When designing a space, the end-user is key. This end-user may not necessari-ly mean the person you actually see using the space, passing through or having lunch. Your ideal end-user may well be someone whom you want to woo into using the space, and this is ideally a user who will care enough about the space, adopt it as their own, feel a sense of ownership and perhaps even take control of managing the space in the future.

Many spaces may also be designed so that is *not* used in a particular way. Known as defensive design, we see this especially in vulnerable inner-city communities where there may be homeless individuals, undocumented migrants or stall owners without licences. Urban designers sometimes go to great lengths to create benches that deter people from sitting or lying down for long periods of time, for example. Or implement lighting that cannot be easily destroyed by those who prefer activities in the dark.

Local governments have the tendency to design for the exclusion of certain types of communities, but this often results in unattractive spaces devoid of families, women or children. This could be perhaps due to safety issues, difficulty in navigating around the space or the lack of appeal to children.

However, whether it is designing only for specific types of users, or designing to omit others, it is choices like these that could lead to exclusivity (Ratho 2020).

MAPPING CULTURE AND LETTING THE COMMUNITY LEAD

It is hard to be inclusive in placemaking if exclusivity is not understood or acknowledged, which is why seeking to comprehend local communities and cultural mapping is imperative before embarking on any sort of initiative. Recognising that each community is exclusive in its own way allows placemakers to work around the fact and include elements which encourage inclusivity. Inclusivity needs to be the key ingredient, not only in the beginning or through scattered engagement sessions, but throughout the entire process, from conceptualisation to implementation.

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It is hard to be inclusive in placemaking if exclusivity is not understood or acknowledged.

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This means letting the community lead the way in terms of setting the objective, identifying stakeholders, inviting different users to explore different solutions on-site, and overseeing implementation in ways that are useful and acceptable for them as a community possessing exclusive traits. Sometimes this means gaining trust — more than usual — and working with local NGOs who have already managed to gain trust, and who understand the different needs of the community.

INCLUSIVITY, CREATED THROUGH PARTICIPATION

Communities take more ownership when they have a chance to participate in the process and are invited to co-create from the get-go. The level of ownership may differ based on the scale of participation, which is why placemaking so strongly hinges on the process of community engagement to achieve inclusivity.

In many cases, communities do not always speak the same language as designers and technicians, or do not know how to express their needs. It is important, therefore, that they are empowered with knowledge and given ways to discover and decide what they wish for their spaces.

RAYER BOISHAKHI PLAYGROUND, DHAKA, BANGLADESH

Md Sohel Rana (UN-Habitat) & Maruf Hossain (Work for Better Bangladesh Trust)

In Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, you see mostly youths — young men and boys — occupying parks and playgrounds, with almost no women, girls or toddlers in sight. The Rayerbazar Boishakhi Playground, poised for renewal, seeks to reverse this. According to the WBB Trust, the playground serves close to 250,000 dwellers in the area, but only 3.9% of those who use the park are girls under eight years old.

This situation is cultural. Despite advancements over the years, women in Bangladesh continue to struggle to achieve equal rights due to "societal norms and enforced restrictive gender roles" (Kotikula & Arango 2019). This includes safe access to public spaces and amenities. A recent World Bank report reveals that when asked about whether they feel safe outside their home, women in Bangladesh are lagging behind men by 30 percentage

points with only 69% of women feeling safe compared to almost all men. Also, while both men and women feel concern over safety in public spaces, the risk of sexual harassment affects women disproportionately.

The plan to transform the playground, (the brainchild of the Work for a Better Bangladesh Trust, in collaboration with HealthBridge-Canada and UN-Habitat, supported by the Dhaka North City Corporation), includes the provision of seating arrangements, security, lighting and other people-friendly facilities. More importantly, the aim is to reinvent the playground with input from the community — the end goal being a space that is equally used by both genders. "I want to play but I did not have a place to play when I wanted. I am happy now as I will be able to go to Rayerbazar Boishakhi Playground once the project is implemented. I will go there with my sisters and brothers and cousin to play every day," explained Rubina Akter, an 11-year-old girl from the Ali Hasan Girls High School in Rayer Bazar, Dhaka (Rana 2019). By transforming the Rayer Bazar Boishakhi Playground, Rubina was provided a safe place that she helped build herself.

Innovative technology has shown great potential in community co-creation. The Block by Block Foundation's approach revolving around the sandbox video game, Minecraft, has been a critical tool in the making of the Rayerbazar Boishakhi Playground — engaging residents and young community members to visualise what could be, and giving them a voice. The approach empowers communities by allowing greater liberty and endless creativity which opens the way for real world outcomes.

Another wonderful example is demonstrated by Hack Our Play (HOP) in Singapore — an ongoing initiative bringing children, educators, and parents together to co-create play spaces from start to finish. Together, they are empowered to 'conceptualise, create and curate safe and unique play experiences' that differ from the standard playground equipment from a catalogue. Apart from fostering stronger bonds and a shared sense of pride and excitement, this exercise enables out-of-the-box thinking and solutions which are closer to people's desires, and as a result, are more inclusive.

To prevent the feeling of disconnection in rapidly growing cities like Hong Kong, the Sai Ying Pun neighbourhood connects new and old residents by identifying the cultural assets of the neighbourhood, for example, what does it mean to be a 'Sai Ying Pun-er'? What are places in the area that matter to people? The project was used to bridge the gap between elderly folk and children through activities such as Hopscotch and the care of plants where the elderly could demonstrate their knowledge and tell their stories. This also shows that the strength and knowledge of different kinds of end-users may help boost the involvement of others.

The strong connection between communities and food, found in almost all kinds of cultures, is another powerful example of how culture can create inclusivity. Even Singapore, an urban city-state with a fabricated landscape and a strong influx of migrants has found success in fusing the country's (predominantly) Indian, Malay and Chinese population through food. Although the multiracial Singapore society may identify with their respective tribes, they are all bound together through the sharing of food, culture and the precious little space they collectively own.

The well-represented cases in this chapter depict spaces that have been transformed into places that are inclusive and welcoming for all members of society, but also processes that are inclusive, taking into consideration the intended users of the space and the needs of communities with exclusive traits, belief systems, and social structures. They highlight the importance of representation in an end-to-end process; how having equally represented voices from various communities play a crucial role in creating inclusive spaces. It is also important to acknowledge and realise that community representation goes beyond what we would typically assume it would entail.

Communities should not only be represented by community leaders but also individuals who are not associated with specific groups.

All cases in this chapter clearly demonstrate both the vast diversity and exclusivity of Asian cultures, as well as using that understanding to create inclusive processes and in turn, inclusive public spaces.

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LET'S HACK OUR PLAY!

Mizah Rahman (Participate in Design),
Dr Jacqueline Chung & Eudora Tan
(St. James' Church Kindergarten)

Most playgrounds today are bought straight off of a catalogue, resulting in cookie-cutter and standardised play experiences. Given the importance of play in a child's development, there is a need to rethink how we design and build play spaces in Singapore. Particularly, it is important that children, educators, and parents are included in the process of designing play spaces so that each one can become a tailor-made experience that meets the community's needs and learning objectives.

Hack Our Play (HOP) is Singapore's first participatory, community-built play space at St. James' Church Kindergarten (SJCK). It is an initiative that lets children, educators, and parents co-create their very own play space, from start to finish. Together, they will be able to conceive, create and curate a safe and unique play experience while also fostering stronger bonds and a shared sense of pride and excitement through the process. This new model of design demonstrates how a play space can be created and transformed by everyone who uses it. The use of non-standard structures, recyclables, and everyday materials in its construction not only encourages non-linear thinking but also allows the HOP space to be reconfigured over time.

THE PARTICIPATORY DESIGN PROCESS

The HOP team started by building relationships with people who are experts in the landscape of play and engaging in thorough literature review and case study research. They also interviewed educators, parents, and children to gather insights on their experience of play in Singapore.

The typical process of creating a playground usually only involves children in the last stage, as users. In this project, it was decided that they would begin with children and the community that surrounds them. To gain a deeper understanding of their needs, challenges and opportunities, the team held engagement activities such as Crayon Conversations, One-Day Pop-Up Play and Field Observations of the existing playgrounds in Singapore. In a series of workshops, children, parents, educators, and volunteers helped to build components of the play space by painting tyres, decorating barrels, pots and pans, and planting greenery.

WHAT DO CHILDREN WANT IN THEIR PLAY SPACE?

HOP asked children and parents from SJCK, as well as members of the public, what they value most in a play environment. The children preferred spaces that let them play comfortably in groups or alone. They loved colours and wanted to have the freedom to choose what and how to play. They also wished for spaces where they could indulge in their fantasies and imagination.

Parents wanted a balance of natural and man-made elements, as well as sensory stimulation areas that were safe yet challenging. They also appreciated the inclusion of comfortable spaces for them to rest.

With this in mind, the HOP play space is designed to 'evolve' into what the children want it to be. It has loose elements for children to build upon, and its green wall integrates nature into the play area. The mix of fixed structures and loose elements provides a variety of play and rest spaces for children and accompanying adults.

The design also reflects input from experts, including architects, designers, playground suppliers and early childhood educators on technical and safety aspects and how to encourage different types of play behaviour.

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DO'S

Let children enhance their learning by doing. By active engagement they can:

- **Develop creative thinking and hands-on construction** as they explore play possibilities with structures and materials not commonly found in regular playgrounds.

- **Learn to construct, deconstruct, reconstruct,** solve problems, and take ownership of the play space.

- **Foster the skills of collaboration** as they co-create with peers and subsequent users of the space.

- **Learn about the impermanence of life / situations / materials** as the HOP space keeps changing and materials respond to wear and tear.

- **Gain skills to adapt to today's speed of change and disruption,** as well as skills for the future.

COMPARISON OF HOP PLAY SPACE AND REGULAR PLAYGROUNDS

	Regular playground	HOP play space
Creation process	Designers and experts choose the outcome. Children, as main users, are not part of the design development. They are consumers of the end product.	Participatory design: Play space is co-created with children / educators / parents, making the process as important as the product. The benefits: • Children, educators and parents become collaborators, not just consumers. • Recognition that every child has something positive to contribute to the process. • Children / educators share ownership over the space, as well as a sense of excitement.
Structures	Only fixed structures: • The play experience and play structures are pre-determined. • Play spaces are made into specific scenes which limit creativity and imagination in play.	Fixed and movable structures so play space is dynamic and constantly evolving: • The different materials and structures offer more possibilities for engagement and creative play. • Built structures are neutral (no obvious label and form) thus allowing children to use their creativity and imagination.
Materials	Built from scratch from new, raw materials.	Built from everyday recyclable / used materials: • Less waste, using what already exists instead of making something new. Children learn to care for the environment. • Children are given the freedom to construct, deconstruct and reconstruct.
Learning for children / educators / parents	Predictable design offering fewer avenues for creativity and therefore limited learning.	Brings learning to broader and deeper levels for both children and educators / parents.

DON'TS

Educators and parents may assume children will learn in a safe and secure environment like a classroom. Show educators and parents that they can enhance their teaching and parenting skills as they continuously help to extend the children's development through play. A few points to remember:

- **Don't underestimate children's imagination**. Observe their responses to the 'invitation' to create, and use these observations to enhance the children's learning.

- **Don't stop evolving.** Facilitate / support the children's learning by continually engaging them through play.

Hack our Play is presented by Lien Foundation and Participate in Design and in collaboration with St. James' Church Kindergarten.

**In loving memory
of Mizah Rahman, co-founder of
Participate in Design (1986-2020)**

ACHIEVING BETTER PUBLIC SPACES USING INNOVATIVE DIGITAL TOOLS

José Chong (UN-Habitat)

Well-managed, used and designed public spaces are essential for cities to prosper (UN-Habitat 2016). This is particularly important for those urban dwellers who are in special need of accessible public spaces — streets, public open spaces and facilities — to support economic development, health, recreation and socialisation. Improving access to good public spaces, particularly for more vulnerable urban residents, is a powerful mechanism to improve equity in a city. Innovative tools for participation and assessment of current conditions are key to engage city dwellers in sustainable urban development projects.

In 2011, UN-Habitat was mandated by member states to work on public space, including developing public space policy, knowledge dissemination and directly assisting cities to improve public space globally. UN-Habitat is fulfilling this mandate through the Global Public Space Programme which utilises innovative tools for public space assessment and design.

Minecraft design for Tacoma Park.

Block by Block is a partnership between UN-Habitat and Block by Block Foundation, in which the computer game *Minecraft* is used for community participation in the design of public spaces. In addition, the Public Space Assessment Tool is a comprehensive methodology that enables local governments and partners to cost-effectively map their public spaces from a qualitative and quantitative perspective.

THE BLOCK BY BLOCK METHODOLOGY

The video game *Minecraft* allows players to build structures out of textured cubes in a three-dimensional computer-generated virtual environment. UN-Habitat's experience using *Minecraft* as a community participation tool for public space design shows that providing communities with ICT tools can promote civic engagement and ownership.

As part of the Block by Block methodology for public space design, participatory workshops are held with the community to gather their ideas and insights. To date, workshops with Block by Block have been held in more than 30 different countries around the globe. Among those in the Asia Pacific region are Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal and the Philippines. The projects implemented so far show that the Block by Block methodology adds value to community participation. Power relationships are changed, communities are engaged in new ways and the process presents great opportunities to attract hard-to-reach groups, particularly young people.

PUBLIC SPACE ASSESSMENTS

Accurate and eye-level data on public space characteristics and quality are crucial for public space policies. However, there is limited availability of data, particularly in the global south. In 2016, UN-Habitat developed the City-wide Open Public Space Assessment Tool to support local governments to gather information about

the availability and quality of public spaces. The digital platform used is called *Kobotoolbox*. It is an open-source application that enables local governments to cost-effectively map their public spaces from a qualitative and quantitative perspective. The Assessment Tool has been applied in more than ten countries worldwide, including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and China.

UN-Habitat also provides training for local governments, professionals, academia and residents on public space data gathering and analysis. The assessment provides comprehensive information about the public space network. In some cases, there is specific thematic focus, such as children, women and girls, safety and security, markets, etc. Recently, UN-Habitat developed the Site-specific Public Space Assessment Tool, which helps to understand the individual public space and its context before / after an intervention. Both are strongly aligned to the specific targets from the SDG 11.7 on public spaces, particularly regarding accessibility, safety and inclusivity.

CASE STUDIES

District-wide Public Space Assessment Jianghan District, Wuhan, China

Jianghan District is one of 13 districts in Wuhan, China, situated on the northwestern bank of the Yangtze River and covering a land area of about 28.3 km². With a resident population of 687,422 (2015 census), Jianghan is both the least spacious and most densely populated of the districts in Wuhan. Here, public spaces are increasingly threatened by the rapid expansion of city structures (UN-Habitat 2017).

The district's high population density has led to inadequate green space and poor-quality land stock. Air pollution is a problem with

Surveying in the streets of Wuhan.

an annual average PM2.5 of 52.5 ug/m³, five times more than the WHO recommendation of 10 ug/m³. To respond to these threats, UN-Habitat in collaboration with the Wuhan Land Use and Spatial Planning Research Centre and with support from the local government, undertook a city-wide open public space inventory and assessment in 2017. The aim was to use the assessment to develop Jianghan as a walkable, blue-green district linking the unique waterfronts on the Yangtze River with the inner lakes and neighbourhoods of the city.

Ultimately, the assessment identified gaps in safety, accessibility, inclusivity and spatial distribution of public spaces in Jianghian. Those that required upgrading were identified through an aggregate of indicators. It was noted that 21% of all public spaces require the most improvement while 29% require the least improvement measures. After spatial analysis, the areas that required new public spaces were identified to be at the periphery of the district, accounting for 18% (4.9k) of the total area.

Participatory urban design using Block by Block Seberang Perai, Malaysia

Tacoma Park is located within Bukit Mertajam, in the Central Seberang Perai District in Malaysia. It is one park within a wider network of open and green spaces in

Design workshop for Tacoma Park (top). Upcycle park in Bukit Mertajam (bottom).

the municipality, predominantly connected through the water drainage system that is a feature of urban infrastructure in this area. This network includes Tacoma Park, Upcycle Park, Jajaran Hijau, and a connecting public space corridor. Tacoma Park builds upon the existing revitalisation of Upcycle Park, a smaller public space adjacent to the site.

Tacoma Park is a large body of water surrounded by thick and untended vegetation. The site is currently rarely used, and offers poor visibility. Upcycle Park, a smaller body of water, has been improved recently by the addition of low-cost design elements, such as an elevated pathway, seating and interactive features from predominantly recycled materials.

Upcycle Park is now regularly used for recreation and exercise, by mostly female users from a mix of ages.

Tacoma Park and Upcycle park are connected to another public space, Jajaran Hijau or 'Green Corridor'. Jajaran Hijau is situated between a main road and the monsoon rain drainage at Bandar Perda. Improvements here included the construction of a new bridge, additional planting, paving and a central, interactive feature. The space is adjacent to a bicycle and pedestrian path, and is now also wheelchair accessible. The Jajaran Hijau intervention was funded by UN-Habitat through Block by Block foundation, and implemented by UCLG-ASPAC and Seberang Perai City Council (UN-Habitat 2019).

The Block by Block workshop for community engagement and participatory design in Tacoma Park highlighted some key opportunities and challenges of this particular site. Key opportunities identified by the community were: Wellness, Inclusion, Size of the Site and Location. On the other hand, the key challenges of the site were: Maintenance, Lack of Amenities, Safety and Accessibility. The workshop facilitated an exchange of ideas, but most importantly it emphasised the community's needs. The process showcased the true value of participatory workshops, which allow a diverse group of citizens to come together and produce an inclusive public space design, regardless of background, gender or age.

Following the workshop, a technical team will translate the priorities of the community into conceptual and technical drawings. Community members will continue to engage with the process throughout its implementation. This will assure the sustainability and long-term use of the public space.

Innovative public space methodologies and tools are key to the successful assessment and upgrading of public spaces in cities.

DO'S

- **Use ICT tools (like *Minecraft*) for community engagement** and participatory urban design to include non-traditional stakeholders.

- **Remember that not everybody speaks the same language!** The Block by Block methodology can improve dialogues between communities and technicians. It is easier to comprehend three-dimensional *Minecraft* models, because of the instant translation from ideas into visible results, and this can increase motivation in the community to participate in the design workshop.

DON'TS

- **Don't only focus on one site in the city.** A city-wide assessment helps to better understand the system of public spaces and to provide evidence-based policies at different levels (national, regional and local). Use open-source tools such as *Kobotoolbox* as technological support for structured methodologies to assess the quality of public space. The benefits of this methodology are: it is a cost-effective tool to collect and analyse current situations, it is easy to apply in difficult contexts and can be customised to different thematic areas.

Both tools have demonstrated how innovative technologies can support urban development and public space policies and interventions. The public space programme will continue utilising both tools while exploring others in order to accelerate the achievement of SDG 11.7 for more accessible, inclusive and safe public spaces.

NOTES

Block by Block Foundation is a foundation set up by Mojang and Microsoft to ensure sustainable funding for global public space implementation and advocacy.
More information: https://blockbyblock.org/

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NOT JUST FOR KICKS

Julia Schipper (Right To Play)

In Thailand, crime and anti-social behaviour amongst young people is a growing problem, due to limited attention within the education system and a lack of social services to support vulnerable youth. The juvenile crime rate here is higher than in neighbouring South Asian countries. Gang crime, petty theft and drug abuse are all on the rise, particularly within Bangkok (UNODC 2015). In addition, in Bangkok, just like many other Asian cities, there is a lack of functioning, safe and accessible spaces to deliver sports-based approaches that can have a long term impact upon youth and their local communities.

The government, United Nations and other organisations recognise the importance of sport and play to act as a prevention and / or rehabilitation mechanism for at-risk youths. This includes using football to promote life skill development to help young people practise non-violent conflict resolution methods, as well as soft skills, such as confidence, leadership, communication and interpersonal skills. All of these outcomes have significant impacts on social inclusion, community building and youth civic engagement. They can help young people become more informed, and engage more meaningfully with each other and with larger society.

THE POWER OF FOOTBALL

With funding from the UK, Right To Play Thailand Foundation has partnered up with urban communities in Bangkok to initiate the Not Just for Kicks project. This multi-year project provides access to safe play spaces and develops youth leaders who harness the power of football to support the positive and healthy development of young people in Bangkok.

Right To Play supported the rehabilitation of a number of existing play spaces within Bangkok to provide safe and accessible areas for young people to play football and other games. The project needs came from the community and the actual restoration was carried out by local builders and community members, youth and children. The spaces are now used for various activities and have become areas that youths and community members manage on behalf of their local communities during and beyond the life of the project.

Rehabilitation included cleaning and improving playing surfaces, painting areas to make them more attractive to users, installing fencing and shading nets, and provision of sports equipment. Now, these arenas have become multi-purpose play spaces for a different range of children and youth. They include futsal pitches, basketball courts, badminton areas, pétanque, playgrounds for younger children, and even a performance stage.

As part of the project, weekly football sessions have been delivered to children and youth by youth leaders (who were trained as part of the project), community coaches and Right To Play, utilising RTP's Football for Development resources and newly developed games and drills. Here, football is used to facilitate participatory learning to improve life skills that can prevent participation in crime and anti-social behaviour.

A cohort of youths from the target areas have been trained as youth leaders to lead their peers in football-based learning activities and the use of Reflect-Connect-Apply (RCA) questioning techniques to develop life skills. Specific football drills have been tailored to teach communication, teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, and conflict resolution skills. At the end of every game, youth leaders use RCA, which asks the kids to reflect on what they learned, connecting this to their wider life experiences and thinking about how to apply the learnings in similar situations.

COMMUNITY COHESION THROUGH PLACEMAKING

These placemaking efforts have helped in bringing the community closer together. The youth leaders also show marked improvements in leadership and other life skills. They can design high quality football sessions and deliver them by themselves now. As a result, youth leaders and community coaches have better coordination in their weekly football sessions. Youth leaders also end up taking a more prominent role in their communities, by being part of the community committee. Certainly, the relationship between children, youth and adults in the community has improved and there is a more positive perception overall of what young people can contribute. Finally, there

has been a spillover effect in terms of other communities that are getting involved in the project activities. The football tournaments that are being organised are extremely popular, with sometimes more than 20 teams signing up from the project and neighbouring communities.

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> ## Here, football is used to facilitate participatory learning to improve life skills.
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The project is truly built on community involvement. Since Right To Play was new to the communities, during the first year of the project, a lot of effort was put into building healthy relationships with the community leaders and members, youth and children. This has reaped benefits, as by the second year of activities, the project had become well-known and well-respected. Thanks to their enthusiasm, Right To Play has already been able to hand over certain activities to the communities themselves. For example, in some locations, youth leaders are leading football sessions with minimal support from Right To Play, and teams of community leaders / members / youth have been formed for the management and maintenance of the play spaces. Besides the activities and events organised as part of the project, there are also many more being organised by the community.

A challenge that the team faced – besides the delays in rehabilitation due to late approvals from local authorities – is the low participation of girls in the project.

With the focus being on football, girls in the primarily Muslim community have not shown much interest. However, they have shown interest in some of the other activities, such as play days and Children's Day celebrations. With additional funding secured for the expansion of the project, the team has decided to broaden the type of play and sports on offer. This way the project aims to respond to the needs and wishes of both girls and boys in the community.

DO'S

- Start small when trying to solve bigger challenges. **Use sport and play as a prevention and / or rehabilitation mechanism for at-risk youths.** Once the community has opened up you may have the opportunity to try to solve small and big issues.

DON'TS

- You may initiate in the beginning, but **don't forget that you have to build trust and a sense of ownership** by youth civic engagement to slowly pass the torch to the community ambassadors like youth leaders.

- **Don't forget to put some extra effort to invite those who might join a play of soccer, like girls or less mobile kids.** They might want to join the social activities but might have many assumptions about why football is not for them.

TOWARDS BARRIER-FREE PLAY SPACES, BEACHES & PARKS

Manju George (ESAF)

Have we ever wondered why we don't see children with disabilities in our public spaces? What are they doing during their leisure time? The answer to all of this leads to the design of our cities. The current situation in India means they are often confined at home within their four walls. Parents also prefer to keep them at home to protect them from bullying or negative attention. Thus, we often forget that children with disabilities are important stakeholders in city planning.

Back in 2011, the Evangelical Social Action Forum (ESAF) as part of their Livable City Program disseminated the idea of creating accessible and barrier-free public spaces with the support of HealthBridge Foundation, Canada. The programme looks into creating freely accessible, safe public places that are welcoming and stimulating for children. Their first intervention in creating inclusive play spaces took place in Nagpur, India. Currently, this concept is being promoted in nine other cities in the country.

DESIGNING A NEW DEFAULT

The current design of play spaces is such that disabled children are discouraged to make use of public spaces. ESAF envisions happy and healthy children and families in every neighbourhood having safe streets, free access to playgrounds and other open spaces to play in. They plan to achieve this by bringing policy changes that assert accessible and barrier-free designs as the default. The primary focus was set on sensitising government officials towards increasing the budget allocation, so that they can make the infrastructure changes required.

For any project to be sustainable, the involvement of the government departments and direct beneficiaries are essential. Discussions were conducted with the officials of Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC) on different designs they could adopt without completely revising the existing model. As the cost difference was minimal, they were open to the idea. With government officials on board, the team held a design charrette that included children with disabilities, their parents, special educators, school authorities, government representatives, architects, physiotherapists, counsellors, doctors, and psychologists. This process helped to identify the designs that catered to their needs.

The designs suggested by the children were then developed by the participating architecture students and submitted to NMC and the Department of Gardens. The first inclusive play space thus designed was inaugurated on 23 January 2013 in Nagpur. The first park was an example to understand how these children will receive a space designed exclusively for them. The team invited a special school to make use of the space on a daily basis, which encouraged other children in the community to join. The government

authorities were fascinated to see the space being used by so many. The success of the project brought more confidence and avenues to engage with responsive government officials.

PARKS AND BEACHES FOR ALL

Sensitisation of policymakers has been a major part of the team's advocacy. Apart from the consultations with the community and immediate stakeholders, a mapping of public spaces in connection with special schools was conducted. The initial inhibitions of school officials were alleviated as soon as they experienced a park visit.

Taking on the role of facilitator, ESAF connected NMC and Nagpur Improvement Trust (NIT) to these special schools which led to the sensitisation of such designs. Currently, Nagpur has four inclusive parks and four more sensory gardens in the pipeline. The achievement in one city has helped in convincing policymakers in others.

Kerala is blessed with beaches from one end to another, which were not explored as public spaces. The Beach for All campaign was initiated in four cities in Kerala which helped in bringing onboard stakeholders. These campaigns engaged specific sections such as women, people with disabilities, transgender communities and the elderly, and looked at their requirements of public spaces. The campaigns also offered the participants activities such as kite flying and other games, enabling many of them to make use of public spaces for the first time in their lives. With the help of the children, the team mapped different areas in each park to identify barriers and submitted these findings to the respective authorities. This exercise reiterated how prevailing designs were excluding a certain set of people from using public spaces.

Inauguration Day of the new play space at Ansari Park.

The new children's play area and access ramp at Munambam Beach.

When the state decided to implement accessible and barrier-free areas in tourist destinations, it was easy for all the other districts to implement the same. The elected officials complimented each other in the allocation of the budgets. As of today, 52 new public spaces have been developed, using an approximate budget of 496.15 million INR.

Thanks to their efforts, ESAF received awards from UN Habitat under the Global Public Space Program for two cities in 2017. Following this, there was an introduction of wheelchair ramps to beaches in Kochi and Thrissur. An inclusive space was also introduced in Calicut. Due to these improvements, both areas have seen an 80% increase in utilisation. Next to this, the success of piloting signboards in Braille has encouraged The District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC) to implement them in other parks. DTPC has been proactive in adding various designs and supporting our efforts.

DO'S AND DON'TS

- **Identifying the right department and officials is crucial for the project's success.** Even though this may delay the process and require regular follow-ups, perseverance indeed plays a huge role. It's important that the process continues even if there is a change in officials. An added advantage is that previous officials could be advocates of this concept elsewhere.

- **Celebrating and observing certain days like World Disability Day, Children's Day in the parks has helped to spread the word and increase the number of users.**

- **The hassle of finding budgets for maintenance can be resolved by having a clear maintenance plan as part of the design process.**

- **Inviting policymakers to visit the parks while organising programs allows them to understand the importance of inclusive designs.** Special schools are important stakeholders as they are responsible for the success of the project. When children are in a public space, they see each other as playmates. They don't treat disability as a hindrance to their playtime. Integrating the new designs with the existing plans is important so that the public can see this initiative as a mode of acceptance, just like the children see each other.

EXPERIMENTAL COMMUNITY DESIGN STUDIO IN HONG KONG

Benjamin Sin (Magic Lanes Design Studio) & Stephanie Cheung (Urban Discovery)

COPING WITH A RAPIDLY CHANGING NEIGHBOURHOOD

Sai Ying Pun is one of many typical old neighbourhoods in Hong Kong that has witnessed an urban transformation in the last few decades. Fuelled by the arrival of a new MTR station, modern high-rises shot up in the historic grid of traditional shophouses. Typical mum-and-pop shops were replaced by hip cafés and bars, bringing in a new wave of residents and tourists. Rents went up, and within 10 years the socio-economic status of the neighbourhood had completely changed. Many of the old residents didn't realise how precious the character of their neighbourhood was until it was changed beyond recognition; how valuable their public space was until it was eaten up by new developments. This neighbourhood sentiment is what triggered this community-led public space initiative.

COMMUNITY DESIGN STUDIO AS SOCIAL ANCHOR

Caritas Mok Cheung Sui Kun Community Centre ('Caritas'), a local NGO with a long-standing history in Hong Kong, started a series of activities in Sai Ying Pun in 2012. Their location of choice was Centre Street, a long and steep slope typical of the neighbourhood. With financial assistance from the Urban Renewal Fund, Caritas spearheaded the organisation of a variety of activities to connect the original residents in a time of rapid urban change: street markets, outdoor movie screenings, pop-up street furniture and even Christmas carolling. A few years of experiments yielded an overwhelmingly positive response, and a clear conclusion: local residents wanted a community hub where they could gather without having to worry about the weather or government permits. This planted the seed of what became the Magic Lane Community Design Studio ('Magic Lanes').

The originators agreed that Magic Lanes should act as an anchor to channel residents' sensitivities and to recover their sense of belonging and identity as Sai Ying Pun-ers. Most importantly, it needed to be a comfortable, homey place to re-imagine the future of the neighbourhood. Ideally, not a fluid or temporary pop-up, but a permanent and shaded space, like a street-level shop space.

Fortunately, they managed to convince the Urban Renewal Fund to commit to renting a space in Hong Kong's skyrocketing property market. In their search, they stumbled upon a small vacant shop in Sheung Fung Lane, a steep alley with busy pedestrian traffic and a high percentage of locals. As an added bonus, Sheung Fung Lane was a privately-owned thoroughfare, eliminating the need to deal with government bureaucracy.

They were able to rent the space for a period of two years and opened the Magic Lanes Design Studio in March 2017. The first project they embarked on was a community-led process to re-design the Sheung Fung Lane. Visualising and articulating the residents' needs and demands in an actual physical project was an empowering and energising process.

LESSONS LEARNED

Two years into the project, the Caritas team is ready to share three key lessons:

1. **Balancing rights & responsibilities of different stakeholders.**
   Sheung Fung Lane is a privately-owned laneway, yet it is publicly accessible and used by hundreds of residents and commuters on a daily basis. This opaque distinction between public and private space is common in Hong Kong, where developers can offer the 'right of way' on their properties to the general public, to increase their plot ratio.

   In the Sheung Fung Lane case, it was the original developer — now absent landlord — who capitalised on this legal loophole. But it is the current apartment owners' corporation who are now required to manage a public space they didn't ask for. It took the Magic Lanes team a good while to understand the complexities of this urban context and map out the different stakeholders, rights and responsibilities. This process positioned Magic Lanes firmly as a credible, neutral party in the conversation between public and private parties as well as in the effort to channel public resources into a safe and quality public space.

2. **Demographic analysis of target audiences.**
   The resident profile of Sheung Fung Lane is distinctly middle-class, many of them newcomers to Sai Ying Pun. Because their relationship with the neighbourhood is typically more functional and less community-driven, their mobilisation was more challenging. The team decided to revise the project's target audience to include more of the neighbourhood's original residents, who are still frequent users of the space and who are happy to be involved.

3. **Aligning expectations of funding agencies and local residents.**
   While the fundament of the project is community planning and empowerment, the team realised it's important to link them to physical interventions. Not just to satisfy the funding agency but for the residents to see visible changes based on their inputs. Combining the two makes it easier to engage the community and lower the threshold of involvement.

   Even though the physical changes may be temporary — like plants on railings or pop-up play equipment — they form an important engagement strategy and a good way to test different uses of space.

FIVE PRINCIPLES FOR QUALITY PUBLIC SPACE

Consolidating resident surveys and project results, the team articulated five key principles for redesigning public space:

- Cultural inclusion: connect new and old residents by identifying the cultural assets of the neighbourhood i.e. what does it mean to be a Sai Ying Pun-er? What are places in the area that matter to people?

- Eco-friendliness: increase vitality by planting functional greens.

- Inter-generational space: bridge elders and children via activities like hopscotch and gardening, where elders can demonstrate their knowledge and tell their stories.

- Playfulness: install temporary play equipment such as slides and merrygo-rounds, and add colours and decorations to the dull space.

- Safety: improve age-friendliness and safety by widening steps, surfacing, adding street furniture.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The project will extend its duration until early 2020. Navigating the field of stakeholders and respecting their rights and responsibilities will remain a key challenge. Now that Magic Lanes has built trust among both ends of the spectrum, the team can move forward to the next stage. The objective is to improve the quality of space on a more permanent basis within the existing context of ownership and maintenance. With building principles laid out and preliminary consensus reached, Magic Lanes is now working on a feasible design proposal. Physical

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Even though the physical changes may be temporary — like plants on railings or pop-up play equipment — they form an important engagement strategy and a good way to test different uses of space.

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improvements, albeit small, will still be a breakthrough in Hong Kong's rigid and non-human centred planning practice. Magic Lanes will be one of the pioneers of community-led design of public space in the city.

DO'S

- **Take the time and effort to map the stakeholders' respective views, interests, rights and responsibilities.**

- **Identify cultural assets and establish a common identity with the target audience.**

- **Leverage on cultural assets and local champions to build relationships and trust.**

- **Engage and empower audience via temporary physical changes.**

DON'TS

- **Don't blindly follow the original plan.** Instead, allow flexibility in target audience, timeline, and actions to better suit the community's needs.

ARMENIAN PARK & BACK LANES

Daniel Lim & Nicole Thum (Think City)

The Armenian Park and adjoining back lanes project focused on one of the inner areas of the George Town UNESCO World Heritage Site (GTWHS), with the aim of reinforcing a densely built-up residential enclave through the establishment of a community green space.

The park is located at the corner of Lebuh Acheh and Lebuh Armenian and is one of the very few open spaces in the denser parts of George Town. The open area measures approximately 2,600 m2 and lends itself to the creation of a community garden in a neighbourhood with limited public space.

The open space was the result of a fire that destroyed a number of buildings in the late-19th century. Over time, the space became an informal leisure space for residents of the neighbourhood. In the 1990s, the area was formally reorganised into a garden, and renamed Armenian Park. It was then turned into a flea market in the 2000s. Stalls were splayed haphazardly throughout the space, and greenery became sparse. The garden virtually disappeared under a layer of compacted earth, and its benches and light fixtures fell into a state of disrepair.

TOP-DOWN, BOTTOM-UP

A series of meetings involving the Penang State Government, George Town World Heritage Incorporated (GTWHI) and Think City led to the conclusion that the flea market had kept residents and children away, detracted from the quality of the area, and impeded the development of social and cultural initiatives in the adjacent Youth Centre, , a public building owned by the municipality..

Design and public consultation work began before the signing of the Agreement between the three parties. This project was included in the Greener Penang Programme sponsored by the Penang State Government and Penang Island City Council (MBPP). Think City, working with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC), developed the concept plans to re-instate a public park, which were presented in two public engagement sessions. It was crucial to ensure the project was executed with all stakeholders in mind, and with an aim to eventually strengthen community ties. The original improvement

plans proposed by the working committee lacked a diversity of use and didn't encourage cross-cultural interactions between communities. After a temporary standstill, Think City proposed — with new insights from AKTC and more community input — a bolder design proposal.

It was hard to address the issue of the current users and occupants of the space. The current situation had made it unsafe for families and children. But the relocation of the flea market was necessary for the transformation of the pocket park into a multi-use and inclusive place. Many traders, especially those without a permit, were very afraid of losing their businesses should they have to relocate opposite a police station. After three months of negotiations, more than 100 traders suggested to relocate to nearby Pesara Claimant and eventually to Padang Brown. The decision of relocating the flea market and restoring the garden to its greater community function kickstarted a collective move to improve living conditions in the residential areas, building up a sense of belonging and raising social capital in the process.

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

Throughout the process, Think City engaged with the community through constant dialogue. To further demonstrate the benefits of the plan, a pop-up park was created. All the materials used in the creation of the park had a story to tell, right down to the selection of indigenous plants reflecting a more local tone. The design created formal edges and side access points on the northern corner. Mature trees were retained, with a network of paths incorporating seating to invite people to rest and stay. The design of the fence was inspired by a local rattan-weaving workshop nearby and the 'Heaven and Earth' feature wall between the green space and the multi-purpose court pays homage to the original Malay settlement at the site. Tactile elements were used as Braille maps after consulting with the National Council for the Blind and the Penang Accessibility Action Group.

IMPACT

Not only did the project fulfil George Town's need for public open spaces, it also benefited tourism and business.The park is complementary to its surroundings, bringing out the beauty of the historical buildings. In addition, residents, businesses and visitors have augured well with the introduction of new cultural attractions in the neighbouring Youth Centre and Syed al-Attas Mansion — a mid-19th century structure owned by the Penang Island City Council.

Following its establishment, the park has had a higher diversity of public uses and a diversified set of visitors. While most of the time the park functions as a neighbourhood garden, on special occasions it is used for community projects including 'Art in the Park' and 'Music in the Park' during the George Town Festival and various periodic

art installations. Popular with both local residents and visitors, the park is currently jointly maintained by George Town Conservation and Development Corporation and MBPP.

OCTOPUS ARMS

Following the completion of the park, improvement works commenced on the back lanes adjacent to the park so that the benefits of the park could be extended, like octopus arms. The 2017 pilot upgrading of the alleyways served as an experiment for open space solutions applicable to other secondary alleyways in the heritage area.

In identifying open space solutions, considerations in keeping with traditional forms and materials, improving the provision of public infrastructure and developing solutions that could be applied to other secondary back lanes in the heritage area were observed.

INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

The Special Area Plan for George Town requires the use of porous materials in the paving of back lanes so as to better absorb rainwater. As a result, lime mortar, a material known for its permeable properties, was employed in the cementitious mix.

In addition, the traditional open drain lined with bull-nose bricks was remodelled to create an efficient and aesthetically-pleasing solution compatible with the character of the heritage area. The project went beyond aesthetic improvements, exploring better ways to upgrade pedestrian spaces by eliminating leakage from pipes, creating more efficient drainage, installing safe electrical cabling and introducing greenery.

Eventually, through the expansion of the programme to similar spaces, it will be possible to create a cleaner environment, with increased community use and greater visual appreciation throughout George Town.

DO'S

- **Organise numerous engagement sessions with various interest groups** to ensure the design of your space can meet different needs, and that concerns can be heard.

- **Design for families, women and children as the benchmark.** When they feel at home in a space, it means that it is safe for almost all types of communities.

DON'TS

- **Don't be afraid of confrontations during a relocation or making a change in a place**. Not everybody will be satisfied, so make sure to work with this group of people, listen to their needs and try to create a satisfying working situation for those who are being moved away from their original location.

- **Don't be afraid to be involved in the long term.** When you initiate change the waters may cross over to surrounding neighbourhoods. Staying connected to a space makes you more aware of the catalysing effect and any needs that may arise after the completion of a design. As you have already built connections and trust with the community, this longer-term involvement will be much easier than the initial start of a project.

BUILDING A PLAYGROUND FOR FOOD

Ryan Smolar

ASEAN neighbours often decry the small, urban city-state of Singapore as a fabricated landscape where culture has to be imported and is consumed like a luxury. Daniel Tan saw his homeland differently: as a teeming hotpot of the flavours and fusion of the country's Indian, Malay and Chinese immigrants bound together through the sharing of food, culture and precious little space. He also saw past the glitzy towers of Marina Bay and the city's emblematic Merlion, recognising that the oft-cited, pristine portrayal of Singapore excludes a lot of people — like stay-at-home moms, seniors, those trying to make ends meet and especially those struggling with mental health.

To combat these shortcomings, Daniel built a playground of food for these outsiders. Daniel's Food Playground is a social enterprise where home cooks gather together to teach over 4,000 visiting tourists and curious locals per year about Singapore's food and cultures through the preparation of some of the nation's treasured dishes like Hainanese chicken rice, *laksa, chai tow kway* and *kuih dadar* in a 19th century 'shophouse' in the heart of Chinatown.

In Asia, where public space often falls under the control of governments or large commercial interests, Daniel's heritage shophouse stands out as a self-sustaining community space where the celebration and dissemination of local food culture represents placemaking at its most fundamental level. In practice, non-government organisations (NGOs) in Asia often serve the critical role of creating infill 'public' spaces on a continent with no 'full democracies' (according to The Economist's Democracy Index, 2018).

FOOD AS A WAY OF BONDING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Daniel's cooking campus employs stay-at-home moms and seniors who are typically left out of the workforce in Singapore. Despite boasting one of the world's fastest rising economies, 63% of women are locked outside the workforce, citing family responsibilities as the top reason (according to the Manpower Research and Statistics Department, 2018).

The campus provides flexible schedules and doesn't hold classes on week-ends so that women who would otherwise be isolated at home due to their child-rearing activities can contribute to society, preserve local heritage and earn income in one of the world's most unequal countries (according to the Oxfam index on efforts to tackle inequality, 2018).

"I tried to rejoin the workforce several times but it didn't pan out. Many compa-nies were looking for full-time staff and, even for part-time jobs, the working hours didn't fit my schedule,"[1] said Lesley Lim, a 47-year old former corporate warrior who spent the last 16 years as a stay-at-home mom before gaining meaningful employment at Food Playground.

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It's a good way to get to know a place: cooking-class teachers bring you to the markets. You get a crash course on local ingredients. It's a complete cultural immersion.

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Lesley's experience reminds me of the placemaking book Palaces for the People, in which author Eric Klineberg explores how social infrastructure can help fight inequality, polarisation and the decline of civic life. While Klineberg visited Singapore in his book and waxed poetically over the city's inclusive public housing design, he missed out on visiting Food Playground, which he would've appreciated as a social infrastructure that brings people out of the home to be together in a meaningful way. After all, according to Klineberg, some of the critical ingredients for social cohesion are formed through the (1) pursuit of healthy activities and (2) shared learning in (3) safe spaces that are regularly accessible.

What's exciting here is that Food Playground's founder has adapted Klineberg's thesis into a sustainable business model and social enterprise. Before Food Playground, Daniel graduated with a master of business administration degree and spent a decade in the tourism industry before taking off on his own sojourn through Asia and Latin America. While on the road, Daniel became obsessed with taking cooking classes. He explains: "It's a good way to get to know a place: cooking-class teachers bring you to the markets. You get a crash course on local ingredients. It's a complete cultural immersion."[2] He was particularly inspired in Bangkok at a class held in the city's

forgotten slums that was called Cooking with Poo. "Don't worry," Daniel asserts, "the word Poo (ปู) means crab in Thai."

While visiting the Galapagos islands, Daniel survived a shipwreck. He returned home thinking of ways to integrate his passion for cooking with a social enterprise business model that would support the many Singaporeans he felt were being left out of his homeland's meteoric economic rise.

Though Daniel doesn't deny the difficulty and expense of operating a business in Singapore, he shows no signs of slowing down. His concept has won many awards including a Singapore Tourism Award and a World Food Travel Trekking Award, as well as praise from the Straits Times and The Business Times. In the future, Daniel plans to create more working opportunities for stay-at-home mothers and seniors by advocating to businesses to create more remote jobs.

Under-employed Singaporean women have found a great advocate in Daniel. He is sensitive to their plight and asserts that the biggest challenge his team faces is their lack of confidence. Helen Teo, one of Daniel's team members agrees: "The biggest obstacle is confidence. We have been out of touch with the corporate world."[3] Some of the teachers struggle with leading a class in English, often reverting to 'Singlish' phrases which may

embarrass them even though these slips of the tongue seem to delight Food Playground customers.

Mary Ng argues that the typical thinking of a stay-at-home mom in Singapore is that she is someone who's lost touch with society — a kind of economic eunuch. "But people forget that a lot of us are well educated and that we take care of kids and ageing parents by choice."[4] But now with opportunities like Food Playground, a Singaporean stay-at-home mom can have her carrot cake (i.e. *chai tow kway*) and eat it, too.

NOTES

1) Goy, P. (2015) *Food Playground reaches out to seniors and stay-at-home mums who get to pass on culinary skills.* [online] https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/food-playground-offers-cooking-classes-with-a-social-mission

2) Lalley, H. (2017) *A life-changing year of travel inspired Daniel Tan, '11 (AXP-10), to start a social enterprise with sizzle.* [online] https://www.chicagobooth.edu/magazine/daniel-tan-food-playground

3) and 4) Ang, V. (2019) *Bringing mums back to the workforce.* [online] https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/life-culture/bringing-mums-back-to-the-workforce

SUSTAINING OUR CITIES TOGETHER

CHAPTER 07

INTRODUCTION

Charlot Schans (STIPO)

Some of the most pressing urban challenges of our time are the unprecedented risks posed by climate change. Asian cities are among the most at risk globally, for the economic impact of extreme weather conditions and coastal flooding. The cities of Guangzhou, Mumbai, Shenzhen, Tianjin, Ho Chi Minh City, Kolkata, and Jakarta for instance, faced $1520 million (USD) in annual losses in 2005 as a result of coastal flooding. And in case the effects will not be mitigated and global warming will continue unhampered, the economic losses for these cities are expected to rise to $32,079 million by 2050 (Dulal 2019). Such risks are not restricted to coastal areas alone, as seen in recent years with the stormwater floods during Thailand's 2011 monsoon season, and the destruction and casualties as a result of super typhoon Haiyan or Yolanda in the Philippines in 2014, hitting in-land and urban areas as well.

THE DARK SIDE OF ECONOMIC SUCCESS

Over the past decades, Asian countries have spurred tremendous economic growth and consequently made great steps forward in poverty alleviation. The unwanted side effects of this success, however, include increased consumption and waste production, rapid urbanisation and infrastructure development at the expense of valuable natural resources, causing ecosystem degradation, biodiversity loss and increased air pollution (Rajesh 2020).

China alone emits about 30% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, mostly stemming from coal electricity generation and mining. As a consequence of the size of its economy and population, this has China ranked as the world's most polluting country, both on the production as well as the consumption side. In cities across the region, climate change causes extreme weather conditions, such as heavy rainfall or urban heat island effects. Pair that with the poor air quality, the nuisance of road congestion and degrading urban green spaces, and cities risk becoming less comfortable for people to live in.

CLIMATE CHANGE INCREASES INEQUALITY

The wide array of risks posed by climate change are affecting the poor populations across the region disproportionately. According to a 2017 research paper by Julie Rozenberg and Stephane Hallegatte climate change is expected to push 13 million people in East Asia below the extreme poverty line. If not acted upon in a timely manner the recent developments of the region, in terms of economy, poverty alleviation and general well-being of the population will be counteracted by the effects of climate change. It is unequivocal that action is needed, and more countries and cities are waking up to the fact across the region. All Asian nations committed to the 2016 Paris Agreement, and are increasingly implementing strategies and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote sustainable practices. But there is much to win in the coming decades.

CITIES HOLD THE KEY TO CLIMATE ACTION AND INNOVATION

With more than half of the region's population living in cities, as centres for unsustainable production and consumption, this is where challenges accumulate. However, urban areas offer tremendous opportunities for innovation and experimentation with climate measures too. And because of their size and density, urban change has the potential to positively impact a large number of people at once. As the Paris Agreement emphasises, tackling climate change requires participation and collective action of a wide variety of stakeholders. Cities as hubs for inter-sectoral collaboration will, therefore, be crucial in sparking climate resilience. China, for instance, is quickly making its way as the world's largest producer of renewable energy and investing more and more in low carbon and climate-resilient cities and sustainable transportation.

The inspiring case studies in this section will illustrate that climate action in Asia today is multifaceted, and operates across a variety of scales and sectors. Each individual case study includes lessons for practitioners to be applied in the field. Together, however, they present a variety of urban strategies for improving the city at eye level, while boosting climate resiliency and creating more comfortable living conditions and economic opportunities for people living in cities. These strategies create win-win scenarios that substantiate investments to be made over the coming years.

- **Create more loveable cities by improving the climate resiliency of public space.**
 More walkable, bike-able, climate-resilient and green urban spaces shape the conditions for increased social interaction in communities and local economies to thrive. In the article 'Walkability in Asian Cities' Richard Lambert shows how cities across Asia are investing in attractive walking routes while reducing air pollution and boosting the inherent qualities of Asian cities, where streets are historically designated as places for social gatherings and informal business. Temporary car-free zones in cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh make way for a weekly cultural festival where residents and tourists connect over board games, dance-offs, music performances, roller skating and street food. The pedestrianisation attracts new economic activity while at the same time offering cultural experiences and quality amenities for residents to enjoy.

  Elsewhere, Yan Ling Lok illustrates that in densifying cities like Singapore it is wise to look beyond the immediate eye level and recognise the potential of greenery at 'skyrise level'. In the article 'Embracing greenery at various 'eye levels' across urban centres' she shows how Singapore has invested and incentivised an impressive 120 hectares of rooftop, edible and healing gardens as part of the built environment, helping to implement Singapore's City in a Garden vision. Besides creating loveable places for the local community, the vast urban green in the city has considerable impact on urban heat reduction, ever more welcome in the hot and humid climate of the region. A 2016 comparative study between Hong Kong, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur by Ardalan Aflaki and Mahsan Mirnezhad proves how urban greens can mitigate the Urban Heat Island effect and decrease global air temperature with as much as 4 degrees Celsius, making the city a much more pleasant place to reside in. And if climate action intersects with improving the quality of urban spaces for the city's users, and increases value on multiple levels, it becomes much more likely to tap into investments in the long run.

- **Increase participation and public support for the necessary change to come by facilitating climate action at eye level.**
  To mitigate the effects of climate change in the coming years it will re-quire considerable investments, of both monetary as well as behavioural change in society. Initiatives that promote climate action in public space make the change ahead tangible and experienceable, and at best fun and inspiring as well. Governments will not be able to face the challenge with top-down policy alone, and public support and participation will be crucial for the collective success of climate measures.

  In 'Bicycle-Friendly Cities Through Public-Private Partnership' Manju George argues how through successful collaboration between multiple stakeholders, people in the city of Bangalore are gradually turning to

干燥的天气情况
Dry weather event

大雨的天气情况
Heavy rain weather event
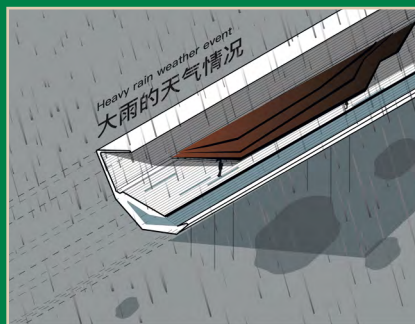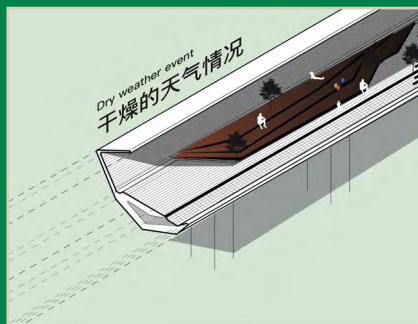
SPONGE CITIES, WUHAN, CHINA

Camille Fong (Technical University Delft)

In 2015 the government of China launched the Sponge City Programme, helping 16 pilot cities transform densely populated areas into sponge cities to better adapt to urban flood risks. As the programme's name states, the goal is to create cities that function as a 'sponge', allowing for the storage, infiltration and purification of rainwater, slowing release, thereby reducing urban flooding, and facilitating reuse when needed. This strategy of so-called low impact development (LID) consists of green infrastructure such as bioswales, ponds and green roofs.

The city of Wuhan, originally known as the 'city of a hundred lakes,' has rapidly developed into a city of over 10 million inhabitants. This has led to the disappearance of many lakes which used to play an important role in flood mitigation. The city is now facing many water challenges such as urban flooding.

Arcadis tasked an interdisciplinary team of masters students from the

Delft University of Technology, in the Netherlands, to support the implementation of the Sponge City Programme in a new development in Wuhan. During a year-long project the team followed a research by design strategy, to come up with the conceptual design of the MengQiao bridg, to connect a network of elevated walkways connecting the city's buildings as a stormwater carrier to transport water from the green roof buildings to the park. After the park has reached its maximum storage capacity, excess stormwater is discharged into the Yangtze river. The bridge moreover provides a pleasant walkway for pedestrians.
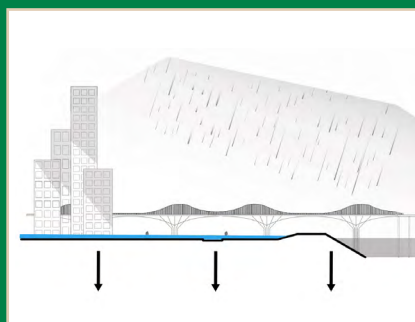
more sustainable practices. Opening the streets for cycling attracts a range of follow-up initiatives promoting waste segregation, terrace farming and gardening, and healthy habits like yoga and Zumba classes to spill out in public space.

At their SG Farm in the middle of Singapore's buzzing financial district, TANAH's Michelle Lai and Huying Ng reconnected people to the origin of their food, by inviting them to help design and implement a temporary urban farm. People came by to take care of the plants or join a public discussion while hanging out on the seating made from recycled pallets. In the article 'Bringing Edge Food Futures Into The Spotlight' they describe how they wanted to use the temporary farm to spark civic imagination and change residents' relationship to the food chain, something that in Singapore's fast-paced environment tends to be permanently packaged and 'on the go'. The spin-off effects of these public displays of climate action are expected to have a huge impact on creating public support for the necessary change to come.

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Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

"

MARGARET MEAD

- **Work together to tackle the complex problem of climate change.**
  Public space, as the natural nexus where various interests of all the city's users are negotiated day-to-day, is a great starting point to gear up the collaborative efforts needed to tackle climate change. All inspiring case studies in this section illustrate the great potential of multi-stakeholder collaborations to make an impact far beyond the sum of its parts. Bangalore's Cycle Day is the result of a successful public-private partnership between government and non-governmental organisations, that continues to connect more partners around common goals. Singapore's National Parks Board helps the city to achieve its vision City in a Garden by giving financial incentives to building owners, communities and residents to invest in more urban vegetation — also on private property — for the public good. In climate action collaboration is key, and making it visible in the public realm helps to create an environment that is more susceptible to co-creation for future innovation.

MEDINI GREEN PARKS, MEDINI, MALAYSIA

Chris Parry (Johor Green)

Medini Green Parks is the development of two parks totalling 12 acres in the township of Medini in the new city of Iskandar Puteri. The project is part of Khazanah's placemaking initiative in Iskandar Puteri strategised by LabDNA and in collaboration with social enterprise JOGREEN. In 2015 JOGREEN pitched the idea of themed public parks to build value in urban green space and community around these ideas. Two ideas were accepted for development: Edible Park, 4.5 acres of edible landscape featuring orchards, gardens and an urban farm, and Heritage Forest, 7.25 acres of wild landscape featuring native and regional flora.

The process took three years to realise with Edible Park launching in early 2018 to great success. The park became a venue for weekly workshops, tours and occasional festivals attracting public engagement, press and industry awards. Heritage Forest is currently being completed for launch in 2020. Both parks are maintained sustainably without chemicals or air conditioning, utilising rainwater harvesting, solar, and ethical hiring of staff.

Placemaking helps build trust in what a community can do together to overcome challenges, and empowers people to take action in their immediate environment. It builds bridges between disciplines and government silos, which is especially necessary in the era of climate change and for the challenges ahead.

- **Increase equity in the city by working on climate solutions.**
  A growing body of evidence shows that walking is the most equitable mode of transportation and that more walkable or bicycle-friendly environments create opportunities for local entrepreneurs to flourish. On top of that, more sustainable modes of transportation promote healthier communities, through reduced air pollution and the active movement of people. Similar arguments can be made with respect to more equitable access to fresh produce, grown in the inner-city at urban farms and edible gardens. Even on a small-scale, the healthier habits it may inspire can have a great impact on people's lives. Access to urban nature additionally helps vulnerable urban dwellers reduce anxiety, stress and mental disorders, thanks to the relaxing effects of greenery and the increased opportunities for social connectedness that they provide. Publicly accessible climate solutions therefore have the potential to uplift the general well-being of people that may otherwise have less access to the mechanisms that promote happier and healthier lifestyles.

  General well-being, in turn, promotes people's ability to wholly participate in society economically, and improve the livelihoods for themselves and their communities. As it was argued earlier, countries across the region have come a long way in poverty alleviation and welfare, and it would be beneficial if working on more climate-resilient cities will naturally continue those efforts.

- **Bridge the urban-rural divide with climate action.**
  With the massive rural-urban migration happening globally in recent decades, it's easy to assume that the future will be urban. Yet, when it comes to tackling climate change, rural communities might have the answers on how to move forward more sustainably the coming decades. In the article 'Pasar Papringan: Finding a future in the past' Singgih S. Kartono illustrates beautifully how a rural pop-up market in Ngadiprono, Indonesia, leads the way in offering local food, artisanal goods with natural ingredients and agricultural produce, all of which are naturally plastic-free and collectively organised by the community. It is precisely these practices that cities should embrace to progress by learning from the heritage of rural communities, as the prototype of a more sustainable society.

  Hiroyoshi Morita, Akito Murayama and Yasutoshi Sasaki showcase in the article 'Connecting Public Spaces and Basins with Woods' how nearly 60% of Japan's forests are planted. Promoting the use of wood in urban

DOCKLESS BIKESHARE REVOLUTION IN CHINA

Deng Han(Institute for Transportation and Development Policy)

In recent years a new mode of transportation has emerged in China: the dockless bikeshare.

Compared to traditional bikeshare systems with fixed stations and parking docks, this model allows a rider to lock and unlock a GPS-enabled bike anywhere by smartphones. As an effective way to promote green travel and solve the 'last mile' problem, dockless bikeshare has gained popularity quickly in China and around the world.

AN EXPLOSION OF BIKES AND BIKING

Peking University school introduced the dockless bikeshare system (Ofo) in 2014. The company Mobike introduced a similar system into urban cities. With the development of the sharing economy, high-speed mobile networks, and smartphone technology, dockless bikesharing systems began to rapidly grow with over 77 dockless bikeshare companies and approximately 23 million bikes in 2017 in China. It's become so convenient for short distance commuters, which enables more people to bike in the city, reduce auto emissions and climate change by cutting vehicle journeys. But the rapid growth has come with some new challenges.

Now Chinese cities face blocked sidewalks, oversupply and bicycle graveyards in more than 20 cities. This raised deep concerns about quality control,

maintenance, management and financial supervision of dockless bikeshare companies. Facing these challenges, the Chinese government have started to implement policies to regulate dockless bikeshare systems. Also, cities now pay more attention to the biking environment and step up efforts to improve infrastructure to meet the surging demand for biking. Meanwhile, companies are exploring new uses of technological innovation, promoting life services and shared e-bike and e-scooters for sustainable development.

The dockless bikeshare, as one of China's "new four great inventions", has brought convenience to public travel. However, it has also brought negative impacts on the urban environment. Therefore, the city should actively explore the co-governance and co-management of the government, companies, and the public, and promote the delicate management of the industry.

LOGICAL STEPS

- Integrate dockless bikeshare into city goals
- Set policies of dockless bikeshare
- Standardise industry management
- Promote user guidance
- Improve cycling infrastructure

areas will therefore prevent further ecosystem collapse and reduce flood risks for cities. It clearly shows the interdependence between our rural and urban environments. The use of wood has the potential to replace less sustainable building materials like concrete, and reduce and store carbon emissions. And as it is a relatively easy-to-handle material, it is excellent for use in community-driven placemaking activities, boosting active citizenship and a deeper connection between residents and their environments.

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With inspiring initiatives emerging all around, public support and awareness is growing, making more permanent change possible.

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- **Scale up best practices to become more climate-resilient - Asian cities have what it takes to transition rapidly.**
  As seen with the fast economic growth across the region, Asian cities show that even though they are in the early stages of more integrated climate action, they are ambitious in their efforts. Strong governmental support and the scale of investments being made across the region will potentially help transition to more sustainable economies over the coming decades. And with inspiring initiatives emerging all around, public support and awareness is growing, making more permanent change possible. If urban practitioners continue to be able to show how climate resiliency measures lead to a better quality of life in cities, and added economic, social and environmental value for all involved, achieving the global climate goals becomes more likely every day.

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WALKABILITY IN ASIAN CITIES

Richard Lambert (Natural Walking Cities)

Walkability refers to the quality of walking environments — how accessible, safe, connected, comfortable and attractive a city's public walking infrastructure is. When we talk about how walkable Asian cities are, we must take into account the continent's vast cultural, geographical and climatic differences. What is walkable in Ulaanbaatar might not be so in Jakarta. However, there are fundamental policies and practices that can be adapted to any urban street and space.

WHY WALKABLE CITIES ARE IMPORTANT

Walkability is a reflection of the sustainability, liveability and health of a city; and knowing that in 2018 Asian towns and cities were home to 54% of the world's urban population, making them more walkable is essential. Advantages include:

- Walking is the most equitable form of mobility and uses land more efficiently than other types of transport.

- By 2019, air pollution levels in Asian cities were some of the highest globally. Transferring motorised transport to walking reduces local pollution, congestion and carbon emissions.

- Walkable cities create more opportunities for communities and places to develop; for people to spend time on streets; and for businesses and tourism to flourish.

- Walking is active mobility and everyday walking ensures urban populations remain healthy into old age.

- As of 2018, the majority of Asia's road deaths were vulnerable users — investing in slower and pedestrian-friendly streets can benefit everyone's safety.

WALKING IN ASIA'S CITIES

Asian cities are traditionally very walkable, with high population density and urban centers designed around walking. As the cheapest form of mobility, walking is essential for public transport, especially in poorer populations.

However, walking investment, policy and practice have generally been neglected in Asian cities, leading to poor walking environments, lack of connectivity, accessibility and safety. With motor vehicle infrastructure projects prioritised over people-focused development — combined with a general rise in private motor use across Asia (particularly low-mobility cities) and increases in ride-hailing ride services (cars and motorbikes) — the result is that more people have turned to privatised modes of transport.

Space, seating, greenery and water create a walkable street in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Walkability studies by the Asian Development Bank in 2011 concluded that average walking ratings for Asian cities were low to medium. The research found that often commercial areas in Asian cities are more walkable; whereas public transport hubs and educational areas experience higher pedestrian volumes but are less walkable.

TURNING THE TIDE

Nonetheless, some Asian cities are now increasingly investing in more walkable, healthy and sustainable streets and places. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) research in 2017 showed on average 83% of Asian countries had Non-Motorised Transport (NMT) commitments and 50% report on NMT; both being essential for enshrining walking at the national and city level.

HOW TO MAKE ASIAN CITIES WALKABLE — LEARNING FROM BEST PRACTICES

The following recommendations and Asian walking case studies are divided into strategic and street-focused interventions:

Strategic level:

1. **Increase and protect space for walking** using pedestrianisation, pedestrian priority and connecting central walking networks. Gradually reducing vehicle access and parking in central city areas and streets with high pedestrian flows will improve walking environments. Utilise modal filtering to restrict vehicle access. Engage with motoring and ride-hailing stakeholders when increasing pedestrian space.

    Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam) have created temporary and permanent car-free areas, which has hugely increased pedestrian numbers and revenue from tourism. The number of cultural events in Hanoi also shot up to 400.

2. **Improve walking as part of public transport.** When reducing private vehicle numbers, public transport and walking must be improved together. Walking routes to transport hubs can be improved by focusing on the first and last mile of walking journeys.

    Thimpu (Bhutan) has created pedestrian-only days in the city and is aiming to improve footways to and from bus stops.

3. **Integrate walking strategies into national and city-level planning** that are ambitious, targeted and protect pedestrian rights in law. Ensure enforcement and compliance of motor vehicle rules e.g. stopping at crossings and not driving on footways.

Traditionally walkable central Hoi An, Vietnam.

Hanoi's walkable Hoàn Kiếm Lake footway.

Pedestrianised residential street, Kyoto, Japan.

Walking infrastructure and projects must be budgeted for, aiming for 10-20% of the transport budget, as walking is often the least funded form of transport.

Kyoto (Japan) orientated their whole 2010 transport strategy around walking, reducing car trips, increasing public transport use and cutting emissions.

4. **The most walkable areas have mixed land use.** Integrate commercial, recreational, educational and residential areas with public transport hubs; interconnected with extensive walkable networks.

   Liuyan Xiaogu district in Guangzhou (China) was transformed into a dense and mixed land use with excellent pedestrian networks by restricting vehicle access, creating walking-only streets and encouraging a diversity of land use.
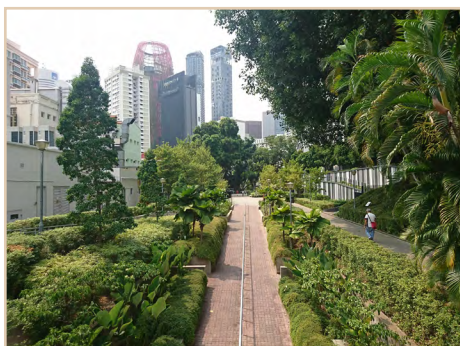
Pedestrian-friendly walking network combined with mixed land use in Liuyan Xiaogu district, China.

DP Road after pedestrian improvements, Pune, India.

Creating a true city in a garden in Singapore.

Space and place to relax, play and socialise in Battambang, Cambodia.

Improvements to both drainage and walkability in Melaka, Malaysia, have created attractive walking environments and places to spend time.

5. **Walking design guidance** ensures new streets and existing walking environments are improved to the same standard. Some basics include: aiming for 1.8 m minimufootway widths; footways that are level, free of obstructions and segregated from vehicles; and safe accessible crossing points every 150 m.

    Pune Municipality (India) enshrined walking design in their 'Urban Street Design Guidelines' (2016), using it to transform pedestrian environments.

Street level:

1. **Walkable means shade and shelter.** Urban green space increases the likelihood of walking. People also walk shorter distances in hot climates, so green walking corridors and shelter is essential.

    Singapore provides covered walkways at pedestrian crossings, to and from public transit and housing developments; whilst it's 'Park Connector Network' provides an extensive network of green walkways.

2. **Ensure streets are active places.** Asian streets are typically social spaces of informal business, community gatherings, play and spending time. Protecting these place functions will increase walkability.

    Maintain active frontages, provide seating, places for social gatherings and opportunities for informal business at the same time as walking space.

3. **Make walking attractive**. Create attractive off-street walking networks by taking advantage of existing infrastructure — waterfronts, green corridors, indoor walking routes and non-walking related projects.

    Melaka (Malaysia) enhanced its walking network when improving flood and drainage systems along the central parts of Melaka river by enhancing accessible and attractive riverside walkways.

4. **Make walking safe.** Reduce speeds on roads (maximum 20 mph / 30 kmph on streets with high pedestrian volumes); use traffic calming measures and modal filters; ensure walkways are sufficiently lit; prioritise direct, safe and accessible walking routes and crossings; avoid pedestrian bridges (crossings at street level are more pedestrian friendly).

    Bangkok's (Thailand) Pedestrian safety training programme, supported by the World Bank, trained specialists and improved 8 km of roads. Improving pedestrian safety by increasing pedestrian space, crossing sizes and installing new traffic lights.

5. **Use temporary tactical urbanism** such as paint or street furniture to increase or create footways, pedestrian priority at crossings and improve aesthetics. Low in cost and quickly implemented with community engagement, results can justify more permanent interventions.

   Kuala Lumpur and Melaka (Malaysia) have improved the aesthetics of central alleyways by adding art and furniture.

6. **Maintaining walking environments is as important as new infrastructure** and quick wins can be made at low cost. People notice when streets are maintained!

   The little things matter — removing street clutter, repairing surfaces and street furniture, regular cleaning and maintenance.

7. **Creating accessible cities for young and old is essential** in both aging and young Asian populations. Children and older adults need more seating, young and old play areas, longer crossing times and amenities within shorter distances.

   Singapore's elderly-friendly 'Silver Zones' improve accessibility, provide safer crossings for older adults, increase seating and reduce vehicle speeds.

8. **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes can enhance urban walking environments.** When conducted according to specific guidelines and rules that benefit pedestrians they can fill public funding gaps

   Malang (Indonesia) developed an urban green space CSR programme, enhancing the city's walking environment through improving street parklets and greenways.

9. **Work with local communities, residents and businesses** (both formal and informal). Tailor initiatives to stakeholders' needs through active participation, fostering ownership and support. Engage with vulnerable and less represented groups, including women and those with access requirements, to conduct audits and review walking environments.

   In Jakarta (Indonesia), ITDP worked with residential communities improving pedestrian safety and priority by delineating pedestrian space using paint and greenery. This was enabled by engaging with the whole community; including women and school children who walk most in the area but are often not represented.

Crossing space, accessibility, priority and location are crucial to pedestrian safety in Bangkok, Thailand.

Mixing art and nature in Melaka, Malaysia.

Brightening up Kuala Lumpur's pedestrian alley-ways with art on all surfaces.

Creating more accessible walking environments for older adults in Singapore.

Using tactical urbanism and community engagement to create priority for people on Jakarta's streets.

CONNECTING PUBLIC SPACES AND BASINS WITH WOOD

Hiroyoshi Morita (Nippon Engineering Consultants Co., Ltd.),
Akito Murayama (The University of Tokyo)
&Yasutoshi Sasaki (Nagoya University)

WHAT IS THE WOODISM CITY PROJECT?

Approximately 60% of Japanese forests are planted forests. However, wood consumption in the country has decreased due to the decline in wood prices, and forest management has become insufficient due to the low number of forestry workers. Forest devastation is an important issue for the entire basin and can lead to problems such as ecosystem collapse and higher flood risks in downstream urban areas. In addition, trees generally have the effect of sequestering a lot of carbon as they grow, but as they age, their elongation stops and the amount of carbon sequestered slows down. One way to mitigate climate change could be to maximize the carbon sequestration effect of the forest by creating a circulation system in which trees that have stopped growing are immobilized elsewhere as wood and new trees are planted in the forest.

Woodism is a project which does this by promoting the use of domestic timber in urban environments, and building a distribution system that addresses the challenges of biodiversity, climate change and the forest industry. The Nishiki-2 area, located in the centre of Nagoya, is the pilot implementation area for the Woodism City project. This district once flourished as a wholesale textile district; however, changes in industrial structure have resulted in a decrease of the resident population, an increase in vacant buildings, and a deterioration of public order. Since the 2000s, the town development council — organised primarily by local SMEs — has begun to revitalise the district, and is promoting this project as one of its initiatives. The authors of this article are members of this project, participating in its planning and production, and supporting research during social experiments.

FIRST ACTION: THE 'STREET WOOD DECK' PROJECT AT 2012

The first initiative in the Nishiki-2 area involved the construction of community spaces using wood. Road space occupies 30% of this area, yet there are no parks or rest zones in this district. Curb parking, which was once permitted for logistical reasons, had become non-utilised space. The 'Street Wood Deck' project aimed to create a large seating area the same size as a standard parking lot. The idea was inspired by parklets, a movement which started in San Francisco. Three wooden benches were created in collaboration with researchers, architects, local residents, and students. The setup remained throughout the initial event in August 2012, but could not be permanently

Landscape of a deteriorated forest.

Construction of the wooden sidewalk by residents (top). The walkway and a pedestrian (bottom).

installed on the roadway under current Japanese law and so was moved to a private site. Still, this initiative led to the development of the basic principle of the Woodism City project, which champions the participation of local residents in their own construction and application of wood in public spaces.

SECOND PUBLIC SPACE CHALLENGE

In 2014, the district was given the opportunity to once again challenge the design of public spaces. This took the form of a half-year social experiment to widen the district's sidewalks. When the town development council first proposed using wood as the primary material, the road and traffic management section of the local government

refused. As a countermeasure, the council promised to verify the performance standards for any use of road spaces (including loading and sliding tests), to secure liability for accidents that might occur during the social experiment, and to manage the roads during flood and snowfall events.

Once opened, the wooden walkway, which was partly constructed by the residents themselves, produced various responses. Many people not only actively walked along the deck but also chose to talk and rest along the walkway. On certain occasions, performers used the space. A survey found that 10% of pedestrians in the area had started walking on the widened walkway. In the questionnaire, over 90% of the responses supported the use of wood. On the road narrowed by the widening of the sidewalk, the number of reverse vehicles was reduced to less than half and the traffic speed was reduced by 10%, contributing to the creation of a pedestrian-friendly environment.

SPREAD OF WOODISM

Since this challenge began, wood has been used in more and more locations within the district, such as in the ground floors of buildings, restaurant terraces, the interiors of information centres, on long benches in private open spaces, and at artist exhibition booths. Initially, researchers, students, and residents were the primary participants; now, there are diverse members including forestry managers, lumber companies and artists. At the beginning of the project, the only funding came from the research university, while donations from local companies contributed to the sidewalk widening social experiment. Currently, funding sources are diversifying, with more funding coming in from store owners and local governments.

The 'Street Wood Deck'.

By using the drying process of timber in parallel with its use in public spaces, the recycling of wood in the district has begun. Wood once used in public spaces is now being reused for interior decoration and insulation in the same area.

POTENTIAL AND CHALLENGES TO ORGANIC URBAN DESIGN

What has allowed this project to develop? At this point it's useful to discuss the relationship between the project and the physical properties of wood, as well as the various efforts of those involved.

First, wood is a material that is easier to process than modern materials such as concrete. Even though some tools are necessary, anyone with minimal skills (which can easily be learned) can participate in the production of wooden objects. The second point is that wood has various functions as an organic material. Its properties include strength, heat insulation, heat retention, and moisture absorption. Therefore, it is a material that can be used in a variety of applications, from structural road materials to small fixtures and interiors. All things considered, it is ideal for encouraging the participation of people in various fields and for generating new ideas.

Japanese cities have depended on modern materials such as concrete, iron, and asphalt since modern times. As a result, the connection between the city and the basin has been cut off and citizens have been deprived of the opportunity to become involved in city planning in a hands-on capacity. The Woodism City project is an effort to create a new urban landscape and restore active citizenship.

This project asks us to pay attention to the materials that make up our cities. Why are certain furniture made the way they are? Have you ever wondered where their raw materials came from? Learning about the nature of each material helps in thinking about the safety of the place and the activity you want to trigger. It leads to thinking about local economic circulation as well as material circulation. In order to create places we can be proud of, it's important to use not only our eyes but also our sense of touch.

DO'S

- When paying attention to the use of materials, you should aim not just for a change of use of public space but also **how these materials can contribute to higher goals like boosting the local economy or combating climate change.**

DON'TS

- **Don't think you're done after the completion of the initial design.** Make sure to think of more than one phase to test the design's functionality, location choice and impact. Challenge your design and create space for improvements.

PASAR PAPRINGAN: FINDING A FUTURE IN THE PAST

Singgih S. Kartono (Spedagi Movement)

Throughout history, human civilisation has shifted not only in a forward linear motion but also vertically on a spiritual-material axis. When imbalances occur due to the dominance of the spiritual side or the material side, people are pushed to find a new balance. The Industrial Age has dragged life to the bottom of an abyss of materialism, resulting in the destruction of nature on a global scale and the emergence of inner emptiness. The old life, which is more balanced, becomes the inspiration for the future direction. The prototype of a new civilisation also begins to manifest itself when old values reappear in new forms. This situation should remind developing countries that are now competing to become industrial countries to return to the equilibrium that they have just left. The future is actually very close to them, but thus far they have seen it as the past that they want to leave behind.

TEMANGGUNG, INDONESIA

Pasar Papringan, located in Ngadiprono hamlet in Temanggung, Indonesia, is one proof that the future of life actually exists in the traditions of rural communities. This pop-up market located in Papringan (Javanese for 'bamboo garden') is not only a unique, clean and beautiful market with a variety of local food, handicrafts and agricultural products. With its local-sustainable concept, Papringan Market is also automatically a plastic-free market. Locally sourced banana leaves and bamboo shopping baskets replace disposable plastic wrappers and bags. Industrial food additives are not permitted, and local residents are invited to use only natural ingredients and dyes. Here, the traceability of materials is a simple matter, because everything is produced locally. Almost all of the market's rubbish is organic, and all of the reusable utensils are washed using *lerak*, a fruit-based cleaning agent.

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>
> ## With its local-sustainable concept, Papringan Market is automatically a plastic-free market.
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> "

Pasar Papringan was initiated by the Spedagi Movement, an NGO headquartered in Kandangan Village, Temanggung, Indonesia. Spedagi focuses on Village Revitalisation movements through creative approaches. Pasar Papringan started in January 2016 in Kelingan Hamlet, Caruban Village, Temanggung. This social and environmental experiment unexpectedly received a very good response; once Pasar Papringan was opened, it was almost never devoid of visitors, including many who travelled

from outside of the district. This success has given rise to a new enthusiasm from the local residents for whom life was previously underdeveloped.

But this very quick process also raised new social problems. Disputes between community groups over the economic aspects of the market proved very difficult to resolve. Spedagi, as a companion institution, did not have the authority to solve problems like this. At the same time, the authorities, in this case the village government, didn't want to be involved in these conflicts. In the end, in December 2016, Pasar Papringan had to be closed. This was a hard decision but it became an important lesson for the Spedagi team. Creativity, good intentions and hard work are not always enough to maintain activities in the village.

LOCAL EMPOWERMENT

Luckily, Spedagi then met Imam Abdul Rofiq, a young man from Ngadiprono hamlet. Imam, the head of the local youth community, offered to establish Pasar Papringan on a lot near his residence. Although it was dirty and muddy, the area Imam suggested was wider than the previous one and had a beautiful landscape. Around November 2016, Spedagi decided to establish Pasar Papringan in this new place. Armed with bitter past experiences, the team conducted an evaluation and made a more careful planning. The implementation team, together with chairman Fransisca Callista and the local community, mapped the opportunities and problems in more detail, with a special focus on social aspects. This process helped Spedagi to understand the rhythm of people's lives, but also how to build better communication with the residents. Imam's role as a local leader became very important, as the bridge between Spedagi, local residents and the village government.

Market days at Pasar Papringan #1 (top) and #2 (bottom)

Because the owners of the Papringan lot were all family relations of Imam, the process of getting permission became easier. The team also proposed actions for the conservation of the bamboo gardens to the owners. Eventually, an agreement was reached and Spedagi was allowed to rent the land.

The biggest problem that the project faced was the initial lack of confidence from the local residents. They felt unsure that simple village products would appeal to visitors. Yudhi Setiawan from the Spedagi team trained the residents to better curate their local cuisine, in terms of ingredients, processes, portions, prices and appearance, while still using local materials. The same thing was done for farm products by other Spedagi teams.

This preparation phase lasted around four months, starting in January and officially opening in May 2017. The easiest part was the physical restructuring of the Pasar Papringan area. Based on a previously made landscape design, the team and the community cleaned and created empty spaces between the bamboo clusters for selling and other activities. Paving stones were added to the lot, using an old cobblestone technique (in Indonesian, *trasah batu*). In addition to preserving local natural landscapes, the Pasar Papringan project also helps to elevate this traditional technique, which is starting to disappear as village roads are turned into asphalt and concrete. The combination of beautiful, towering bamboo clusters and unique cobblestone patterns results in stunning organic spaces.

STIMULATING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

During special events, the space becomes vibrant with thousands of visitors. They come from far and wide to taste the village cuisine, to shop for village products and to linger and enjoy the beautiful atmosphere of the countryside. Thanks to the affordable prices of products, the market gathers people from all economic layers. Pasar Papringan also teaches its community about the local wealth that is stored in the village. The residents are able to witness for themselves how people from distant places and urban areas value their products, culture and way of life. This endorsement from urban society — which had been the idol society of rural communities — has helped to erode feelings of inferiority and foster self-confidence.

The organisation of each event at Pasar Papringan typically involves almost all 450 residents from the hamlet. They are involved as part of the management team, sales team, cleaning staff and parking

attendants. The economic value of each event is relatively large for the Ngadiprono community. Though it would be possible to open more regularly, Pasar Papringan only opens on certain Sundays according to the Javanese calendar; twice every 35 days. Spedagi realises that in the concept of Village Revitalisation, it is more important to restore the lives of rural communities by starting from existing local, social, economic and cultural roots, rather than by replacing them with new activities.

Outside of the event schedule, the 3,500 m2 outer garden area of the market has become a new, much-needed public space for the local community. The Pasar Papringan area has also been used several times for different local, national and international events. Beyond these activities, Pasar Papringan has turned the hidden Ngadiprono hamlet into a place for young people to gather and learn about empowering localities.

Pasar Papringan, with its local / sustainable / self-sufficient concept, has not only transformed a muddy slum into an attractive place and provided various benefits for the local community, but has also made visible the idea that the future is really just the past reappearing in a new form. The old values that are still attached to the life of rural communities are in fact the same as the values of the future, which looks to locality, self-sufficiency and sustainability as the main pillars of life.

DO'S

- **Find local leaders and key figures in the community, and involve them in every process.**

- **Map problems and potentials, with special attention to the social aspect.**

- **Establish good communication with the local community and all relevant stakeholders, including the local government.**

- **Involve outsiders' expertise; they are more heard by local residents.**

- **Develop local human resources so that they will be able to be independent.**

- **Everything must be based on the concept of Revitalisation.**

DON'TS

- **Don't focus on the design of the architecture or the events.**

- **Don't focus on tourism or economic profit.**

EMBRACING GREENERY AT VARIOUS 'EYE LEVELS'

Yan Ling Lok (NParks)

Over the years, the urban landscape has morphed into a unique topography where everyone's perception of 'eye level' varies. As people traverse the city, someone working on the 34th floor would have a different 'eye level' from someone else sitting at a bus stop. Singapore's strategy for greening up its built infrastructure constitutes this very idea of multi-level viewing. Skyrise greenery (a term coined in Singapore) refers to both rooftop and vertical greenery. It contributes towards the creation of a seamless continuous green layer weaving through our urbanscape — from our streetscapes, parks and nature reserves onto our high-rise structures. At the helm of this transformation is the National Parks Board (NParks) which looks at greenery holistically as part of their 'City in a Garden' vision.

CHALLENGES IN A SMALL NATION-CITY

Faced with the realities of limited land, a growing population and a premium for green spaces, Singapore has to be innovative in finding urban solutions to improve liveability. Driven by Singapore's biophilic 'City in a Garden'

vision, NParks has been continually striving to create integrated and pervasive green spaces across our island. Today, skyrise greenery has emerged as one of Singapore's most viable, effective and innovative urban strategies.

Ten years since the inception of the Skyrise Greenery Initiative in 2009, Singapore has recorded more than 120 hectares of rooftop greenery. This is a remarkable achievement that has placed Singapore as a global trendsetter in this arena.

The Sustainable Singapore Blueprint (SSB) target currently envisions 200 hectares of rooftop greenery by 2030. Supported by a concerted whole-of-government approach and a comprehensive range of policies and initiatives, Singapore's skyrise greenery is poised to break norms and push frontiers of greenery provision, creating a truly liveable city.

GROWING OUR GREENERY IN THE SKY

The programme's success can be attributed to a strong level of support from various government agencies. This effort involves providing incentives and implementing policies to stimulate both the landscape industry and the local community. Understanding how businesses and communities work is essential when developing spaces that address their needs. Leading this greening effort since 2009 is NParks, an organisation that seeks to grow skyrise greenery in not only quantity but also quality.

Their initiatives include:

1. **The Skyrise Greenery Incentive Scheme (SGIS)**
   While there are other policies in place that target greenery on new building developments, SGIS provides financial incentives for building owners who wish to install rooftop and vertical greenery on their existing buildings.

   Since its inception in 2009, this scheme has successfully supported more than 180 building owners in their greening efforts. It has helped community facilities, businesses and developers to recognise both monetary and non-tangible values of greenery within their private residential developments, community facilities and commercial spaces. Schools and healthcare facilities have also started to embrace the educational and therapeutic value of greenery on their elevated spaces. This scheme helps each project to achieve their own objectives while contributing towards Singapore's overall skyrise greenery footprint.

2. **Edible gardens on rooftops:**
   Edible gardening is a rapidly growing trend amongst city dwellers worldwide. Factors fuelling this trend include the increasing preference for fresh and organically grown food, the revival of 'farm to table' food concepts and rising food security concerns. Likewise, Singapore also witnessed a burgeoning interest in edible gardening and urban farming. Making use of a consolidated strategy, NParks decided to champion and nurture this phenomenon into a viable edible gardening movement for all Singaporeans.

   The NParks Community-in-bloom (CIB) team works together with members of the public islandwide to form community groups that help to develop under-utilised rooftop spaces into community gardens for social bonding and to grow edible plants. As most of our population live in high-rise apartments with limited outdoor space, these rooftop gardens have become key social nodes or 'vertical *kampongs*' providing residents with vital communal experiences.

3. **Therapeutic Gardens:**
   Studies have shown that city-dwellers face a higher risk of suffering from mental health ailments compared to those who live in rural areas. This is exacerbated when it comes to more vulnerable groups such as the elderly. Singapore currently has a senior population of 487,000 with an estimated 1 in 10 with dementia. Both numbers are expected to just about double by the year 2030. The social and economic pressures of caregiving and the strain on the healthcare sector is expected to rise significantly.

A research study conducted together with the National University Health System (NUHS) showed that participants with greater access to nature and nature-related activities experienced higher social connectedness, improved immune systems and a lower risk of depression. As part of a multi-prong approach to deal with this significant national issue, NParks embarked on various initiatives to develop green spaces catered for an ageing population. NParks Therapeutic Gardens and Horticulture Movement is the first programme in Southeast Asia which combines evidence-based design, research, an integrated network of gardens across the island, as well as comprehensive therapeutic horticulture programming customised for seniors. The movement optimises existing public green spaces including rooftop spaces as healing sanctuaries that maximise the restorative benefits of nature and encourage positive people-nature interactions to provide highly tangible social and health benefits for the community.

CONCLUSION

Skyrise greening in Singapore will continue to evolve with the changes in our population's demographics and their needs. For us, every rooftop space represents an opportunity to develop a meaningful communal bonding place, a flourishing urban farm, a stress-relieving therapeutic garden, an educational space to connect with nature and even more simply, a chance to promote biodiversity within our city.

DO'S

- **Review your schemes and budgets regularly.** In this case, implementation costs will change over time due to economic changes and market surveys should be carried out to understand this cycle. Where necessary, adjustments need to be made to the funding caps to bridge that gap between what was previously stated on paper and the actual costs of on-site works.

DON'TS

- **Don't only consider the implementation costs, installation methods also need to be reviewed.** Technology is ever-evolving, and rooftop and vertical greenery technology have changed significantly in the past decade alone. Old frameworks on eligibility for funding need to be re-worked accordingly to encourage building owners to adopt improved and innovative rooftop and vertical greenery systems on their façades. Ultimately, it is the ability to understand market sentiments and adapt to changing times that will determine the success of such schemes.

BICYCLE-FRIENDLY CITIES THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Manju George (ESAF)

We live in an era where cities prioritise wider roads and the use of personal vehicles. In India, some citizens and transport planners are trying to change this. In October 2013, the Cycle Day was born, a public-private partnership aimed at bringing about attitude and behavioural changes in Bangalore.

At first, Cycle Day was organised once a month, leading to the formation of the Bengaluru Coalition for Open Streets (BCOS). Participants included government and non-governmental organisations; such as the Directorate of Urban Land Transport (DULT), Department of Urban Development, Government of Karnataka, ESAF, and Praja RAAG.

The campaign was launched to promote cycling and an open street concept. Its aim was to raise public awareness about non-motorised transport as a sustainable mode of mobility, pedestrianisation and the government's plan to implement the National Urban Transport Policy, 2006 (NUTP).

BANGALORE, INDIA

It also encouraged the public to use bicycles for short-distance commutes and to adopt a healthier lifestyle. The team envisions that these initiatives will make Bangalore a bicycle-friendly city.

GROWING THE CYCLING COMMUNITY

Throughout the planning stage, DULT, the nodal agency implementing the NUTP, took the initiative of getting other government bodies on board, including Bengaluru Bruhut Mahanagare Palike (BBMP), Bangalore Traffic Police (BTP), and 101 Ambulance. The event quickly became a weekly programme, within 18 months of operations. The core team engaged with many community partners from different neighbourhoods spread across Bangalore. These volunteers, who came from a range of economic backgrounds, committed to keeping the event open to people of all sections, ages, and abilities. At this point, each community was advised to visit as many other places and partners as possible to learn what it takes to organise such a programme.

Any Resident Welfare Association (RWA) or NGO can approach BCOS or DULT to initiate this process. Over six years, the team equipped 60 community partners and conducted more than 500 Cycle Day events. These communities spread the message to promote sustainable transport, the safety of cyclists, and open street events.

The cycle rides range from a distance of 3 to 5 km, after which the streets will be open for people to engage in various activities. These activities engage all age groups, allowing different generations to bond together. The youth play games they have never heard of while the older crowd gets to cherish and experience their childhood memories once again. These games inculcate qualities of patience, sharing, and using tactics to overcome hurdles. During these events, the streets are blocked for about three to four hours which provides opportunities for people to perform group activities such as Zumba and yoga. Various programmes such as waste segregation, terrace farming, gardening and bike repairing are also conducted. About an average of 150 to 200 people are engaged every Sunday, improving social interaction within the neighbourhood.

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CHANGING ATTITUDES

Over the years, this event has attracted many new partners due to the wide coverage by social media and print publications. BCOS and community partners have also introduced the concept to new partners through their network. Once convinced, they meet with the DULT and BCOS team who brief them about the objectives and goals of the event. The team then identifies the stretch where the cycle rides and open street events can be conducted safely and where they won't obstruct the general public. After the completion of the initial step, the community partners sign the Memorandum of Understanding with DULT, which is renewed every three months. The DULT then works with the BTP and the media.

On the day of the event, the local police, traffic wardens, and the community volunteers cordon off the traffic for the cycle ride. One BCOS member is always present to handhold and help check the process of the programme.

The major impacts created so far are as follows:

- Three Cycle Day community partners got cycling and pedestrian infrastructure installed in their neighbourhoods while two community partners got public bike-sharing facilities.

- With the success of Cycle Day, the State Government has allocated 801.8 million INR for Public Bike Sharing (PBS) Programme for Phase I.

- The government has encouraged dock-less PBS in the city, leading to three new apps based on bike-sharing systems.

- Bicycling schools have opened to teach teens, ladies and elderly women. On average 10 – 15 people are taught weekly.

- The department of Horticulture has closed Cubbon Park (one of the largest lung spaces in the city) for vehicles on all Sundays, second Saturdays and on public holidays to encourage more people to use the space for cycling.

- Behaviour and attitude to cycling by motorised vehicle owners have improved as reported by the cyclists.

- Several media houses have become media partner of Cycle Day, publishing event details on a weekly basis and spreading the message of sustainable mobility at a larger arena.

- Four cities in Karnataka are trying to replicate our cycle stands in public spaces and have made budget allocations to do so. Mysore has India's first Public Bike Sharing Scheme which has 8000 active users, mostly students and elderly. Gadag has passed a resolution to implement PBS and Cycle Days.

DO'S AND DON'TS

- **The event can be used as a platform to address various civic issues**, create awareness and promote socialisation.

- **The Open Street strategy can be used to promote NMT** which will allow you to consider them as first and last-mile connectivity.

- **It's important to keep the project low-profile** in terms of financial resources with volunteers from the community pitching in and local establishments sponsoring for minimal expenses.

- **Involving local partners especially from the neighbourhood** brings more cohesiveness and resources (human and financial).

- **Cycle Day is a project which proves that a public-private partnership can bring long term benefits for the whole society.** This is nothing but an amazing way to implement the NUTP, and the citizens, civil society organisations and government officials have come together to make this programme a huge success, leading to the implementation of policies from the grass-root level!

BRINGING EDGE FOOD FUTURES INTO THE SPOTLIGHT

Michelle Lai & Huiying Ng (TANAH)

Food culture in Singapore is fast: packed and eaten on the go; rarely made or enjoyed slowly. Knowledge of other relationships with food, and of Singapore's agricultural history, have been relegated to the margins. For TANAH, building spaces and moments for people to pay attention to different approaches to food is a practice of re-possessing connection to the matter of life: beyond food for consumption, moving against the flow of expanding expropriation. Co-founders Michelle Lai and Huiying Ng view these interventions as time niches for new haptic connections.

Space is also important to the duo. When working with a site, they apply placemaking as a guiding principle: by responding to the everyday routines of its users, respecting the symbolism and function of its architectural forms, and understanding it in terms of its cultural and economic significance. In addition, a crucial criteria is that interventions should seed images, habits, and practices of other futures. As science fiction writer William Gibson said, "The future is already here; it's just not very evenly distributed."

TANAH's mission is to bring edge futures into the spotlight — to construct a space-time for them to exist within, and the methods needed to disperse them. Michelle and Huiying explain: "This too, is how we grow and tend to our gardens. And often, we have found that the most undervalued futures are actually closest to the futures that are most sustainable and equitable. Our work is to lure them onto the stage, bathed in a fresh light, so that people may perform them anew."

Working with food is both the means and the end for them. It is to bring food production closer to urban dwellers — conscious that the place-specificity of a foodspace is woven into the food we eat — including at urban edges and rural spaces. It is to expand awareness for environmental issues by locating a person in place: illustrating, through simple gestures, the physical and relational locations from which we eat, live, love and perform our mundane duties, heightening our collective consciousness.

Place thus offers the possibility of Transformation: of imagination, of practice — from monotone into hybrid spaces of gathering, farming and play.

PLACE-SPECIFIC: SG FARM

In 2016, TANAH worked on a project called SG Farm, with landscape architect Faiz bin Zohri, in conjunction with the 10th anniversary of Archifest. Archifest is a flagship festival, organised by the Singapore Institute of Architects and the Singapore Institute of Landscape Architects. The project site was Zoysia Green, at the heart of Raffles Place in Singapore's financial district.

The goal behind SG Farm was to spark civic imaginations of the forms in which a farm in the city could look like, and how social interactions could be reshaped accordingly.

During the lead-up to the festival, TANAH organised two on-site participatory design workshops for the public, in which they shared ideas about future food spaces such as the *Chinampas* floating farms used by the Aztecs, floating farms in Bangladesh and urban farm concepts from New York City and Tokyo. Following this, the participants contributed their personal wishlists for food awareness.

In 2016, though urban farming was gaining interest locally, people were still turned off by the heat of farming in soil-based farms. This was a question TANAH wanted to address through design provocations. Split into teams, the participants proceeded to design mock-ups of their installations on a given map. Following the richness of insights and ideas gathered from these workshops, TANAH designed a site based on the input.

The design for the plots followed the concept of Discussion / Action. First, they designated a plot with pallets stacked to form columns of varying heights, suitable for sitting and gathering around (Discussion). Then, the same pallets were overturned and filled with a bed of soil and plants, setting the platform for the Action portion, making SG Farm a space for creation and recreation. The garden plots were set at varying heights, with the central plots high enough to enable participants to garden at

ease, without having to squat or bend over. Eventually, the Discussion and Action plots would set the tone for the events during Archifest. Recycled pallets were chosen as building blocks for their low cost, modular design. What resulted was an iteration of SG Farm, which was low-cost, using recycled materials, relatively light-weight, and easily transported.

During the course of Archifest, TANAH conducted a series of programmes around SG Farm, demonstrating the daily routines revolving around urban farms. The events served to kickstart planting awareness and know-how amongst the workers in the Central Business District.

DO'S

- **Plan early.**

- **Include areas for memory and learning about food production and local ecologies in your urban farm.** Urban farms are key arenas for these.

Set up your farm so it allows communication between users of the farm e.g. with a blackboard, a guest book, or colourful structures that function as non-linguistic message boards. Make the site friendly to conversations, so information exchange becomes spontaneous.

- **Create regular activities to build a habit.** By scheduling regular plant giveaways, for instance, familiar faces will return to ask about planting advice over time, and a small face-to-face community can develop.

- **Build your place by thinking about its role as a threshold space.** Make it a physical point of connectivity. Public spaces in the city are used by different individuals; design features that help people come into contact with one another to enable more opportunities for brief, informal interactions between groups who would never otherwise meet.

- **Make use of dead and in-between space.** Stacked pallets can be introduced as elevated seating. Interactions across formerly dead space, desire lines, and usual walking routes will instil a different life and introduce new rhythms to the space.

- **Be intentional with duration.** If threshold spaces exist over a longer duration, a 'threshold culture' might also form through the ease of people to enter /exit (ambage), and different ways to interact with objects in the space (ambiguity).

- **Add ambiguous objects into your space.** For instance, plants. As living beings, they can be plucked, eaten, watered, harvested. Individuals able to read the plants (with plant literacy) can participate in several actions: they could choose to spend five minutes caring for the farm on their daily commute. Plants have needs and are a resource. Much like rough building façades with detail, ambiguity offers interesting spaces to stop and linger.

to hold a two-week workshop with very little manpower. They recommend recruiting volunteers who would learn from the process with you, and who would dedicate work days to building with you.

DON'TS

- **Work without backup manpower.** Some of the greatest learnings for TANAH were simply being able to pull off a build in such a public project and

- **Leave transportation and logistics to the end.** TANAH's process was not perfect — most of the work was split between three people, with a great deal of last-minute work and long hours. The need to balance the workload and expectations may cause minor frictions.

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EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE

PLACEMAKING AS EMANCIPATORY PRACTICE IN ASIA?

Jeffrey Hou

A vast continent with rich cultural traditions, Asia is steeped in its extraordinary heritage of places, ranging from the majestic monasteries in the high plateaus of Tibet to the multicultural streetscapes of George Town on the island of Penang. For ages, these memorable and remarkable sites have evolved through exchanges of cultures and the economic and social life of their communities. They embody systems of cultural values and spatial practices that are integral to the local ways of life and the identities of those places.

For much of recent history, however, these longstanding practices of placemaking in Asia were disrupted by a multitude of changes, conflicts, colonisation, and rapid economic development, and through institutions imposed on the local communities, including none other than the professional planning and design practice. Over time, vernacular practices gave way to imposed economic and political imperatives. Human-scale places were demolished and replaced by large-scale developments. The city at eye level was transformed by policies at the high level.

It was not long ago that renowned planning scholar John Friedmann lamented that the "art of place-making has not informed planners of the swaths of the

urban in the newly industrialised global regions of Asia and elsewhere" (2010, p. 149). Today, however, a refashioned practice of placemaking is not only in vogue among professionals and state institutions in Asia but also among a wide array of civil society actors. The growing variety of practices have enabled individuals and communities to play a more active role in the shaping of the physical environment as well as the social and cultural life that unfolds in those places.

Placemaking as an age-old practice is not new to Asia, to say the least (Hou 2016). But placemaking as a refashioned attempt to address the shortcomings of institutionalised planning and design in the West has indeed become popular and more widely accepted in the fertile ground of Asia. These wide-ranging practices are the subject of this encyclopaedic volume that features a remarkable collection of projects and initiatives in Asia. This concluding essay intends to offer a few thoughts and ask pertinent questions. Specifically, what can we learn from these recent practices? How can we reflect on these emerging practices critically to avoid the trap of past mistakes?

Starting with lessons, first, it is abundantly clear that **placemaking initiatives can provide a platform to engage a multitude of actors**, in ways far surpassing conventional planning and design. In this volume, beyond the typical cast of professionals, developers, property owners, and governmental staff, we see the active roles of non-governmental actors including non-profits, philanthropists, social enterprises, artists, volunteers, residents, vendors, and business owners through collaboration, co-creation, and other forms of engagement. They include adults, teens, and children, both locally and from afar. Although Friedmann did not foresee the emergence of placemaking practices in Asia, he was absolutely right that "making places is everyone's job" (2010, p. 159).

The ability for these projects and initiatives to engage such a broad range of actors represents a window for social transformation or possibly a "site of emancipation" (Lee 2004; Amin & Thrift 2004). As emancipatory practices, these placemaking initiatives are not just about transforming the built environment but also about building capacity and relationships in societies that have become increasingly fragmented. This includes providing agency for people who may have been historically marginalised, including migrants and children. In many specific cases, we see the potential of placemaking practices not only in creating "convivial and liveable urban environments" (Ho & Douglass 2008, p. 199), but also "to challenge top-down, procedure-driven, physical planning" (Huang & Roberts 2019, p. 3).

Secondly, similar to the wider range of actors, **placemaking can engage a wide variety of places and types of interventions.** Rather than conventional sites of planning and design, the collection of cases in this volume encompasses events, programs, murals, gardening, activation or rehabilitation of vacant and residual spaces, and a variety of short-term and longer-term interventions.

They take place on the street, in alleyways, under bridges, on rooftops, and also in commercial buildings and private residences, including both highly visible and strangely interstitial spaces. Because placemaking can involve all kinds of actions and take place in a wide range of contexts, it can be mobilised to address different needs, issues, and circumstances.

In some cases, placemaking can represent a form of resistance against development or encroachment, as in the alleyway murals in Colombo and community gardens in the Pokfulam village in Hong Kong. In other cases, placemaking can support experiments in an alternative way of life as in the cases of Pasar Papringan, an environmentally friendly pop-up market in rural Indonesia. Furthermore, **placemaking can help revitalise declining communities and neighbourhoods**, as in the cases of the Asahikawa Green Street in Hokkaido, Japan, and Escolta in Manila, the Philippines. Also, placemaking can serve as a vehicle for addressing the needs of underserved populations such as at-risk youths and children with disabilities as in projects by the Right to Play Thailand Foundation and the Livable City program in India.

Aside from existing communities and institutions and spontaneous acts of individuals, these projects are being led by a growing number of emergent practices. They include charity organisations that have begun to engage in placemaking projects, new nonprofits and neighbourhood associations with placemaking as the focus of their work, public space management consultants, architects and artists who use placemaking as a new medium, and even community media platforms. These new practices bring with them new energy, methods, and dynamism to the shaping of the built environments in Asia.

Thirdly, **placemaking can be scalable in both time and space.** What may begin as a simple, short-term intervention can blossom into a more substantial program with sustained impacts over time. The Yangon's Alley Garden Project, one of the most remarkable cases in this volume, for instance, has grown to include twelve sites, totalling 15,000 m2 of urban space. Furthermore, the skills and experiences from the alleyway cleanup and activation have been applied to other sites including streets and playgrounds. In another case, about bicycle-friendly cities in Bangalore, what began as open street events to promote cycling has led to the building of cycling and pedestrian infrastructure and the introduction of a bike-share programme in the city. The scalability of placemaking initiatives is particularly critical to addressing issues of long-term sustainability and for building future-proof cities and communities.

In terms of critical reflections, as an approach embraced by grassroots and institutional actors alike, the practice of placemaking also raises important issues that require further examinations and debates. In this volume, while we have seen bottom-up efforts by artists, non-profit organisers, and professionals that represent challenges to the status quo, there are also projects led by

developers and governmental authorities in which the agency and subjectivity of community stakeholders are not as evident or clearly presented. In other words, **as placemaking becomes increasingly used as an institutionalised planning tool, will it simply become another form of elitist intervention and fail to fulfil its emancipatory potential?**

Even if community-engaged consultants and artists are commissioned to facilitate the projects or initiatives, can such arrangements substitute for the organic processes of placemaking? Does the consultancy model replicate the power structure that has been responsible for the disruptions of local places in the first place? In a study that examines the involvement of artists in placemaking projects in Berlin, Bain and Landau (2019, p. 406) find that "contrary to collaborative and participatory governance ideals, artists are often singularly responsibilised by civic leaders to realise place-narratives for a community rather than with them." In Detroit, Montgomery (2016, p. 776) finds that placemaking driven by business and real estate interests "subordinates the black urban poor, even as it incorporates their street culture." Do the projects in Asia face similar constraints and predicaments?

As places and placemaking increasingly become the subject of institutionalised planning and design, what will happen to the fluid and evolving identities and meanings of a place? As the line between placemaking and place-marketing or branding becomes increasingly blurred, who gets to determine the identity and narrative of a place? Do these processes contribute to the reification of place meaning and identity? As placemaking becomes closely aligned with urban regeneration and beautification, how can we prevent gentrification and displacement from happening? As placemaking is increasingly adopted through the neoliberal model of public-private partnership, who is being held accountable to the public? How are decisions being made concerning the use and, at worst, enclosure of public spaces and resources?

Lastly, while placemaking initiatives offer opportunities for quick fixes and early wins, how do these projects address the long-standing, systemic disparities in society? How do they empower those who historically marginalised? While short-term outcomes are desirable, how will the effort be sustained over time? How do they meet the needs for long-term impact, investment, and sustained engagement?

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As places and placemaking increasingly become the subject of institutionalised planning and design, what will happen to the fluid and evolving identities and meanings of a place?

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While many projects are promoted as human-scaled and human-centric, which human populations are they intended to serve? Do these innovative practices challenge the status quo or become just window dressing and, at worst, undermine the agency and capacity of the public?

As a practice that is characteristically fluid and almost all-encompassing, placemaking does present a powerful and critical counterpoint to the narrow, technocratic exercise of planning and design that has governed the making of the built environment in Asia for too long. Compared with planning and design practices that too often prioritise profit and institutional priorities rather than the interest of communities and the reality of everyday lives, placemaking can serve as an emancipatory alternative through the agency of the public. However, placemaking as currently practised in Asia and elsewhere is often fraught with conflicts and contradictions. With a lack of clear definitions and the predominance of political and economic interests, placemaking can be easily co-opted and appropriated for other agendas or imperatives.

Placemaking can serve as a vehicle for learning. Just as identities and meanings of places are often contested and negotiated over time, and just as placemaking often involves trials and errors, we must, therefore, continue to debate and examine the ongoing practice and evolution of placemaking in Asia. It is through continued experiments and critical reflections that we may build capacity within communities and institutions over time to address the complex and systemic challenges facing the built environments and society in Asia.

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EPILOGUE

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

BIOGRAPHIES

Anca Abraham is a Partner at Abraham John Architects. Originally from Romania, she has made Mumbai her home since 2005. She is one of the lead designers of The Bombay Greenway Project, a series of urban planning proposals for a city for people, where open spaces, connectivity and alternative modes of transport are the key to thriving communities. She chooses to give back to the city through design and participation in several social initiatives.

Giulia Ambrogi is a curator specialized in contemporary art and management of cultural heritage. She has been working in museums such as MAXXI in Rome as well as on public art projects since 2007. In 2014 she founded St+art India Foundation — the first Urban Art platform in India — and in 2016 the XXL Collective art & design agency.

Jack Backen specialises in the economics behind property performance. With qualifications in economics, law and finance, Jack was one of the founding directors of Cistri's Singapore office, having previously worked with Cistri's parent company, Urbis Australia. In recent years, Jack and his team have worked closely with master planners, landscape designers, social researchers, property valuers, and other economists to help build up a deep understanding of placemaking and the value that it brings to real estate.

Angeline Basuki is a member of Konsorsium Kota Tua Jakarta. The consortium aims for reviving the present for the future of Jakarta Old Town. The Konsorsium does this through restoration, venue, event & heritage management.

Margaret (Maggie) Brooke has worked in the property profession in the Asia Pacific region for over 40 years. Based in Hong Kong, she's a leading industry professional and long-time advocate for heritage preservation in Hong Kong. Maggie is also the chairwoman of the Heritage Hong Kong Foundation, the agency behind the award-winning revitalisation of the Blue House Cluster in Wanchai.

Fransisca Callista was born in Banjar City, West Java. Sisca studied Product Design at the Bandung Institute of Technology, then continued to pursue a Master Programme of Design Culture at Chiba University in Japan. She became involved in the Spedagi project while she was a student in Japan as a participant of ICVR # 1. In 2015, she was trusted as the Project Manager of Pasar Papringan 1. In 2018, Sisca became The Chairman of ICVR#3. Now Sisca is active in the field of permaculture and contextual education, while also taking on independent projects.

Tsai-Her Cheng is an author, architect and urban planner in both Taiwan and Netherlands. She is the director of Boundary Unlimited, an intercultural urban research and planning agency.

Stephanie Cheung is executive director of Urban Discovery. Combining her business background with an interest in urban culture and development Stephanie enjoys working in a multi-disciplinary context, fostering connections to improve urban liveability in cities in partnership with local government, private companies, creatives, NGOs, and grassroots communities. Stephanie has managed community development and cultural mapping projects in Hong Kong, Philippines (Manila), Indonesia (Bali), Thailand (Bangkok) and Malaysia (Penang) and created partnerships with like-minded partners to significantly grow the non-profit iDiscover Asia as a tool for mapping and promotion of heritage districts in Hong Kong and across SE Asia.

José Chong works as Programme Management Officer for the Global Public Space Programme at the Planning, Finance and Economy Section of UN-Habitat. He leads the development of new tools for public space assessments / city-wide strategies and applies innovative tools for community participation / collaborative urban design. He is an urban planner and licentiate architect (Lima, Peru) with master studies in Renewable Energies, Sustainable Architecture and Urbanism (Huelva, Spain), and International Cooperation and Urban Development

(Darmstadt, Germany) specialising in Sustainable Emergency Architecture (Barcelona, Spain).

Dr. Jacqueline Chung is the senior principal and Academic Director of St. James' Church Kindergarten, Singapore (SJCK). She believes that play is essential for developing children's cognitive and social skills, as well as their creativity and imagination. Under her leadership, SJCK's Nature Playscape and Creative Sensory Playscape have won national early childhood innovation awards.

Stephen Davies is the co-founder of Project for Public Spaces and Principal of Place Solutions Group, LLC. An advocate for public spaces, placemaking and public markets, his work takes him around the world as a consultant, facilitator, educator, researcher and speaker.

Stephanie Geertman is founder and owner of Living in Cities and senior researcher at the department of Interdisciplinary Sciences, Faculty of Social and Behavioral Science, Utrecht University, the Netherlands. Stephanie worked and lived in Hanoi, Vietnam from 2000-2016, specialising in self-organisation, everyday urban politics, sustainable urban development, and Vietnamese and Asian urbanism.

Manju George is a Senior Programme Manager with a decade-long experience in advocating and place-making for accessible and barrier-free open public spaces, open street events, and car-free days. She heads the Livable City Program, which is spread in four states in India with ESAF, a pan-India NGO. Listed as one among the country's top 50 female change-makers, Manju George is a trained psychiatric social worker from Bangalore.

Camille Fong is part of the Delft University of Technology team, involved in the Sponge City Programme. For the programme Camille is focusing on water management.

Tran Thi Kieu Thanh Ha is Manager of the Livable Cities Program with HealthBridge Foundation of Canada in Vietnam. Taking overall responsibility for the programme planning and implementation since its launch in 2006, she has provided leadership to her team supporting Vietnamese cities in promoting physical activity environments, healthy food environments, park development, land-use planning and health, and active transportation.

Tasnim Hadi has broad experience working in the social sector, focusing on social innovation and the intersection between social impact and business. She enjoys exploring how design thinking can be used to bring about systems change. At the time this book was written, Tasnim was working on Partnerships and Resilience at Think City, a Malaysian-based urban rejuvenation outfit. Tasnim holds an MBA and Lean Six Sigma Green Belt from the University of Oxford.

Sakura Hachisuka works at a non-profit for town development through art in Asahikawa, Japan. As a member of the merchant association in 7th Avenue Green Street, Sakura aims to create communities where all generations can connect for the future of Asahikawa.

Ryuzo Hasegawa was born in Tokyo, and graduated at Tohoku University of Art & Design. He has worked for many cities as a town planner, and recently entered the field of place management, as founding Partner of FRONTYARD Co. Ltd.. Ryuzo has also been a guest student at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts Schools of Architecture.

Deng Han is a senior transportation engineer of the Institute for Transportation & Development Policy(ITDP) and a consultant of the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank who focuses on Non-motorised Traffic, Bike Sharing, Child-friendly City and Sustainable Transportation Policy.

Architect couple **Dr. Florian Heinzelmann and Daliana Suryawinata** founded their firm SHAU in 2009 in the Netherlands and later in Indonesia. SHAU works on all scales of architecture, from microlibraries to vertical housing and masterplans. Main concerns of their projects are social and environmental responsibilities and they were named eco-modernists of their time by *FuturArc* magazine in 2018. SHAU's work has received international awards including the LafargeHolcim Silver Award for Sustainable Construction in 2017 for the Asia-Pacific region and being shortlisted for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2019.

Maruf Hossain is currently managing UN-Habitat supported public space pilot projects in Dhaka and is also in charge of multiple place-making events organised by different Government and International Organisations in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Jeffrey Hou is Professor of Landscape Architecture and Director of the Urban Commons Lab at the University of Washington, Seattle. Hou is best known for his pioneering writing on guerrilla urbanism, insurgent public space, and bottom-up placemaking.

David Hutton is Managing Director of Development at Lendlease Asia and Russell Dart of the Lendlease Urbanisation Practice. Lendlease is a leading international property and infrastructure group with core expertise in shaping cities and a vision "to create the

best places". Headquartered in Sydney, the business operates in four regions: Australia, Europe, the Americas and Asia. Lendlease is currently undertaking 21 major urbanisation projects in nine gateway cities around the world including The Exchange TRX In Kuala Lumpur.

Yohei Ikai is born in 1987, and is currently Partner of Sotonoba and an architect based in Tokyo. Yohei is specilised in design architecture and public space. Yohei acquired the master's degree in environmental studies (architecture) at the Graduate School, the University of Tokyo.

Yuya Ishida is born in 1988, and is currently Co-Chairperson of Sotonoba and an architect based in Tokyo. Yuya is also a designer and consultant for street furniture, architecture and public space. Yuya obtained a Master of Engineering in Architecture at the Graduate School, the University of Tokyo.

Rui IZUMIYAMA is a tactical urbanist and placemaker at Sotonoba. Sotonoba has its own Web Magazine of Outdoor and Public Space, where Rui acts as an Co-Leader and Head Editor. Next to his work at Sotonoba he is an Assistant Professor at the Dept. of Architecture, Nihon University. Rui is the Regional Network Leader for Japan in the global placemaking network called PlacemakingX. He is specialised in City Management, Area Based Management, Place Management, Public life Public Space, Tactical Urbanism and Placemaking.

Hans Karssenberg is founding partner of STIPO. With many other partners, he has helped to build the international programmes The City at Eye Level, Placemaking Europe and Placemakers Asia. Key words are human scale area development, community building, co-creating streets and places for people, place management and place-led development, and connecting top-down long term strategies with short term bottom-up initiatives. Hans works as strategic advisor, senior project manager, public developer, placemaker, trainer and lecturer. He works with and for governments, private sector as well as civic initiatives and international networks.

Singgih S. Kartono was born and raised in Kandangan Village, Temanggung, Central Java. After studying Product Design at the Bandung Institute of Technology, he decided to return to his hometown. Singgih believes that the future is in the village, not in the city. Pioneering craft-based design and production activities in the village, Singgih's designs include the Magno Wooden Radio and Spedagi Bamboo Bike, two local products that received prestigious

international design awards. In 2014 Singgih initiated ICVR#1, which became the foundation of the Spedagi Movement, which later gave birth to Pasar Papringan.

Fumi Kawashima was born in 1985 in Fukuoka prefecture, Japan. Fumi studied how to make community spaces through fieldworks at Keio University Fumitoshi Kato lab. In 2014, she joined Rebita Inc. as a manager of shared space BUKATSUDO. She currently manages the communication between users and office workers around Yokohama Minato Mirai area. Her hobby is making dumplings.

Yoichi Koizumi is an architect and workshop designer. He graduated Yokohama National University BArch in 2010. After the Great East Japan earthquake, he participated in starting up the urban revitalizing action called ISHINOMAKI 2.0. Between 2011-2020, he worked for architectural design office Ondesign. In 2020, he started his own urban design office, About Your City.

Richard Lambert is the founder of Natural Walking Cities and Livable Cities and Asia Coordinator at Cities Forum. He has over 10 years' experience advising and developing pedestrian and urban green space improvement projects and policies for governments, companies and NGOs globally.

Saeid Labaffi is the founder of One Kampong Gelam Association, which was set up in July 2014 to support businesses economically and to introduce cultural and historical values of Kampong Gelam to the visitors. He is currently the chairman of One Kampong Gelam Association and has been working closely with URA to implement initiatives such as the car-free zone and street bazaars to bring greater vibrancy and footfall to the area. He is also the winner of the Place Management Coordinating Forum's annual Place Champion Award in 2017.

Christopher Law is the founding director of the Oval Partnership, with offices in Hong Kong, London and China. Working across disciplines of architecture, design and planning, his projects have won numerous accolades. Chris is also a tireless advocate of progressing the urban planning profession in Hong Kong; he's a member of many public committees and initiator of several ground-breaking heritage conservation and public space activation initiatives in the city.

Jia Ping Lee heads Tempatico, a consultancy that designs futures that fosters hope and wellbeing in four key places, that of the urban, corporate, cultural

and inner place. She was previously Programme Director, KL and Partnerships, at Think City. She is currently a board member of Placemakingx, a global placemaking network with the objective to advocate a more human-centric approach to urban planning and design through placemaking.

Thanan Lilaonitkul is co-founder of Creative District Foundation, a non-profit dedicated to supporting people with valuable projects for cities.

Daniel Lim leads the Placemaking practice for Think City, a Malaysia-based social-purpose organisation that aims to make cities people-friendly and resilient by being a catalyst for change in the way cities are planned, curated, developed and celebrated. He has spent the last decade pioneering programmes to conserve, restore or rejuvenate spaces through placemaking and space activation.

Yanling Lin is a Senior Place Manager at the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA). She works with communities in Singapore River, Kampong Glam, Tanjong Pagar and Raffles Place to enhance these precincts through placemaking. She was also actively involved in the Streets for People programme, supporting ground-up efforts in creating car-free zones to turn them into temporary public spaces.

Yan Ling Lok is the Deputy Director of HortPark at National Parks Board (NParks) Singapore, in charge of horticulture excellence and standards as well as estate management. Prior to her current appointment, she worked in the skyrise greenery department in NParks which actively creates awareness of skyrise greening among the various stakeholders through outreach activities and administers a scheme that incentivises building owners to integrate greenery on their facades.

Hiroyoshi Morita is an urban researcher, planner, and community manager based in Nagoya, Japan. Since 2008, he has been working at Nippon Engineering Consultants as a chief engineer and planner of public space projects in Japan. He received his Ph.D. from Nagoya University, researching the quality of life created by urban environments.

Joanne Mun was a Sydney-based architect-urban designer with over a decade of experience in urban renewal. In 2015, she returned to Malaysia and joined Think City for nearly four years. Her passion for community empowerment remains unabated and she is now volunteering with two non-profit organisations.

Akito Murayama is Associate Professor of Urban Planning at the Department of Urban Engineering,

School of Engineering, the University of Tokyo. After graduating from the same course in 2004, he worked as a Project Researcher at the Center for Sustainable Urban Regeneration at the University of Tokyo. From October 2006 to March 2014, he worked as an Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Environmental Studies, Nagoya University. In addition to research and education, he also participates in municipal urban planning and a low-carbon community development project in the Nishiki 2 District, Nagoya.

Tina Nandi is a Sociology graduate turned freelance photographer and filmmaker. After six years of living in Mumbai with her architect husband and their four-year-old son, she now calls herself an urbanist and truly believes in the power of the placemaking approach for more inclusive cities. Tina is also an environmentalist and tries every day to inculcate a zero-waste lifestyle in her home.

Born and raised in the city of Toyohashi, **Naoya Ogawa** studied landscape planning at the University of Tokyo. He has been working on the Toyohashi Ekimae-odori-2 redevelopment project since 2016 and has been with the Toyohashi Machinaka Conference secretariat since 2018, managing both projects to improve the public spaces in his hometown.

Eke Omardin is part of the Placemaking Team in Think City. She is the main curator for Think City's Space Activation programme and in charge of the Grants programme. She manages and organises projects under Citi Foundation Grants, including being part of the editorial team for A City for Everyone Shared Spaces Impact Report, Experiments in Greening the City Outcomes Report and the Turning Spaces into People Places Outcomes Report. Eke has over 15 years of experience in advertising and branding.

Anuradha Parikh is the Founder and Artistic Director of G5A Foundation for Contemporary Culture. Next to G5A, she is Founder Director of Chapter 24 Consulting Private Limited, Co-Founder Director at Tropicfilm Private Limited, principal at Matrix Architecture (design studio) and an active figure the field of architecture, film and culture.

Chris Parry is the founder of Johor Green, a platform focusing on cultivating green urban lifestyles. Chris knew edible landscapes to be a successful idea having lived in New York City, but he also knew that the edible landscapes of his youth were fast disappearing. He designed and operates Medini Green Parks, a pair of urban parks in Johor which includes an Edible Park and a Heritage Forest.

Kazutaka Nomura Paterson is a Japanese

community producer based in Hokkaido Japan. Having performed music professionally for over 10 years after studying classical music composition in the US and working in tech at companies like Google and Salesforce, he now pursues the utilisation of abandoned properties to provide more flexible options to small business owners. He is an executive director at Nomura Architectural Design Company.

Lorenzo Petrillo is a service designer and community driver stationed in Singapore. He started his career in Italy, designing for Esterni, a creative agency that develops cultural projects for public spaces. In 2015 he founded LOPELAB, a design consultancy agency, marrying urban design and social ideas for a more enjoyable and sustainable city. He loves to create places for people to reconnect with the city.

Sohel Rana has been working for the Global Public Space Programme since 2013, coordinating public space projects in the Asia-Pacific and the Caribbean Region. Currently, he is coordinating public space projects in Bangladesh, India, Mongolia and Nepal.

Placemaker by day and artist by night, **Mardiana Rahayu** started as an architect who always questioned the 'education of an architect'. Over the years, the advice she has given herself is to not obsess with design but rather with what design can contribute to the community and to the environment, voiceless animals included.

Firi Rahman is an artist who lives and works in Slave Island. He captures the uniqueness of place in his conceptual cartography and ink pen drawings. In an effort to save the soul of his neighbourhood and protect its buildings from the threat of demolition, he and his artist friends started the campaign #WeAreFromHere.

Mizah Rahman (1986-2020) was a designer and community organiser who strongly advocated for a participatory and community-centric approach in the design and planning of cities. She was the co-founder and Director of Participate in Design (P!D), a non-profit design organisation that empowers communities by designing their neighbourhoods with them — not just for them.

Bart Reuser is the founder of NEXT architects, an international agency with offices in Amsterdam and Beijing, China. In addition to architectural projects, he works on various research-oriented projects, including Seoulutions, which relates to urban

development transformations. In 2010-2011, he was a visiting professor at the University of Seoul, Korea.

Lisette van Rhijn is a hands-on project manager who operates on the interface of sustainable urban development, livability and social impact. For Lisette, living in Hong Kong for five years has stirred up a huge fascination for human scale and authenticity within urban environments. She is drawn to creative initiatives that aim to make a difference within cities. Lisette's broad and international experience and network enables her to think outside the box and build new bridges. She loves to help organisations and projects move forward, ideally together with the people around her.

Emilie Roell is the founder and director of Doh Eain, focusing on overall organisational strategy and growth. Emilie has been based in Myanmar since early 2013, working on heritage and nature conservation projects. An anthropologist by training, she is interested in social business opportunities that make use of and preserve cultural and natural capital while also creating sustainable community impact.

Imam Abdul Rofiq studied Literature at Sebelas Maret University in Solo City, Indonesia. Concerns about his home district of Ngadiprono brought him back to build an initiative with young people in his village. Since then, Imam has helped to organise several local and international events in the area, including the Spedagi Movement in the Pasar Papringan Project, ICVR#3 and the Sindoro Sumbing Festival. Now Imam actively assists the Temanggung Regency Government in community development projects.

Yasutoshi Sasaki is Professor Emeritus at Nagoya University. After graduating from the Nagoya University Graduate School, researching wooden materials and wooden environment design, he served as a visiting researcher at the University of Munich and the Vienna University of Technology from 1993 to 1994. As keys to the creation of a sustainable society in harmony with the environment, he studies 1) the mechanical durability of wooden structures, 2) the mechanical behaviour of wooden structures, 3) the material distribution of forest resources and supply—demand simulations, and 4) urban environmental designs based on wood.

Charlot Schans is an urban sociologist and anthropologist by training. She is fascinated by processes that enhance collaborative city-making, cross-cutting barriers between disciplinary silos and public and private domains. As advisor at STIPO she translates

this vision into long term projects in the field of area and real estate development, placemaking and urban regeneration, co-creating better cities and places with innovative partners and professional friends. Charlot is co-director of Placemaking Europe, project leader for Placemaking Week Europe, co-editor of The City at Eye Level Asia and start-up team member for PlacemakingX, the global network to accelerate the impact of placemaking.

Julia Schipper is Programme Manager at Right To Play Thailand Foundation. With an advanced master in international development, a master in cultural and social anthropology, and a bachelor in European studies, Julia has over 10 years of international work experience in the humanitarian and development sector.

Paul Schuttenbelt is co-founder of Urban Discovery, a social enterprise that has developed an app-based methodology for community-led cultural mapping in historic neighbourhoods in Asia. Paul is based in Bangkok.

Benjamin Sin obtained his Master of Social Work degree from the University of Hong Kong in 2002 and joined Caritas Hong Kong, becoming the Social Work Supervisor of Caritas Mok Cheung Sui Kun Community Centre. In his work, he practices Asset-based Community Development approaches, and promotes poverty alleviation, community resilience, authentic craftsmanship, and social innovation.

Ryan Smolar is the initiator of PlacemakingUS, the United States' regional placemaking network. He also runs a culinary and arts-focused business improvement district and a food system alliance in Southern California. While travelling to Placemaking Week ASEAN, Ryan visited Singapore and Food Playground where he learned to cook Hainanese chicken, *laksa*, and *kuih dadar*.

Ester van Steekelenburg is co-founder of Urban Discovery, a social enterprise that has developed an app-based methodology for community-led cultural mapping in historic neighbourhoods in Asia. Ester is based in Hong Kong and is partner of The City at Eye Level Asia publication.

Koichiro Tamura is writer at Sotonoba and director of QUOL. Active in advocacy, capacity development, and consulting for public spaces in Japan. Koichiro acquired a master's degree in urban placemaking and management at Pratt Institute in New York.

TANAH (Soil/ Earth in Malay) is a duo consisting of

Michelle Lai and **Huiying Ng**, exploring symbiotic relationships and forms of everyday participation through nature and food-themed interventions, research and dialogue. Their intersecting practice opens up gaps between thinking and action, reflection and theory around food, land, cultures, and imagination.

Eudora Tan is a preschool educator in St James' Church Kindergarten who had worked as an architectural designer before entering the early childhood education field. She believes that environments have the power to inspire children and conversely, children can also be empowered to inspire changes to their surroundings.

Philip Tan believes that cities can be made better for people through participation in planning and design. As Project Manager with Epic Communities with a background in urban planning and marketing, Philip is part of a team of passionate individuals aiming to discover, co-create and implement innovative solutions with the communities he works with.

Nicole Thum received her bachelor's in accounting and finance from Curtin University of Western Australia, and worked for four years in accounting in Penang, Malaysia. In 2014, she joined Think City as a programme executive to analyse and understand the needs of communities and turn them into city-making plans. In the past four years, she has overseen the upgrade of Kampung Benggali Pocket Park and Public Swimming Pool, the first water-sensitive urban garden in Butterworth, Jeti Lama Rain Garden and Butterworth Fringe Festival. Nicole firmly believes that cities should be planned together with its people to create a better sense of belonging and pride which leads to a more sustainable future.

Serene Tng is a Senior Curator at the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA). She writes about placemaking and other urban issues in Singapore as editor of *Skyline*, URA's corporate magazine. She also produces other urban publications such as *Designing our City*, *Wander More* and *30 Years Of Conservation In Singapore Since 1989*.

Siënna Veelders is an advisor and urban heritage professional at STIPO who links local identity, stories and intangible heritage to urban transformation challenges. She has a hands-on mentality and makes sure that participation and co-creation is part of area development. Within STIPO she shares knowledge through workshops, training and the connection of placemakers to networks. In her work she aims to combine work with pleasure and through the creation of the City at Eye Level Asia network she found the

perfect balance between work and travel to immerse herself in all these wonderful Asian cultures and cities!

Thanawin (Net) Wijitporn graduated from the Faculty of Architecture, Chiangmai University in 2005. In 2009, he co-founded Kon.Jai.Baan group with his partners, which changed its name to JaiBaan Studio in 2015. Net is now the Director of JaiBaan Studio's Urban Design Unit. This unit has the important role of providing design and planning consultancy to stakeholders to create a better city.
Originally from Indonesia, now a Singaporean, **Prof. Johannes Widodo** is a lecturer at the National University of Singapore where he teaches urban history of Southeast Asian cities, modern Asian architecture, and heritage conservation & management.

Szu-Ju Wu has a Master of Natural Resources and Environmental Management from the National Taipei University. He is founder of Vision Union Co., Ltd., is deeply involved in the issues of environment and community participation, and takes action as a way for social learning and practice.

Marisa Yiu is the co-founder and Executive Director of the Design Trust initiative, which supports creative and research content related to Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area. She has been instrumental in shaping the growth of the NGO since 2014, conceptualising the Design Trust Futures Studio programme. Yiu is also an architect and Founding Partner of ESKYIU and Chief Curator of the 2009 Hong Kong & Shenzhen Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism/Architecture. She has taught at London's Architectural Association, Parsons, HKU, School of Architecture at CUHK. Yiu is an AIA member, HKIA associate, member on the Board of Advisors for RTHK, and is formerly a Board member of the Hong Kong Ambassadors of Design.

ABOUT STIPO

STIPO is a multi-disciplinary consultancy team for urban strategy and city development. Its operating area consists of spatial planning and strategy with economic development, culture, urban anthropology, community planning and placemaking. STIPO, based in Rotterdam and Amsterdam, is affiliated with the international network Inspiring Cities and has extensive experience in international exchange settings. STIPO works for cities, housing providers, regions, ministries, private developers, knowledge and innovation centres, international networks and universities.

STIPO stands for Strategy, Innovation, Process development and Open-source. STIPO started at the University of Amsterdam in 1995 with as core values: the breathing city (long lasting quality), the public city (public realm quality) and the soul city (identity). STIPO approaches the city as a whole with connecting spatial, social, economic, and cultural components. STIPO works in collaborative networks, involving partners and co-makers from both the 'planned city' and the 'lived city'. The STIPO approach ensures that results are not shelved, but used. It is only by integrating content, process, and management that we can safeguard real innovation, improvement, and production - and this is the ultimate objective. Often the STIPO approach leads to new ideas for cities. As a public developer we make ourselves co-responsible to bring these ideas from the strategic level to implementation, always with the co-makers we involve in the projects. STIPO has extensive experience in innovative projects, both in The Netherlands and internationally. STIPO shares its knowledge through training programmes, concept development, complex project management in urban practice, knowledge exchange, and social media. Recent themes are the shift from making to being a city, new investment strategies, smart cities, urban development after the crisis, collaborative urban development, co-creation, incubator strategy, organic renewal, urban anthropology and urban psychology, cultural clusters, social enterprise, public squares, area coalitions, child-friendly areas, co-working, vacant buildings, temporary use, the future role of housing providers, synchronicity, soul and plinth strategy.

www.stipo.nl
https://www.facebook.com/stipoteam

ABOUT THINK CITY

Think City is a social purpose organisation dedicated to making cities people-friendly and resilient by being a catalyst for change in the way cities are planned, curated, developed and celebrated. As a regional citymaking agency, Think City provides urban policy thinking, management and implementation of urban solutions in Southeast Asia and beyond.

Established in 2009 to spearhead urban regeneration in George Town, Malaysia, their impact and successes have led to expansion into Butterworth, Kuala Lumpur, and Johor Bahru. Adopting a community-first, evidence-based approach, Think City focuses on four main communities of practice: Placemaking, Resilience, Analytics and Conservation. Owing to their position as a neutral party, Think City has enabled synergies between the public and private sectors, the community and international partners. Together, they work to implement projects that enhance the heritage, arts and culture, environment, economy, and resilience of cities in the Asean region.

thinkcity.com.my
www.facebook.com/mythinkcity

ABOUT URBAN DISCOVERY

Urban Discovery is a Hong Kong-based social enterprise with Dutch origins which has over 15 years of providing advisory services and training in the field of urban regeneration, community building and heritage revitalisation throughout Asia. Its extensive network includes developers, governments, NGO's and community organisations in many Asian cities. Clients also include multi and bilateral agencies (World Bank, ADB, UN-Habitat etc.) and cultural institutions (UNESCO, Ghetty Foundation, Asia Society etc.) and professional (Asian Institute for Architects, Urban Land Institute etc.).

urbandiscovery.asia
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE CITY AT EYE LEVEL ASIA

Public space is the backbone of a sustainable city. Great streets, places where you intuitively want to stay longer, human-scale interaction between buildings and streets, ownership by users, placemaking, active ground floors and a people-centred approach based on the user's experience — that is what The City at Eye Level is all about. Some of the underlying mechanisms for human-scale public space and great social life in the streets are universal, such as the way we as human beings experience the space around us. Many other mechanisms, however, are local and contextual, such as the specific opportunities and challenges that the local climate brings; and for instance the specific local cultural perception of public space.

The City at Eye Level Asia is a collaboration between STIPO, Think City (Kuala Lumpur, George Town and Johor Bahru) and Urban Discovery (Hong Kong). In 2019 these three organisations partnered up to realize a new edition of *The City at Eye Level* series, focusing particularly on Asian cities and their successful strategies to create better places for people. The book aims to collect the best examples from all over Asia in the form of a publication, and launch a network of Asian practitioners, Placemakers Asia, working on creating better cities. We are very proud to now present the book before you, with special thanks to the 70+ co-authors and the funding provided by Think City and Stimuleringsfonds Creatieve Industrie (Internationalization Grant).

The City at Eye Level is not just a series of books, but an open-source learning network and a programme for improving cities, streets and places all over the world. With the knowledge as fundament, we help cities and their partners to develop strategies to create and improve their own great City at Eye Level. With our local and worldwide network partners, we:

- set up rules and strategies for the new city
- help change existing streets and districts;
- set up place and plinth games to co-create with the local network;
- set up street coalitions and place management;
- **give public lectures and organise training programmes and master classes.**

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