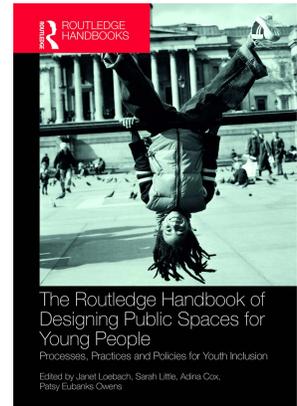**The Routledge Handbook of
Designing Public Spaces for Young People**

Processes, Practices and Polices for Youth Inclusion

Edited by: Janet Loebach, Sarah Little,
Adina Cox, and Patsy Eubanks Owens

TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 1

A Fundamental Need: Linking Youth Development to the Public Realm
Patsy Eubanks Owens

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Young people need places where they can complete tasks associated with their development.
- The public realm provides an important and necessary venue for the completion of these tasks.
- Current policies and design practices limit the opportunities where these tasks can be completed.
- Society in general as well as designers, planners, and policy makers need to recognize the importance of youth being able to undertake these tasks in the public settings. For example, a group of young people hanging out in an urban plaza is a sign of them engaging in healthy adolescent development.

BENEFITS FOR YOUTH

- The provision of supportive physical environments will provide places where youth can:
  - build their self-esteem and internal growth,
  - develop satisfying social relationships,
  - learn to manage their free-time, and
  - build a sense of social responsibility.
- Involving youth in design and planning decisions supports their emotional and social development.

BENEFITS FOR THE PUBLIC

- The successful transition of youth to adulthood has long-term positive implications for society.
- Providing youth with places where they feel safe and welcome contributes to them becoming caring citizens.
- Involving youth in decisions about their lives and their communities contributes to their healthy development.
- Participation in community-based activities helps youth to develop a pro-social identity and leads to life-long community engagement.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Advocate for youth activities and their presence in the design of public environments.
- Engage youth participants in community-wide and site-specific design, planning, and policy decisions.
- Rethink and change how existing public environments are designed and managed.
- Tell others that youth should be welcomed in public spaces and that their activities are necessary and healthy, and not something that warrants fear or control.

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- Owens, P.E., Nelson, A.A., Perry, A., and Montgomery-Bock, K.F. 2010, November. *Youth Voice Matters: Toward Healthy Youth Environments*. UC Davis: Center for Regional Change. https://regionalchange.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk986/files/inline-files/Youth_Voice_Matters.pdf

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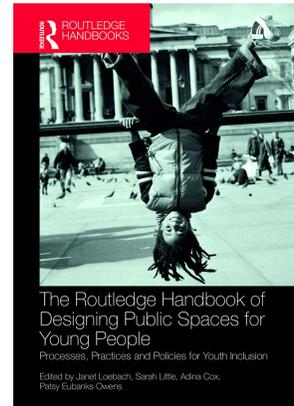
TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 2

Freedom to Flourish: Why independent mobility and access to the public realm is important for youth development
Adina Cox

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Youth learn through social interactions within the context of their physical environments
- According to Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development, youth must gain *competence* during the fourth stage of development through a conflict between industry and inferiority during the approximate ages of 6-8. During the fifth stage at approximately 12-20 years,, youth gain the virtue of *fidelity* through modeling the behaviors of others. These tasks may be supported by a broad array of opportunities to interact within the public realm.
- Executive functioning skills are rapidly developed during adolescence. The more time that youth engage in less structured activities, the better their executive functioning skills become. Interactions with others and the opportunities provided by the public realm can create opportunities for healthy development.
- When youth are allowed to move freely about the physical environment, they may be exposed to more opportunities for healthy social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development.
- Youth are spending a larger portion of their time engaging with digital media, which is contributing to the rise of psychopathology in children and adolescents. Limiting youth's access to the public realm by privileging vehicles and ignoring the developmental needs of youth may be increasing the amount of time youth spend with digital media.

BENEFITS FOR YOUTH

- Increased opportunities for independence
- Increased opportunities for physical activity

- Enriched environmental experiences
- Increased opportunities for contact with nature
- Increased opportunities for healthy risk
- Increased opportunities for social interactions
- Reduction in myopia risk

BENEFITS FOR THE PUBLIC

- Lower rates of medical expenses
- Lower volume of vehicle traffic
- Improvements to air quality

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES

- See Chapter 23, Patsy Eubanks Owens and Mina Rezaei, The Rocky Hill Trail: A path of transformation in this book

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Decrease traffic volume in areas where children and adolescents frequent
- Create alternative pathways that connect youth to desired destinations such as schools, parks, and neighborhood markets
- Consult with youth to help determine local solutions

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- Shaw, B. Bicket, M. Elliott, B., Fagan-Watson, B., Mocca, E., with Hillman, M. (2015) Children's Independent Mobility: an international comparison and recommendations for action. Policy Studies Institute, University of Westminster, London, UK. **https://perma.cc/3F7B-DNUU**
- Larouche, R. (2018). *Children's Active Transportation. Elsevier.*

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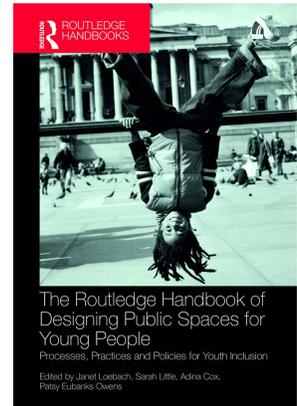
TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 3

Why we should find ways to renew children's opportunities for self-directed risky play
Peter Gray

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Children everywhere, when free to do so, play in ways that entail risk of injury, as do the young of other mammals.
- Research with animals indicates that risky play promotes effective adaptation to fearful, stressful conditions later in life.
- Research reveals that children play in more vigorous and seemingly risky ways when they play away from adults than when adults are present but sustain fewer serious injuries in such play than they do in adult-directed sports.
- Over the past several decades opportunities for children to play outdoors away from adults have declined greatly in North America and other developed parts of the world. Over these same decades, young people's physical fitness and sense of control over their own lives have declined, and their rates of anxiety and depression have increased greatly. There are good reasons to believe that the decline in child-directed risky play is a cause of these deleterious effects.

BENEFITS FOR YOUTH

- Renewing children's opportunities to play in freely chosen, physically challenging ways will improve their physical fitness.
- Such renewal will also help to ameliorate the current epidemics of depression and anxiety among young people.
- With more opportunity to control their own play lives, young people will develop a greater capacity for self-control outside of play.

BENEFITS FOR THE PUBLIC

- The physical and psychological health benefits of self-chosen risky play will reduce public and private expenditures on therapy.
- The youth of today are the adults of tomorrow. Self-chosen play is how young people acquire the skills of self-direction, including risk assessment, that allow them to contribute productively to society in adulthood.

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES

- The recent revival in development of adventure playgrounds, where the only adults present are playworkers trained in nonintervention, is one route toward renewing risky play in our time.
- Mike Lanza, in his book *Playborhood*, has described ways by which parents have successfully renewed children's outdoor free play in their neighborhoods.
- The nonprofit Let Grow Foundation is currently working with schools and whole communities to restore free outdoor play in the United States.
- The so-called "Free Range Parenting Law," enacted by the state of Utah in the United States, is an example of how legislation can affirm parents' rights to allow their children to play outdoors unsupervised.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Educators, psychologists, and pediatricians can educate parents and society in general about the value of child-directed play, including play that appears risky.
- Government authorities can pass legislation that encourages rather than restricts children's freedom to be in and play in public spaces without supervision.
- Communities can develop adventure playgrounds and nature playgrounds where children are free to play in their own, self-directed ways with minimal monitoring by adults.
- Schools can open up outdoor and indoor play spaces for play during non-school hours, with minimal monitoring by adults.

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- Mike Lanze. *Playborhood: Turn your Neighborhood into a Place for Play*. Free Play Press.
- Lenore Skenazy. *Free-Range Kids: Giving Our Kids the Freedom We Had Without Going Nuts*. Wiley.
- Peter Gray. *Free to Learn: Why Unleashing the Instinct to Play Will Make Our Children Happier, More Self-Reliant, and Better Students for Life*. Basic Books.
- Sam Aquillano & Amanda Hawkins (Eds.). *Design & Play: Imagination Needs Places to Thrive*. Design Museum Foundation.

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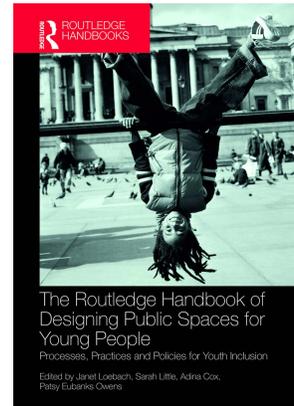
TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 4
Why is it important to provide child- and youth-friendly streets?
Juan Torres

KEY TALKING POINTS

- The streets are a crucial component of the public space and the urban structure.
- During the last decades, growth of motorized transportation and urban development patterns have made streets hostile for children and youth as pedestrians and cyclists and for their non-transportation activities.
- Legitimate users of public space; children and youth need access to streets. This access is crucial, not only because of the opportunities of activities these places represent, but also because they bring access to other urban resources and they provide critical location for youth development.
- Traffic calming measures are needed to reintroduce pedestrians and their activities to streets.
- Children and youth participation in urban design and planning promotes a better understanding of their points of view and enables more effective actions.

BENEFITS FOR YOUTH

- Child- and youth-friendly streets allow independent mobility making them and other urban resources, such as schools, parks, natural spaces, and shops, accessible.
- Multifunctional streets can better support youth development and social interactions.
- By taking part in the planning or design of inclusive streets, young people develop skills, such as decision-making and leadership, and gain a sense of community belonging.

BENEFITS FOR THE PUBLIC

- Youth-friendly streets contribute to an increased use of the public realm.
- Using streets for more than transportation purposes enhances the diversity, the quality, and the quantity of public space available for all.
- Children and youth participation contributes to their civic engagement and to the quality of the built environment.

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES

- The Safe Routes To School program has transformed streets and supported communities for more active mobility. Information about the Safe Routes Partnership in the United States is available at https://www.saferoutespartnership.org
- Play Streets is a growing global movement to make local streets more accessible and safe for play, usually by closing them to traffic for some period of time. See, for instance, Play Streets initiatives in England (http://www.playengland.org.uk/what-we-do/street-play/) and Australia (https://www.playstreetsaustralia.com).

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Legitimize the presence of young people in the street, whether for travel or for unstructured activities.
- Reshape the streets in central and suburban areas, in order to support varied activities and social inclusion.
- Enable children and youth participation in the design of streets and urban planning.
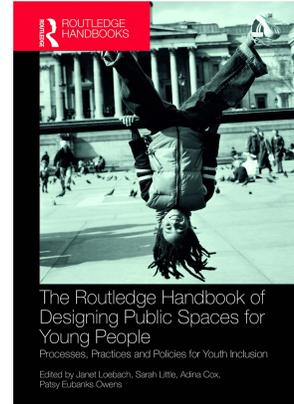
SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- https://www.aplayfulcity.com
- http://www.saferoutesinfo.org

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TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 5
A Therapeutic Approach to Design
Sarah Little

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Accessibility in the public realm should be viewed through two lenses: *access to the built environment and access to the **experience** of the built environment*.
- Current ADA interpretation focuses on equality over equity since the minimum standards mainly address building accessibility and not accessibility of services, programs, and activities.
- Identifying common experiences among youth living with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), mobility limitations, and hearing and vision impairments may assist in creating experiential access. Common experiences may include having issues with sensory processing and barriers to social interaction.
- Incorporation of nature into the public realm may also be important since research shows nature to be a protective factor against or ameliorate the negative consequences of living with a disability.
- Environmental interventions, such as escape spaces, transitions, and 3D models may help to overcome issues with sensory processing and barriers to social interaction.

BENEFITS FOR YOUTH

- Accommodating youth living with disabilities in the public realm may foster a feeling of belonging within them that could translate into a more meaningful and productive life.
- Exposure to youth of all abilities in the public realm may cultivate empathy and understanding of the many experiences possible.

BENEFITS FOR THE PUBLIC

- Inclusion of all citizens regardless of ability strengthens society. Every person deserves to be included.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Talk with youth living with a disability to understand their experience.
- Ask youth living with disabilities how to best address their issues with sensory processing and barriers to social interaction, if applicable.
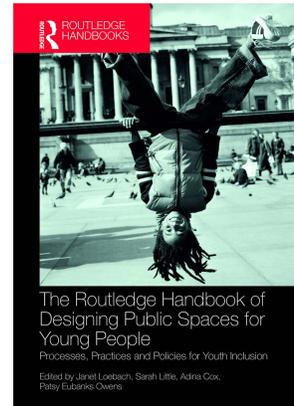- Find ways to incorporate nature into the public realm.

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- https://www.ada.gov/
- https://adata.org/
- https://www.cdc.gov/
- https://www.autismspeaks.org/

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TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 6

Engaging Marginalized Youth as Stakeholders
Mariela Fernandez, Brandon Harris, and Katrina Black

KEY TALKING POINTS

The chapter answered the following questions:

- How do marginalized youth benefit from inclusion in the design process?
- How does society benefit from the inclusion of marginalized youth in public design processes?
- What does an inclusive design process look like?
- What can community planners do to ensure that the voices of marginalized youth are heard during the design process?

BENEFITS FOR YOUTH

- **Increase in skill-set development**: During the inclusive design process, marginalized youth exercise a myriad of skills, including conceptual skills (e.g., research, organizing), technical skills (e.g., reading, writing), and human skills (e.g., communication, conflict resolution). Providing these youth with opportunities to develop these skill-sets is importance, particularly in cases where they attend underfunded public schools or lack access to out-of-school-time youth programs.
- **Psychosocial benefits**: An inclusive design process leads to growth in open-mindedness, personal responsibility, and moral and ego development. Increases in self-efficacy, self- esteem, social connectedness, and decision-making have also been found. An inclusive design process may also help build a relationship between marginalized youth and city and government officials, which can move these youth closer to empowerment.
- **Empowerment**: Due to participating in the design process, marginalized youth can become aware of the structural inequalities affecting their lives and learn to enact social change. This can have a spillover in other parts of their lives.

BENEFITS FOR THE PUBLIC

- **Effective services, programs, and policies**: By incorporating youth's perspectives, marginalized youth may demonstrate ownership of services or programs they helped create. More importantly, involving marginalized youth in the planning process will make planners aware of issues affecting outdoor natural environments, which they had not previously considered.
- **Builds a stronger sense of community**: An inclusive design process can disrupt the divisions that exist between adults and marginalized youth, and it may lead to an understanding and appreciation of each other's values, attitudes, behaviors, experiences, and realities. It can also lead to trust if youth see that adults involved in the planning process have their best in mind.
- **Creates a more equitable society**: Marginalized youth may suggest outdoor natural environment designs that ultimately benefit everyone in the community.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Formalize marginalized youth's participation into design processes. Examples of this include creating youth councils or assigning youth representatives to planning committees.
- Build trust with marginalized youth by using community organizing techniques, partnership building, and hiring diverse employees
- Invest in cultural competence and youth development training.
- Tackle adultism present in the design processes.

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- Campbell, D. & Erbstein, N. (2012). Engaging youth in community change: Three key implementation principles. *Community Development, 43*(1), 63-79.
- Chawla, L. (2002). "Insight, creativity and thoughts on the environment": integrating children and youth into human settlement development. *Environment and Urbanization*, *14*(2), 11-22.
- Checkoway, B., Potukuchi, K., & Finn, J. (1995). Youth participation in community planning: What are the benefits? *Journal of Planning Education and Research, 14*(2), 134- 139.
- Driskell, D. (2002). *Creating Better Cities with Children and Youth: A Manual for Participation*. Stylus Publishing, 22883 Quicksilver Drive, Sterling, VA 20166-2012.
- Fletcher, A. (n.d.). Adultism. Retrieved from https://freechild.org/adultism/
- Frank, K. I. (2006). The potential of youth participation in planning. *CPL bibliography*, *20*(4), 351-371.
- Institute for Local Government. (n.d.). Youth commission brief paper #3- Youth engagement and local planning: Ideas for commissions. Retrieved from http://www.ca- ilg.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/ilg_briefing_paper_3_proof7.pdf
- Knowles-Yánez, K. L. (2005). Children's participation in planning processes. *CPL bibliography*, *20*(1), 3-14.
- Simkins, I., Thwaites, K., & Paget, S. (YEAR). Who are the experts? The development of tools and techniques for revealing spatial dimensions of place experience of children and youth. In J. Loebach, S. Little, A. Cox, & P. E. Owens (Eds.), *Fostering the inclusion of youth in the public realm: Design processes, practices, and policies for the creation of youth- inclusive public outdoor environments*. New York: Routledge Press.

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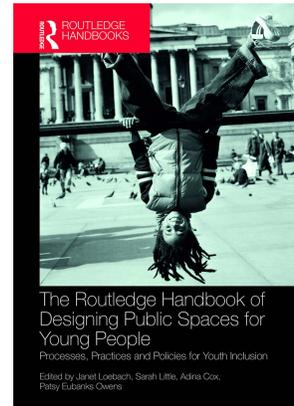
TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 7
Why involve youth in the construction of community places?
Katherine Melcher

KEY TALKING POINTS

- There is compelling evidence that involving youth in "community-built" projects, a practice that involves the local community in the design and construction of community places, provides valuable benefits for both the youth and their communities.
- Youth involved in community-built projects can develop a stronger awareness of their own abilities and value. This evolution starts with a feeling that their opinions and abilities are valued, leads to feelings of accomplishment and pride as the project is realized, and ends with a more general sense of being empowered to make additional changes in their lives.
- Youth involvement benefits the community at large by adding unique perspectives to the design, by creating a relationship of care between youth and their place, by fostering intergenerational learning, and by teaching future leaders how to engage in collaborative work.
- Three specific characteristics of the community-built process are critical to their success: a participatory process that values all contributions but does not sacrifice the quality of the design, the use of art for collaborative meaning-making, and the focus on a permanent project in a publicly-visible place.

BENEFITS FOR YOUTH

- Discovering new and unexpected interests and strengths and further developing existing skills and knowledge.
- Seeing themselves as valuable contributors to the community, with something unique to give.
- Experiencing a sense of pride in the final work.
- Identifying more strongly with places where they live.
- Developing a sense of empowerment that can transfer to other projects or other parts of their lives.

BENEFITS FOR THE PUBLIC

- Youth perspectives can add new meanings to public artwork and suggest new uses for public space.
- Youth involvement in building a place can create a place that is cared-for. For example, there have been observations of a decrease in vandalism when youth are involved in the building of a project.
- Youth involvement can lead to intergenerational learning that builds new relationships between generations.
- The leadership and collaborative skills gained by youth can be applied to future community work.

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES

- Pomegranate Center: a nonprofit whose core mission is "to teach people the art and practice of collaboration." Their "unique style of community building combines artistic vision with effective community planning, broad and inclusive public participation, hands-on learning and leadership development, and the transformation of desolate spaces into thriving gathering places". http://pomegranatecenter.org/
- Chicago Public Art Group: "a nonprofit organization that seeks to unite artists and communities in partnership to produce high quality public art, and to extend and transform the tradition of collaborative, community-involved, public artwork". http://www.chicagopublicartgroup.org/
- Concrete Couch: a nonprofit whose mission is "To work with kids and community groups to create public art, to build community, and to create environments and experiences that humanize our world". http://www.concretecouch.org/

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Include smaller youth-built projects such as murals, gardens, gathering spaces, and public art works within larger public space projects. Events and temporary installations are a great way to start, but creating something permanent can have a significant impact on youth by instilling a sense of pride.
- Realize that the process of developing the project is just as important as the final product; involve professional artists and designers who have experience facilitating these types of projects.
- Value the role of art in placemaking. Art engages youth, allows them to explore and express meaning, and adds beauty to place. These outcomes might not be quantifiable in and of themselves but are important to increasing positive youth engagement with places and society.
- Make use of resources within the community to realize the project: partner with existing organizations, solicit the knowledge and skills of residents, find new ways to reuse materials, and seek small donations.

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- Community Built Association: http://communitybuilt.org/
- The Pomegranate Center's Building Better Communities Handbook: http://pomegranatecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/BuildingBetterCommunities2015.pdf
- Chicago Public Art Group's Community Public Art Guide: http://www.cpag.net/guide/

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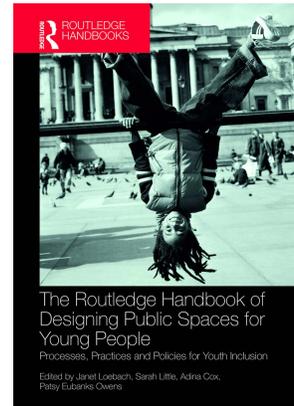
TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 8

How to create and sustain governance structures to include young people in urban placemaking
Louise Chawla and Willem van Vliet

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Young people's rights to live in cities with inclusive public spaces, and to a voice in decisions that shape their environment, follow from basic rights stated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Practices to realize these rights are developed in the Child Friendly Cities Initiative of UNICEF and the Growing Up in Cities program of UNESCO
- Progress toward creating a Child and Youth Friendly City requires structures of governance that embed young people's participation in urban planning and design in routine operations of city government and other institutions of civil society

SUMMARY OF STEPS

- Find allies who believe that including young people in urban planning and design benefits young people and creates more livable cities for all ages
- Build a broad based top-down, bottom-up partnership that includes city agencies, citywide institutions of civil society, influential child and youth advocates, and community organizations that work directly with or support children and youth
- Establish a Memorandum of Understanding that states the partnership mission and the role of each major participating institution and agency
- Create a funded position for one or more coordinators who can organize partnership activities, manage projects with children, youth and communities, and maintain records and communication
- Incorporate evaluation of the process and outcomes for young people and their communities, monitor progress toward goals, and make adjustments as needed

TIPS

- In the partnership for young people's inclusion, enlist representatives of organizations that can mobilize resources and provide a high level of legitimacy, as well as organizations that can provide workers who carry out programmatic activities
- Recognize that relationships are more important than resources—take time to build a partnership coalition in which everyone benefits and shares the same aims and principles
- Value the quality of participatory processes as much as the products achieved
- Budget for outcomes from the beginning, with the flexibility that specific outcomes will emerge from the participatory process
- Seek synergistic practices whenever possible, such as demonstrating common needs among young people and elders, or young people and people of all ages with disabilities

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Connect international principles of children's rights to inclusion and voice in their city or town with relevant cultural values at the local level and with every aspect of the child- and youth-friendly initiative itself
- Be responsive to diversity among young people, and practice social justice by engaging children and youth from socially marginalized groups
- Create precedents that demonstrate young people's competence and the value of their contributions, while going beyond implementation of discrete projects to create culture change that supports mainstreaming young people in local planning and design
- To ensure that young people see results, divide their goals for action into three categories: actions that are the responsibility of city agencies; actions that require outside funding; and actions that a community can accomplish for itself in collaboration with young people

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES

- Growing Up Boulder, Boulder, Colorado, U.S.A. (featured in Chapter 9)

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- Child-Friendly Cities website: https://childfriendlycities.org
- Derr, V., Chawla, L., and Mintzer, M. (2018). *Placemaking with Children and Youth: Participatory Practices for Planning Sustainable Communities*. New York: New Village Press.
- Thivant, L. (2018). *Child Friendly Cities and Communities Handbook*. New York: UNICEF.

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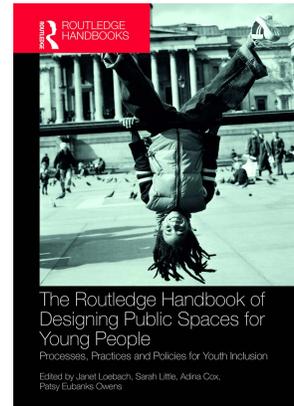
TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 9
How to turn young people's ideas into actions
Mara Mintzer and Louise Chawla

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Growing Up Boulder is Boulder, CO, USA's child-friendly city initiative. It is a program inspired by and built upon lessons learned from: UNESCO's Growing Up in Cities program, UNICEF's Child-Friendly City Initiatives, and Denver, CO's Child-Friendly City Initiative.
- Turning young people's ideas into tangible designs and actions is challenging and complex, but it is possible, as demonstrated through Growing Up Boulder's projects.
- Through GUB's direct work and partnerships, children and youth have provided input to 84 projects over 10 years; this collaborative work has helped create a city culture that values young people's input.

SUMMARY OF STEPS

- Assess the existing landscape of child and youth civic engagement in your community to build upon community assets and tailor participatory planning to your community's needs.
- Use a top-down and bottom-up partnership model to support institutionalization of a child-friendly lens and grassroots work.
- Build capacity amongst partners so more children, youth, and community projects can benefit from young people's input.

TIPS

- Go where the young people are—don't expect them to come to you.

- Create cycles of communication from young people to decisions makers and back again.
- Use a variety of media, including printed letters, municipal publications, social media, and public recognition plaques, to communicate to young people and the community how young people's ideas were realized in your community.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Partner with existing child and youth-serving organizations to engage children from marginalized groups.
- Develop an MOU among key stakeholders to support commitment to shared goals.
- Create and fund a coordinator position to shepherd the process of turning young people's ideas into actions.
- Use sustained cycles of reflection amongst stakeholders to improve process and outcomes.

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES

The following participatory planning and participatory action research projects, facilitated by Growing Up Boulder, are featured on www.growingupboulder.org:

- Public Transit: HOP Transit Study
- Public Space: Civic Area Park (2012-2018)
- The nation's first printed, child-friendly city map

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- Website: www.growingupboulder.org
- TEDx talk featured on TED: How Kids Can Help Design Cities
- Book: Placemaking with Children and Youth: Participatory Practices for Planning Sustainable Communities, by Victoria Derr, Louise Chawla, and Mara Mintzer

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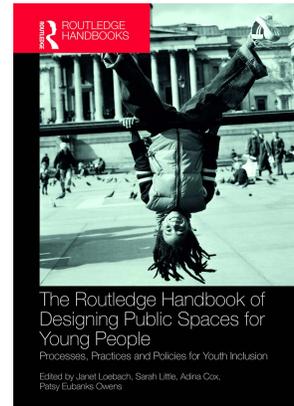
TAKEAWAY:CHAPTER10

Developing and carrying out participatory planning and design processes that embed young people's interests, goals, and ambitions into strategic plans and shared public space designs

Linda Corkery and Kate Bishop

KEY TALKING POINTS

- The process of engaging with young people in planning and designing shared public outdoor spaces is central to delivering a successful project.
- A "good" participation process requires an understanding of young people's interests, goals, and ambitions.
- Adults must engage authentically and with integrity throughout the process—from the initial invitation, throughout the process, and in the follow-through—to ensure decisions reflect specific inputs and expectations.
- Innovative, "custom-made" participatory projects provide lessons and their unique processes can be adapted to create relevant methodologies for other projects with youth.
- The goal is to embed participatory practices with youth into the planning and design processes for the everyday public space environments.

SUMMARY OF STEPS

- Young people's involvement needs to be invited in variety of activities over an extended time period— for example, the one-year consultation for the Parramatta Council Youth Strategy process which utilized workshops, surveys, and forums with elected officials. The invitations to participate were issued in ways that appealed to youth, for example, including music and dance performances, a GIF booth, and social media campaigns.
- A Children's Parliament (or other similar convening), hosted by local government, can introduce young people to democratic processes and allow them to effectively model decision-making that can shape their local environment.

- Co-design workshops drew out the specific expectations and aspirations of local youth. The young people's ideas were integrated into a new skate park and gathering place in a remote community with the guidance of experienced designers.
- A smaller group of young participants worked as "ambassadors" for the project to further promote it to the community.

TIPS

- Build adequate time into the project schedule to allow for participatory processes
- Initiate youth engagement early and throughout the process of planning and design
- Prepare adult facilitators in effective methods for working with young people
- Establish good communications and clarify expectations with the client body
- Maintain a good flow of communications with youth participants; social media platforms can be helpful engagement and communication tools
- Identify ongoing project opportunities for further involvement
- Build in mechanisms for ongoing monitoring or maintenance to retain participants' and community's interest; for example, ensure participants know how their involvement and specific contributions had an impact

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Policy makers can engage professional consultation specialists with experience in running participatory processes with young people.
- Practitioners can build this expertise into their own professional service offerings and advocate for the time and costs to be included in their project fee proposals to ensure engaging with young people takes place.
- Publicize how the involvement of youth shifted the discussion, influenced decision-making processes, and informed the final outcomes.
- Policy makers must commit to making these practices "business as usual" for all similar projects.

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES

- Parramatta City Council, *Needs Study and Youth Strategy*
  https://www.cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au/council/city-strategy
- 2168 Children's Parliament, Liverpool City Council
  https://www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au/community/your-community/Community-2168-Project
- Skate Park and Community Center, Onslow, Western Australia
  http://convic.com/projects/onslow-western-australia-skate-park/

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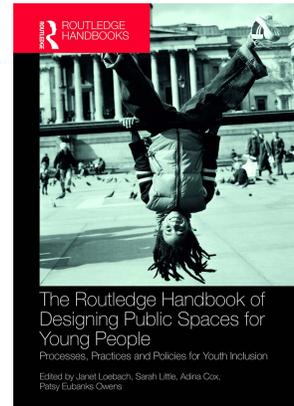
TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 11
A Participatory Framework for Designing and Building Public Spaces with Youth
Janet Loebach

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Article 12 of the UNCRC establishes children's right to express their views in all matters affecting them, including community planning, and to have their view taken into consideration during decision-making.
- The benefits of involving children and youth in the planning and design of spaces in their community have been well documented, but practitioners and organizations still face barriers to youth engagement, and the involvement of children/youth remains rare.
- Children need to be given adequate space, opportunity, time and information in order to meaningfully contribute to public space design and decision-making processes.
- With the right framework and tools, and the commitment of adult facilitators, children and youth are highly capable of serving as effective co-designers and decision-makers.
- The participatory framework, with recommended tools, outlined in this chapter can be utilized to integrate youth into the design and building of public spaces in their communities.

SUMMARY OF STEPS

The youth participatory design framework involves engaging children and youth through the following five core phases, each of which can be tailored to suit the needs of a given design or planning project:
- ***Phase 1: Project Orientation:*** What are we trying to do and who is going to do it?
- ***Phase 2: Research:*** What do we need to know?
- ***Phase 3: Designing & modelling solutions:*** What could the space look like?
- ***Phase 4: Decision-making and design integration:*** What are our priorities for the space?
- ***Phase 5: Community building & maintenance:*** How do we build a legacy of care?

TIPS

- The youth participatory design framework as outlined works well with children aged 10 to 14 years; to work with older or younger groups consider modifying the recommended tools and activities
- Involve local design practitioners and community decision-makers to serve as facilitators; adult facilitators, however, should be committed to working in partnership with youth participants and be careful not to take over decision-making.
- Time is a key factor in the success of the project; be sure to allow sufficient time to carry out the framework and to give youth the time to become well versed in relevant topics and issues.
- Hands-on activities are highly effective; integrate as many activities for youth participants as possible that will help them explore and understand the project goals and context.
- Involve as many diverse youth groups as possible in aspects of the framework to ensure as many youth voices are heard as possible, and so that many children can take part in decision-making and feel a sense of ownership towards the project.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Municipal / community planners and developers can advocate for the time and budget to properly involve local youth in design and planning processes.
- Upon completion of youth-engaged projects, be sure to communicate with participants how their involvement explicitly affected the final outcomes.
- This framework can be utilized by cities and communities pursuing 'child-friendly' or 'resilient city' status.
- Developing such participatory projects with youth not only demonstrate their capacity for community planning, but can foster lifelong interests in civic engagement.

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- *The Magical Park of Aviacion: Lessons from a participatory design project with the children of Aviacion, Peru. PlayRights*, Vol 11 (2).
  By Janet Loebach
  See www.thrivedesignconsulting.ca/publications.html
- *Creating Better cities with Children and Youth: A Manual for Participation*
  By David Driskell
- *Placemaking with Children and Youth: Participatory Practices for Planning Sustainable Communities*
  By Victoria Derr, Louise Chawla and Mara Mintzer

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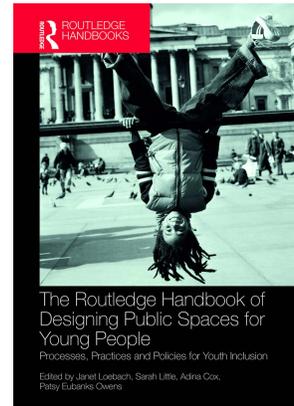
TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 12

How to engage youth in the study of positive neighborhood change that is just, equitable, and inclusive

Bethany Welch, Andrea Rusli, Atianah Thomas, Madeline Dahlin, and Ma'Kayla Taylor

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Low-income youth, some without citizenship, encountered neighborhood change as an overwhelming force that was re-shaping their day to day experience in the community.
- After-school and summer programs for youth in a faith-based community setting engaged youth in participatory action research about the neighborhood change
- Staff at community center, in collaboration with university partners, created activities to help the young residents explore the "what" and "why" of in-fill development, rising home prices, and changing business practices.
- The most positive, sustained outcomes from this intervention were the creation of clear pathways for youth engagement in the planning and civic process. Youth became aware of new ways to be involved in public efforts to strengthen the community, such as at the recreation center and library.

SUMMARY OF STEPS

- Assess key concerns of youth participants (e.g., cost of housing, school closures, lack of access to businesses or public space). Then, define the research questions around these concerns.
- Use these research questions to inform the research methods (e.g., mapping, counter-mapping, PhotoVoice, journaling, yoga and mindfulness).
- Share youths' collective findings at a public presentation.
- Work with youth to identify next steps for communicating their findings to decision makers.

TIPS

- Youth engagement is rooted in trust; therefore, this is the first priority.
- Funding and committed program staff are essential to developing concrete action steps that both engage youth and are sustainable over several years
- University partners who value youth participation and also understand youth life stages are critical to the success of this form of engagement
- Practitioners and scholars must be open to different outcomes than what they anticipated at the outset.
- Be prepared for turn-over in the program participants. Youth involvement changes frequently in communities where economic precarity and migration-related challenges are common.
- Balance research and action goals with immediate takeaways for youth. They may not see the long-term goals as being valuable as their current day to day reality.
- Provide youth with skills and tools that they can apply in many settings (e.g., public speaking practice, storytelling techniques, digital mapping, and photography).
- Create frequent and interim opportunities for participants to share their findings with peers, family members, and policy makers. Social media, web-based map platforms, and public gatherings can be valuable spaces to celebrate the work and to share back with constituents.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Practitioners should spend time cultivating trusting relationships with youth in order to hear their concerns, hopes, and dreams. These perspectives can then be incorporated into planning and decision making about places and spaces where they live, work, study, worship, and play.
- Policymakers should welcome collaborations with community-based organizations who have created safe spaces for youth to share their views on their neighborhoods.
- Consistent, mutually beneficial conversations with young people will yield stronger planning outcomes and greater buy-in from the later adults who will be voters, taxpayers, and users of the built environment.
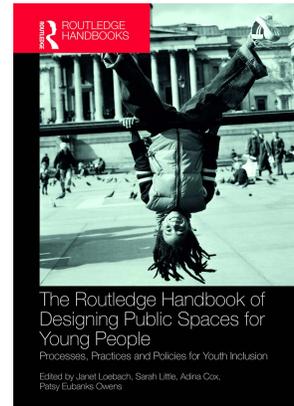
SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES

- Philadelphia Youth Call for Change
  https://citizensplanninginstitute.org/citizen-planners-in-action/bethany-welch

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TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 13

Working with children and communities to improve play spaces in social housing areas

Helen Woolley, Alison Somerset-Ward, and Kate Bradshaw

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Social housing areas with poor quality and underused playgrounds and green spaces can be improved by a partnership of professionals working with schools and other local organizations working with youth and communities;
- This process can take many years, both to develop relationships of trust between the professionals and with the children, organizations and communities, and to inform the redesign and build of the playgrounds and green spaces;
- One way to understand the use and ideas that children and communities have for these green spaces is to activate them through community-based activities; informal observations and conversations on site about future potential use of playgrounds and greenspaces is a very meaningful way to work with children and communities.

SUMMARY OF STEPS

- Establish meaningful partnerships with professionals who have the range of skills and knowledge that might be required for the project's aims, including a partner who is already known to the communities;
- Engage with schools and arrange activities both in school and on site to help the children to become more familiar with underused sites;
- Invite children and members of the community to a first event, such as a Fun Day, and then co-organize future activities with the schools, organizations and community;
- Use the on-site community events to watch how children use a site and to discuss the potential future use of the playground and green space to inform a redesign to improve the

play value and increase the number of potential users: informal observations and conversations can be invaluable;

- Support children, organizations and community members towards building a legacy that continues after funding has ended by:
    - Supporting children and communities to develop a sense of ownership of the site and
    - Providing opportunities for children and communities to develop skills for organizing and holding their own events and fundraising for ongoing capital works so that the community can become self-sustaining for activities and ongoing site improvements.

TIPS

- Be creative and responsive to the community and flexible in your approach;
- Start with issues of interest to the children and young people;
- Give incentives to become involved by giving some control over certain aspects of the community events, such as choice and provision of music, food and type of activities;
- Build up a relationship with the young people over time and allow them to take the lead where possible;
- Work with volunteers and schools from both within and outside of the community if this is possible.

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

The main resource for this project was that of funding for staff to support activities and enhance social and skills capital within the children and communities, rather than major amounts of funding for physical changes on site. Additional funding sources were also used, one which was secured by the partnership and other smaller amounts secured by the communities.

More information about the project can be found in our Stories of Living with Nature publication: https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.516000!/file/living-with-nature-online-2014.pdf

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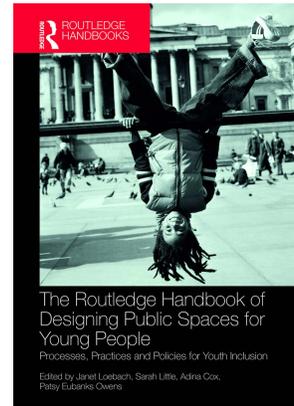
TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 14

Fluid Inquiry: Investigating a Re-Imagination of Youth Friendly Public Places in the Era of Rapidly Changing Technology
Zahedus Sadat

KEY TALKING POINTS

- The rise of the social media and virtual games is complicating the meaning of public space and its connections with youth. We can make sense of such connections through a critical interpretive approach that uses a creative, nuanced, and reflexive method.
- The boundaries between the real world of public space and the virtual world of websites are often fuzzy. Youths share their experiences in the real world on different websites and social media. Youths also use tools from the virtual world to help them navigate the public spaces.
- The *fluid inquiry* method is a means to adapt established research methods by prioritizing movement in public spaces, thinking about the connections between the virtual realm and real world, and analyzing changes that happen.

SUMMARY OF STEPS

- The research starts with a reflexive engagement to explore one's own knowledge, assumptions, and past applicable memories about the youth activity. This is a useful practice as it encourages the researcher to identity assumptions he/she brings to the research.
- Ways of navigating the real world:
  - Observations: Observations can be made while moving in the public space to gain a holistic understanding of how the public space is used. Patterns of interactions and changes in the interaction, behavior, and the site can be recorded and analyzed.
  - Interviews: Interviews can be conducted both on and off site. The interviews may be either semi-structured or non-structured. The researcher is encouraged to conduct the interview while walking with the interviewee through the public space. This allows the researcher to observe how the interviewee interacts with the public space, their peers, or others.
- Ways of exploring the virtual world
  - Using web pages and blogs: Identify websites relevant to the research question and scrutinize

them for information relevant to understanding the relation between youth and public spaces. When specific locations (i.e. parks, plazas) are the subject of study, the websites of the places should be investigated to prepare for meetings with different stakeholders (such as landscape planners and park managers). Websites are fluid and likely to change, therefore, new entries, revisions or deletion of pages or texts should be recorded.

- o <u>Analyzing YouTube Videos:</u> The analysis of YouTube videos requires identifying the best key words relevant for the research question in order to retrieve appropriate videos among the millions on the platform. The videos are coded to classify the information contained in the videos and to keep track of them.

TIPS

- Since the *fluid inquiry* method gathers data from multiple source and through varied means, care should be taken to triangulate the data.
- Depending upon the subject matter and the site, this method may be adjusted to increase youth inclusion in developing the research questions, gathering the data, and interpreting the data.
- Some familiarity with the locale and current youth activities may be helpful before starting the research project.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- The real world and the virtual world merge together through games like Pokémon GO, and when planning for more youth inclusion, it is important to see how such games can be used as a tool.
- Online sources may provide important information to youth regarding the availability of public spaces and their use, and should be utilized by researchers and practitioners to understand and promote their use.
- Youth preferences and choices for recreational activities change rapidly and so there is a need for using the fluid inquiry to ensure that the public spaces created are malleable, and proactive to incorporate youth choices.

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- Hein, Jane Ricketts, Evans, James, & Jones, Phil. (2008). Mobile methodologies: Theory, technology and practice. *Geography Compass, 2*(5), 1266-1285. doi:10.1111/j.1749-8198.2008.00139.x

- Skelton, Tracey, & Valentine, Gill (Eds.). (1998). *Cool places: Geographies of youth cultures*. London: Routledge. doi: 10.4324/9780203975596

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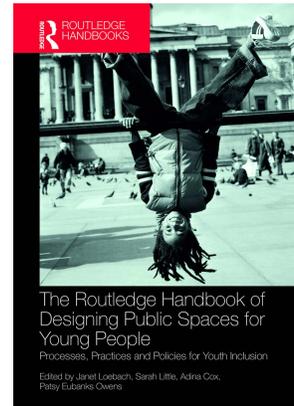
TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 15

How to Use Big Data for Youth Inclusion: Lessons and Insights from Video-based Social Media on Adolescent Skateboarding, Parkour, Dancing, and other Non-instrumental Play in Cities
Ben Shirtcliff

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Social media is part of the social ecology of young people, informing them about opportunities to participate in public space and, reflexively, sharing with others.
- Access to social media, as a form of big data, opens windows into the places young people play and engage in public space.
- Given a guiding conceptual framework, environmental design researchers can observe, interpret, and analyze such data for key insights that would have been lost to everyday life.

SUMMARY OF STEPS

- Begin by developing a guiding framework or research interest that has enough flexibility to adapt to available data.
- Search, screen, index, and download relevant online videos to enable further research; stop once saturation is achieved.
- Select, geo-locate, and code scenes for place and behavior related information.
- Interpret and analyze coded scenes for patterns and processes within and between settings.
- Visualize new information and contribute to larger, theoretical narrative, or to local planning, policy, and urban design practice.

TIPS

- Be prepared to allocate time and develop a work plan for searching, screening, geo-locating, coding, training, inter-rater coding, interpreting, and analyzing data.

- GIS and statistical consultants are encouraged to be part of the process from the beginning.
- Prior to proceeding, institutional researchers should submit proposal to human subjects review, and all researchers should be certified with NIH's Protecting Human Subject Research Participants.
- Video coding software is vital for efficient and reliable coding of data as well as extracting relevant video data for later presentations and training.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Evidence-based design begins with evidence, something which is lacking regarding adolescent behavior in public space. Social media is packed with anecdotal evidence that adds up to a substantial amount of data. Advocates, researchers and practitioners are recommended to access available data for youth-related projects.

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES

- The case study on Parisite in this book highlights the use of the approach in advocating for youth place in cities.

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- Contact author for papers and training websites. Also see, Shirtcliff "Big Data in the Big Easy" *Landscape Journal*, "Surfing the YouTube" *New Prairie Press,* "Sk8ing the Sinking City" *Interdisciplinary Environmental Review*, & "The Transformative Power of City Play" *Cities & Health.*

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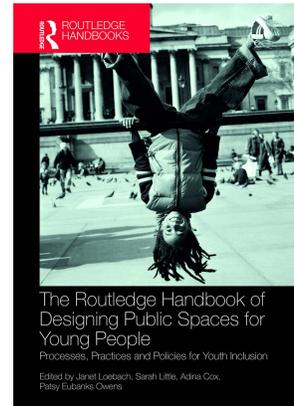
TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 16

How to understand the relationship young people have with their significant places

Tim Baber and Linda Corkery

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Adults can build a relationship of trust with young people in which together they form a deep understanding of young peoples' relationship with their significant places. This mutually developed understanding can then identify the place priorities of young people.

- This chapter outlines how adults can lead a process in which young people come to understand their relationship to significant places and identify their place needs by examining:

  o How young people perceive and represent their significant outdoor places

  o How young people engage in their significant outdoor places by they way they navigate them and participate strategically and purposefully there.

  o How young people form meaning in their significant outdoor places through their symbolic associations there, their historic relationship with them, and who they know and are known by there.

SUMMARY OF STEPS

- When seeking to understand the relationship young people have with their significant places, work holistically: facilitate a process that values what they have to communicate by treating their drawings, writing, and spoken word as one 'whole language.'

- Help young people to develop Environmental Autobiographies to document their personal relationship with places that are significant to them through drawings and writing. For every drawing invite them to make detailed notes about what they have drawn.

- The Environmental Autobiography has four elements:

  o *Draw the place* – Asks the young person to consider and draw a picture of their significant place in detail and to be careful to represent its key features.

  o *Map the place* – Ask the young person to map the important elements of their place. Google Maps can be a helpful tool to prompt the participant's drawing and for creating an annotated map.

- o *Write a recount of a significant event that occurred at this place* - Invites the young person to recall an event or experience from their significant place. Ask them to reflect on their feelings at the time and to recount the event with reference to the physical features of the place.

- o *Draw a self-portrait at the place* - Invites the young person to consider what they would like to convey in a portrait of themselves at their significant place. What personal values, meanings, and feelings would they like to communicate through their drawings, and how might they achieve this in their drawing? Ask the participant to make planning notes or write a reflection about their self-portrait at the end of their work.

- *Interviews* can be carried out later to identify and discuss the key aspects of the young person's place relationship that emerged from their environmental autobiographies. Refer back to what they have drawn or written and ask them about it.

- Understand the young person's place-relationship by considering what they have said holistically: pull together their written and spoken words and align these with the relevant drawings; together the three will synthesize as a whole.

- Return to the young people with your findings to 'close the loop' on the process. Ask them 'Did I get it right?' 'Have I understood how you relate to your significant place?' Carefully consider what they have to say. Remember the most important aspect is that the participants feel that they were heard.

TIPS

- Invest in developing a strong rapport with the young people ahead of the process. This may require working with someone already trusted by them.

- Maintain regular contact with the young people throughout the process. Allow several weeks to work through the process in total.

- Show you value what the young people have to say by including a feedback and check-in phase. Once you have worked through everything that the young people have said, organize and arrange it into a logical form (e.g. themes) and present it to the young people. Do this in a way that captures the complexity of their insights; be careful not to lose the richness of their ideas. A good way to do this is to quote from their written or spoken text and to align these quotes with their drawings. You will find that when you place the words beside the drawings the meaning identified by the young person becomes revealed.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Establish and build trusted relationships with young people

- Understanding the place needs of young people requires a process equipped to consider the detail and depth of what they have to say. Practitioners and policy-makers are urged to consider a process such as the one advocated for in this chapter.

- Return to them to check that you have heard them correctly

- Incorporate what they have to say in the design of their places

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- Lim, M. & Barton, A.C. (2010). Exploring insideness in urban children's sense of place. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, *30*, 3, pp. 328-337. DOI: 10.1016/j.jenvp.2010.03.002

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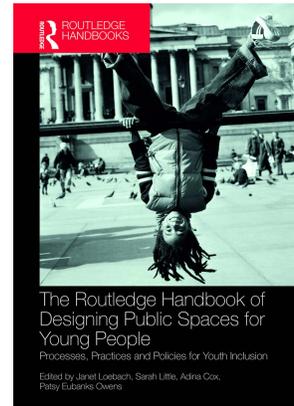
TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 17

How to integrate Photovoice and multiple participatory methods: Lessons learned from collaborating with tribal youth in India to explore their surrounding environment
Yohei Kato and Amina Charania

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Photovoice combined with multiple participatory methods offers rich insights of tribal youth's lived experiences in their surrounding environment in India
- Combining multiple participatory methods, flexibility in planning, and active collaboration with a grassroots organization in the participatory process help adapt Photovoice approach, responding to limited resources and availability of children and youth in remote areas

SUMMARY OF STEPS

- Connect and consult with a target community
- Recruit participants
- Use complementary methods such as Daily Activity Log and Community Mapping as warm-up exercises to understand young people's everyday life from multiple angles
- Identify significant places and themes for young people based on findings from previous activities
- Take photos and conduct fieldwork in the identified places
- Analyze photos, maps, and activity logs to examine issues and assets in the significant places
- Share findings with local community and influencers, then decide on next steps

TIPS

- Engage with local youth through a grassroots organization which contributes to building trust with youth participants, improves implementation of activities through facilitation, translation, and can provide access to equipment and venues
- Prepare a "basket" of activities and methods to help researchers and participants adapt the research

process and enable youth participants to choose how to contribute and what to say during the research

- It is important to respect that young people have other commitments and therefore research activities should be scheduled accordingly
- The duration of the research should be long enough for the planning, conducting, and completing the study but not so long that young people are unable to see the study from its beginning to the end

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Engage with government officials and policy makers from the initial stage of youth participatory project to put research findings into practice
- To address the limited availability of children and youth in remote areas, it's suggested to divide a Photovoice project into a series of short-term projects, which are short enough to be completed during school holidays or other suitable occasions
- Record and share the process of youth participatory action research. The opportunity to learn from each other's experiences is invaluable to achieve "genuine" children and young people's participation in building a sustainable environment

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES

- **Application of Photovoice with young people**
  Wang, C. C. (2006). Youth participation in photovoice as a strategy for community change. *Journal of community practice*, *14*(1-2), 147-161.
- **Application of youth participatory action research and Daily Activity Log with underrepresented youth in India:**
  Bannerjee, K., & Driskell, D. (2002). Tales from truth town. *Growing up in an urbanizing world*, 135-160.
- **Application of combining multiple methods in youth participatory action in Sri Lanka**
  Armstrong, M., Boyden, J., Galappatti, A., & Hart, J. (2004). Piloting methods for the evaluation of psychosocial programme impact in Eastern Sri Lanka. *Report for USAID, Oxford. Retrieved December*, *9*, 2004.

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- Community Tool Box: http://ctb.ku.edu/en
- Wang, C., & Burris, M. A. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health education & behavior*, *24*(3), 369-387.
- Driskell, D. (2002). *Creating better cities with children and youth: A manual for participation*. Routledge.
- Chawla, L. (2016). *Growing up in an urbanizing world*. Routledge.

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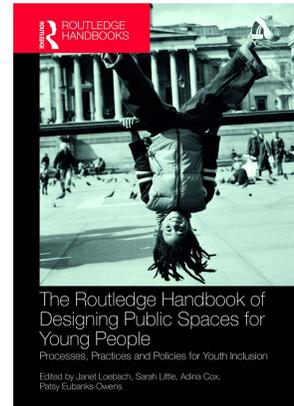
TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 18

How to plan and implement a co-design workshop with Indigenous children that engages them in the redesign of community public spaces
Angela Kreutz

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Indigenous children and youth views are underrepresented in environmental decision making and planning.
- Indigenous knowledge systems and understanding the impacts of colonial histories are important considerations when engaging children and youth in the redesign of their community spaces.
- Participatory design projects with Indigenous children and young people require flexible timeframes in order accommodate cultural commitments that may affect the availability of Aboriginal people, including children and youth.
- Culturally relevant lessons learnt from the project include the value of developing a place-based program, establishing reciprocal relationships with the community, seeking broad-based approvals, recruiting local Indigenous facilitators, and engaging children in creative, self-driven activities.
- Involving children and young people in participatory projects improves their decision making-skills, ability to communicate with professionals and peers, and increases their sense of influence over the decisions that affect their lives.

SUMMARY OF STEPS

- Consider adopting a strength-based perspective that focuses on the innate strengths of Indigenous cultures, rather than on the deficits that are often a result of past colonial practices.
- Implement a place-based approach that responds to local history and respects Indigenous peoples' cultural diversity.
- Work collaboratively with Indigenous people, implementing locally-valued and culturally-appropriate methods (e.g., Yarning – informal and relaxed conversations).
- Select a venue that that is perceived as familiar and safe to participating children and youth allowing them to express their views easily.

TIPS

- Seek out partners and speak with community organizations and stakeholders to support the development of a culturally appropriate and valued program.
- Involve Indigenous children and youth in choosing the methods and activities.
- Develop familiar and valued tools to engage with children and young people that respond to their competences and interests (e.g., playing a budgeting game).
- Use multiple methods, including verbal, visual and written to cater for individual participant to cater for various engagement preferences.
- For children and youth comfortable working with maps, work with community/neighborhood plans at different scales and explore the public realm in various levels of detail.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Collaborate and work together with children to establish the goals of the project, while discussing realistic outcomes and ensuring transparency at all stages.
- Respect and value children's views and trust their genuine responsibility for their own and other people's needs by listening and ensuring their ideas have tangible outcomes.
- Evaluate and review co-design activities via collaborative discussions (e.g., yarning circle where participants gather in a circle to share ideas and thoughts) or asking children to provide feedback, either individually or through anonymous surveys.
- Reflect and provide feedback to participating Aboriginal children after reflecting upon the co-design activities and project outcomes, and discuss potential improvements to the engagement process with all parties involved.

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- Crooks, C., Chiodo, D., Thomas, D., Burns, S., & Camillo, C. (2010). Engaging and empowering Aboriginal youth: A toolkit for service providers (2nd Edition), Canada, viewed 10/8/2019, https://youthrelationships.org › uploads › toolkit_text_-_english
- Hunt, J. (2013). Closing the gap: Engaging with Indigenous Australia – exploring the conditions for effective relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Issue paper no. 5. Produced for the Closing the Gap Clearing house. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare & Melbourne: Australian Institute of Family Studies, viewed 10/8/2019, https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/7d54eac8-4c95-4de1-91bb-0d6b1cf348e2/ctgc-ip05.pdf.aspx?inline=true

The Routledge Handbook of Designing Public Spaces for Young People

Processes, Practices and Polices for Youth Inclusion

Edited by: Janet Loebach, Sarah Little,
Adina Cox, and Patsy Eubanks Owens
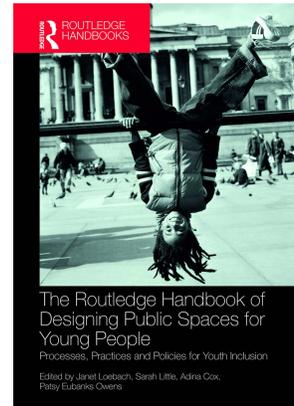
TAKEAWAY: CHAPTER 19
Behavior Mapping to Support the Development of Youth-Friendly Public Places
Janet Loebach, Adina Cox, and Sarah Little

KEY TALKING POINTS

- Researchers, designers, and public space managers can design and operate more inclusive spaces when they have a full understanding of the environmental features and conditions that support the interests and needs of young people.
- Behavior mapping is an observational tool that captures *in-situ* behavior simultaneously and systematically recording observed behaviors *and* their specific location, enabling a thorough understanding of *who* is using a space and *how* they are using the space.
- Behavior Mapping, originally developed by environmental psychologists, recognizes the reciprocal nature of human behavior and the environment, objectively recording the use of space and denoting how the environment affords that use.
- Data collected with Behavior Mapping can be customized to fit the research questions.
- Observational methods, such as Behavior Mapping, are effective with children and youth who may have more difficulties articulating their perceptions of activities and space use.

SUMMARY OF STEPS

1. Prepare a base map of the observation site
2. Select the data collection approach and tools
3. Establish a set of observable variables to be collected
4. Set up a systematic protocol for collecting data
5. Establish a strategy for data analysis

TIPS

- Choose variables to be collected carefully to balance the time spent collecting data with the usefulness of information that is collected.
- Acquire ethical clearance from an appropriate source.
- Allow ample time for training data collectors.
- Partner with a University or an organization with GIS resources and skills.
- Allow for qualitative, open coded data collection in order to broaden the understanding of how activities of children and youth use their environments.
- Conduct a pilot study to test the protocol, ensure agreement between data collectors, and to finalize data variables to be collected.

RECOMMENDED PRACTICES

- Evaluate spaces in the public realm objectively and systematically, with a tool such as Behavior Mapping, in order to guide the re-design or programming of public spaces.
- Consider conducting pre- and post- construction/renovation (or programming) studies in order to benchmark the effectiveness of design (or programming) solutions.

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES

- Public Play Space in Waterloo, Canada (This chapter)
- Cosco, N. G., Moore, R. C. & Isla, M. Z. (2010). Behavior Mapping: A method for linking preschool physical activity and outdoor design. *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise, 42* (3), 513-519.

SUPPORTIVE RESOURCES

- Cox, A., Loebach, J., & Little, S. (2018). Understanding the nature play milieu: using behavior mapping to investigate children's activities in outdoor play spaces. *Children, Youth and Environments, 28*(2), 232-261. doi:10.7721/chilyoutenvi.28.2.0232
- Moore, R. C. & Cosco, N. G. (2010) Using behavior mapping to investigate healthy outdoor environments for children and families: conceptual framework, procedures and applications. In Ward Thompson, C., Aspinall, P., & Bell, S. (Eds.). Innovative Approaches to Research Excellence in Landscape and Health (pp. 33-72). London, England: Routledge