The Routledge Handbook of Placemaking

Cara Courage, Tom Borrup, Maria Rosario Jackson, Kylie Legge, Anita McKeown, Louise Platt, Jason Schupbach

Facilitator skills for effective collaborative placemaking

Publication details
Husam AlWaer, Ian Cooper
Published online on: 31 Dec 2020

How to cite :- Husam AlWaer, Ian Cooper. 31 Dec 2020, Facilitator skills for effective collaborative placemaking from: The Routledge Handbook of Placemaking Routledge
Accessed on: 30 Dec 2023

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR DOCUMENT

Full terms and conditions of use: https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/legal-notices/terms

This Document PDF may be used for research, teaching and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproductions, re-distribution, re-selling, loan or sub-licensing, systematic supply or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The publisher shall not be liable for an loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.
Support for more communicative and collaborative approaches to planning through a participatory democracy has been growing over the last 20 years (Healey, 2003; Condon, 2008; Roggema, 2014; Ermacora and Bullivant, 2016; Campion, 2018; AlWaer and Cooper, 2020). Indeed, Allmendinger (2002) suggested that this should be considered as more than just another planning theory, but rather as a new and improved 'world view' that planners, architects, urban designers, and other stakeholders need to adopt. Design-led planning events often involve members of a community working alongside local authorities and developers and other stakeholders to co-create visually planned, agreed action plans and strategies (Campion, 2018). Such events are used to stimulate discussion of place-based issues, promote thinking about community values, and allow consideration of the ways in which assets can be best utilised. However, concerns have also been expressed about the quality of, and skills required to support, effective facilitation in community participation, highlighting an ethical responsibility to include and serve wide-ranging stakeholder groups (Wates, 2014; Campion, 2018; Malone, 2018; AlWaer and Cooper, 2019, 2020). Three issues in particular have been signposted: first, that facilitators may be biased, over-powering, manipulative, or not concerned with meeting community needs; second, that there is often an overdependence on facilitators with 'subject-specific' knowledge; and third, that there may be inadequate attention to process-based facilitation skills, particularly the 'social competencies' needed for process management and stakeholder engagement (Kaner et al., 2007; Wates, 2014; AlWaer et al., 2017; Cooper and AlWaer, 2019).

Ensuring meaningful engagement in collaborative planning has been signalled as a key priority to allow individuals and groups to feel included and valued (Wates, 2014). Facilitation is required to support stakeholder engagement at various points during design interventions in the built environment and stakeholder engagement has become a prominent part of the practice expected from built environment professionals (AlWaer and Illsley, 2017). However, community participation in design is an example of planning complexity (Innes and Booher, 2018) where fragmentation, uncertainty, and ‘social problems’ are compounded by a multiplicity of stakeholder views, and where the resultant complexity needs to be understood as socially constructed rather than merely a product of complicated processes.
This chapter brings together the diverse expertise and experience of both professional and lay participants of design-led events held across Scotland over the past decade, collated into a report for the Scottish government (AlWaer et al., 2017). This wide-ranging report, *Shaping Better Places Together: Research into the Facilitation of Participatory Placemaking*, included advice that equal weighting needs to be given to two skills sets for those involved in mounting community-orientated design-led events: non-context-specific skills for managing the processes involved, and skills required to provide the professional and context-specific information required for such events. The study explored new ideas and shared insights captured from recent experiences across Scotland which have wider international significance. The report's analysis was based on a literature review, a survey to capture relevant experience from both those 'who participated in design-led events' and 'those who facilitated them', and – using the survey outputs to inform the format and focus – a one-day interactive workshop to use the 'aspirations and concerns' they had expressed in the survey (see below) to frame a future agenda for both improving professional practice in community engagement and helping to make the outputs of design-led events more robust and deliverable. The study sought to add to the wider discourse in collaborative community planning about where, when, and how to use engagement opportunities – a topic actively discussed within both practice and academia. It identified that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to the roles and effectiveness of facilitators and other professionals in individual design-led events – let alone in terms of their wider contribution to the ongoing stages of community planning as a whole. Each planning intervention has its own particular context and circumstances, its own journey, rhythm, and hoped-for destination. Understanding these and manipulating them successfully calls for insightful inputs not just from professionals but, aided by well-directed facilitation, from local stakeholders as well. The process employed for collecting and analysing the data on which this chapter is based is detailed in AlWaer et al. (2017). Other non-skills-related findings are reported in AlWaer and Cooper (2019 and 2020).

### Recognising professionals’ roles and responsibilities (management task)

Facilitation of participatory design-led events is often seen as a team effort, involving a lead facilitator working with co-facilitators called upon to help run active participatory group work sessions. The primary concern of this 'facilitation team' is the smooth operations of participation. Different engagement tools might be used to 'promote meaningful participation, such as generating mutual understanding, inclusive solutions and cultivating shared responsibility' (Kaner et al., 2007). The experience and expertise that members of the facilitation team bring to their roles can vary widely. They may be built environment professionals with some expertise in facilitation, professional facilitators with no built environment expertise, or built environment professionals with little or no expertise or experience of facilitation (AlWaer et al., 2017). Influence from the facilitators and the facilitation team can run upwards (towards regulators and policy-makers) or downwards (towards the community and the end user). Doing this effectively requires combining non-expert knowledge with expert contributions to boost the value of bottom-up experiences and ensure wider impact (Woods et al., 2018, p. 211). The multiple disciplines present in facilitation teams involved in community design processes could make them well-placed to help synthesise such local, context-aware (bottom-up) thinking with national and regional (top-down) ‘planning’ guidance, legislation, and regulation (Rogers and Leach, 2014). There are suggestions in the literature (Lennertz and Lutzenhiser, 2006; Conrad, 2010; Wates, 2014; Campion, 2018; Malone, 2018) that those who facilitate community-based, design-led events need to address five key dimensions as explained below (Conrad, 2010, p. 47). These dimensions are not presented as being linear. Rather they are regarded as being cyclical in nature,
occurring through a collection of processes and strategies made up of a multiplicity of activities and entry points (Ermacora and Bullivant, 2016).

1. Scope: the rationale for involving the public

The purpose of engagement proposed at an event needs to be explicit from the very beginning and the activities and tools chosen for use at it should both support collaborative decision making and be relevant to pursuing outcomes, in order to avoid raising false expectations (RTPI, 2005). It is important that the tools are supportive and do not become a distraction from the objectives of the engagement.

2. Representation and addressing inequalities: the extent to which public involvement in the process is inclusive and represents all those affected.

Those involved in collaborative planning should comprise a broadly representative sample of affected population (Rowe and Frewer, 2000; Mascarenhas and Scarce, 2004). The processes adopted must show how they will help to tackle inequalities and combat disadvantage. Seldom heard and marginalised groups are at particular risk of exclusion; they include children and young people, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, minority faith groups, people with physical disabilities or mental health problems, and gypsy/travellers (Yellow Book Ltd., 2017). Additionally, it is important to demonstrate how the tools and techniques to be used will support the ongoing engagement of groups or individuals who may face barriers to participation, particularly across areas of deprivation, and areas affected by poverty or people living in remote locations (Policy Link, 2012; Malone, 2018). People living in particularly challenging circumstances, such as the homeless or young carers, also need to be included (Yellow Book Ltd, 2017).

3. Understanding stages in collaborative planning: the extent to which the public is involved both early on and throughout the collaborative planning process.

Participants should be involved from early on in the process, as soon as value judgments become salient, and when there is potential to influence the brief, scope, and methods used for any design intervention in the built environment (AlWaer and Cooper, 2019, 2020). Lay members of the public are often involved late in final stages, only to provide feedback on chosen options, which are already largely complete, to provide buy-in to a preconceived project or vision. Where this happens, collaborative planning is likely to be seen as lacking genuineness and legitimacy, leading to disillusion and even growing distrust (AlWaer and Cooper, 2019, 2020).

4. Creating a comfortable and convenient environment: the extent to which the process of participating is rendered easy for the public.

The logistics employed for community-based, collaborative planning are seen as determining whether the process is rendered comfortable and convenient for the wider public. However, there are no hard and fast rules about the amount of engagement activity required, the level of stakeholder engagement that is appropriate, or about the methods to be used. Such issues should be determined jointly by community organisations, facilitation team, planners, and policy-makers (Yellow Book Ltd, 2017). The process has to be focused on how local stakeholders will be involved in the delivery of the outcomes of any design events mounted. Organisers have to set
Effective collaborative placemaking

out how they intend to take forward the actions arising from their event(s), and to consider what the challenges and risks might be and how these might be addressed (AlWaer and Cooper, 2020).

5. Influencing outcomes and design interventions: the extent to which collaborative planning delivers concrete results and outcomes.

Whilst the success criteria listed above relate mainly to the process of participation, influence is a measure of the degree of effect that participants have on resultant outcomes such as the quality of life in an area. Whilst influence is manifested in several way, important considerations are held to include: the extent to which the public’s contribution will influence the decision-making process; the extent of transparency concerning the incorporation of public views in decision-making as represented in final outputs; and the effectiveness of the process in terms of its effects of outcomes, subsequent performance, and longer-term sustainability, as achieved over the short, medium, and long term (Condon, 2008; Roggema, 2014; AlWaer and Illsley, 2017; Campion, 2018; Malone, 2018; Campbell, 2018).

The personal attributes and skills required for successful facilitation

Those who have been involved in design-led events in Scotland point to two types of skills that facilitators required for their effective delivery. These can be divided into personal attributes and learned skills (AlWaer and Cooper, 2019, p. 209). The personal attributes require that facilitators should be open-minded and supportive of different agendas and views: participants will want to be involved in the community design event for a variety of reasons. This need not be a problem. Diversity of perspectives can assist in developing novel or innovative design interventions. Facilitators must accommodate different, often competing agendas and views in an open and inclusive manner. They should also be approachable and welcoming and respectful of the perceptions, choices, and abilities of all participants. When a facilitator is open and friendly, participants respond. People feel they can talk in an open manner and are more likely give valuable feedback. Facilitators should also be honest, open and trustworthy, and straightforward about the nature of any activity during the event. This is part of managing expectations, both avoiding raising unrealistic aspirations and clarifying what might be achieved. People will participate more enthusiastically if they know that something can realistically be achieved. They also need to be courteous and humble, displaying good conduct before, during, or after charrettes, and the capacity for ‘silence.’ Where the participants are engaged, a facilitator should remain silent and ensure nobody is disrupting or being left out. Facilitators need to adopt an impartial stance, portraying a neutral attitude. They become compromised where there is potential for manipulating an apparent viewpoint. Above all, they need to be empathetic, able to sense and understand the feelings and concerns of others. This helps them to identify effective means of developing contributions.

There are also learned skills that facilitators need to develop and hone. They need to be able to work flexibly, modifying an event’s structure and activities as circumstances dictate and avoiding inflexible methods and strategies, their aim is to help in moving towards common objectives, as agreed during the pre-event preparation. They need to pursue continuous improvement, reflecting and working to improve practice by combining knowledge, skills, and behaviours. Competency grows through experience. They have to empower participants, involving all affected parties as early as possible, seeking to identify participants’ needs in terms of perspectives, and abilities to participate effectively. They have to be self-aware, practising self-reflection both during the running of an event and afterwards, recognising the feelings and impacts gen-
erated by how they discharge their role. They need to be organised, giving sufficient time and effort to preliminary stages to ensure the smooth running of the event. They should focus on consensus building, supporting all participants so as to search for inclusive solutions. This may require them to mediate, presenting participants with the pros and cons of the positions being disputed, leaving participants to make their own decisions about them. It is not a facilitator’s role to choose between or promote one side or another.

They have to communicate clearly, carefully expressing themselves and giving advice or instructions that are unambiguous. Such communications can be given to participants in written form. This will involve them in listening attentively, paying careful attention to what participants are saying, and not letting preconceptions cloud their understanding, and giving careful attention to what isn’t being said and, where necessary, reading between the lines about what is. This is also known as ‘active listening.’ They may have to challenge prevailing assumptions, work to recognise and unpack meanings in a manner that respects the integrity of those who hold them to avoid alienation and work through any conflict. They should seek inclusive solutions, balancing impartial inclusivity and experience-based advice as decisions made from a diversity of inputs are more likely to be sustained by stakeholders.

Facilitators should signal where experience suggests that a proposed course of action is unrealistic or likely to result in failure. When applying their judgement, they need to be transparent if offering advice. This will involve them in being fair and inclusive, creating a safe space where ‘truth can be spoken to power,’ and where professionals’ expertise and lay people’s lived experience are both treated as valid. It is essential to give all participants an equal voice, regardless of power, status, education, social capital. Behind all of this is a need to act ethically, respecting participants’ confidentiality and acting within a recognisable moral code and in accordance with accepted rules. So, for instance, confidentiality restricts the facilitator from further and unauthorised dissemination of information to which they become privy during their engagement with participants.

The overarching skills within the very broad sets outlined above are: preparation, impartiality and seeking inclusive solutions, and consensus building. To be well-structured, an event will exhibit successful deployment of these skills – which significantly require not just effective communicating but effective listening too. In practice, the features that participants in design-led events see as desirable fall into two categories: those that are predominantly personal attributes, and those that can be taught – but some features contain an element of both. It is worth comparing these categories with what Shulman (1998, p. 525) elaborated as the features of a profession. These comprise, he suggested, ‘moral vision, theoretical understanding, practical skills, the centrality of judgment, learning from experience and the development of responsible professional communities.’ Shulman’s list emphasises both the technical and moral dimensions of preparing for and undertaking professional activity. Shulman later characterised (2005) professional education as a synthesis of three types of apprenticeships: a cognitive apprenticeship where one learns to think like a professional; a practical apprenticeship where one learns to perform like a professional; and a moral apprenticeship where one learns to think and act in a responsible and ethical manner. His conceptualisation of professional education integrates across all three domains. Such a holistic apprenticeship model could help to prepare professional facilitators with what Shulman called ‘knowledge for action.’

In the study for the Scottish Government, the professional facilitators and participants in design-led events were asked to rank what they saw as the top six priorities of the competencies, skills and qualities for facilitators. Their first six priorities were: ‘effective communicator; organised; good listener; impartial; empowering others; and challenge assumptions.’ The first three
of these priorities were ranked similarly by both types of respondents, highlighting the shared importance attached to them by both facilitators and event participants. However, impartiality was not as highly ranked as a priority by facilitators as it was by participants. Only a fifth of facilitators signalled this as important in comparison to a third of event participants. Conversely, inclusivity and challenging assumptions were not rated as highly as priorities by participants as they were by facilitators. A quarter of facilitators signalled challenging assumptions as a key skill whereas less than a fifth of participants did. These differences, whilst not vast, are important. Those who run design-led events and those who participate in them may share some criteria for assessing how well they are run, but their views are not identical. Clear separating emphases are apparent. Facilitators need to recognise these and understand how to take them on board and adjust their facilitation practices accordingly. Knowing where they and those they facilitate (dis) agree, and making necessary adjustments to how they operate, may prove important for meeting participants’ expectations.

The responses from event participants indicate that facilitators require skills relating to ‘people management’ – coaching, mediation, therapy, and community development, not simply architecture, planning, and urban design. Whatever the personal skills of facilitators, members of the wider facilitation team also need understandings of planning law, policy, local government, action planning, and the production and management of built environment. Such skills are necessary in order to build traction, secure funding, and acquire regulatory approval. A facilitator may have to be neutral – and may deliberately play a ‘naive role’ – but this does not mean they can be ignorant. They should either know where and how proposed activities are likely to ‘end up’ or be able to orchestrate the skills of their wider facilitation team to achieve these ends. For example, a facilitator who is a skilled process manager can deliver engaging events – that participants experience as fun – but may result in outputs that cannot be taken forward. However, with some knowledge of built environment processes, they can help generate more plausible/feasible ideas solutions etc. (e.g. more acceptable to the funding or regulatory system in design terms). A facilitator with a deep knowledge and understanding of design and planning processes, funding streams, and regulatory systems can add to the likely deliverability of an output arising from design-led events. The joint deployment of these two skill sets – people management and professional understanding – do not ensure deliverability but their effective integration makes this more likely.

The facilitation skill set employed in design-led events is seen by respondents as being experientially based, though some suggested that it can be improved through training. Importantly, it is also seen as being learned (honed) through action. Both the confidence required, and the reflexivity deemed important, are personal traits, as is an ability to handle difficult social and interpersonal situations. The study’s results indicate that facilitators operating at built environment events have to be capable of deploying a very broad range of skills. When built environment professionals act as facilitator, they need to supplement their knowledge-base of technical domains, of urban design and planning, with social competencies required for effective process management and stakeholder engagement. When trained, non-domain, facilitators do so, they need to bolster their process and engagement skills with domain ones. Since both sets of skills are unlikely to reside in one individual, this bolstering will need to be done by the recruitment of others to balance the facilitation team. This balancing is necessary in order to link spatial planning and community planning, including co-ordination between service provision and physical design considerations. One skill which was missing from the list identified in the survey – but which participants in the workshop suggested cut across all aspects of collaborative community planning – is the nature of the leadership provided by facilitators. This, participants agreed, should be non-dictatorial.
The role of facilitation in the five key stages of collaborative planning

Participants’ responses from the survey and at the workshop were analysed and collated in order to identify what they, as individuals or through group/plenary discussions, saw as the imperative actions and activities that need to be undertaken by facilitators throughout each of the key stages of collaborative community planning (see Figure 32.1).

The imperatives respondents offered can be separated into those that occur before, during, and after design-led events. These imperatives are reported below against the stage at which respondents suggested they should occur. These suggestions do not represent a consensus view across all participants in the study: rather they reveal an ‘ideal’ wish list constructed from the very wide breadth of aspirations expressed by individual and group comments.

**Brief and purpose**

This stage is to be organised by a ‘stakeholder management team’ – possibly involving representatives from local authority/public agency, independent consultants, community groups, and the third sector. Briefings are necessary to outline the basics of what will happen, the key issues that an event will explore, and to establish what participants should be aware of, and to agree what background information is required to be established prior to the event. The involvement of the lead facilitator at this stage is desirable, but not essential unless they have acted as the main front-person during previous related activities. There needs to be agreement of who should attend the design-led event and what their actual responsibility and authority will be. Facilitators may not be involved unless they have engaged with the stakeholder management team in writing the brief.

**Pre-event facilitation**

Facilitators should have a clear plan of action and engagement strategy; bringing together a multidisciplinary team with the appropriate skills, knowledge, and social competences to accomplish

![Figure 36.1](https://example.com/figure361.png)

*Figure 36.1 Sequence of stages surrounding design-led events – over-simplified linear framework (AlWaer and Cooper, 2020).*
Effective collaborative placemaking

this plan; and the logistical organisation of the event itself, e.g. venue, equipment, materials, budget, advertising/publicity, and ensuring key decision-makers are in attendance. According to some engaged through the study, there is a need for facilitator input early on and such early involvement was seen as especially important where: the stakeholder management team does not have a neutral role (i.e. they may be promoting a specific plan/solution or be working to a special agenda); the client or local stakeholder groups are inexperienced – so a facilitator could be helpful in building trust in the process and methods being employed; and there is a pressing need (sometimes because of previous activities) to establish the principles that will underlie the approach to be used, including in how the event will be managed, and how any material arising will be dealt with. The aim here is to try to avoid criticisms levelled at early design-led events that facilitators were ‘parachuted in,’ then left the community once the event was over.

Pre-event engagement

Facilitators should be involved in agreeing with relevant stakeholders – such as local stakeholder groups – the intended aims, objectives, and outcomes of the design-led event, along with establishing its terms of reference, and detailing the approach used for publicity and engagement. Survey respondents suggested that the facilitation team should get to know where in the locality stakeholder groups congregate, and then take their discussion to these venues; and by facilitators attending community briefings, utilising a wider range of media, and devising innovative engagement approaches specifically targeted to attract under-represented or harder to reach groups, involvement in the event can be promoted to wider stakeholder groups, resulting in a more diverse attendance, and, in turn, the creation of objectives that address the real issues and concerns affecting their community. Facilitated engagement at this stage could be used to: support effective decision-making about the overall structure of the event; identify who with appropriate authority and responsibility should be invited to attend; and clarify which factors could dramatically impact on the success of the engagement process.

Collaborative design events

Facilitators (and, by extension, the facilitation team) create a ‘safe space’ which can support conflict-free relationships within clear boundaries, so people can freely share their ideas, aspirations, and concerns by jointly working through potentially difficult issues, and eventually translating these into an ‘action plan’ and ‘strategies.’ The input of facilitators is essential here. They are expected to direct the whole event. But the rest of the facilitation team also need to be synchronised and aligned in order to manage and deliver a smooth event. Expectations about the facilitator’s role, and that of specialists, client, and local stakeholders, should all be made explicit at the beginning of the event in order to effectively manage the following ‘live’ process. Clear guidelines should be set to empower participants and they should be encouraged to see the issues from the perspectives of other stakeholders. Local stakeholders should be enabled to guide discussion of what are deemed appropriate issues. Facilitators should ensure everyone is given the opportunity to contribute, by encouraging the less confident to speak up whilst managing more vocal individuals and groups. It is important that facilitators bring out the ideas of all the stakeholders assembled and that they draw on the knowledge, expertise, and creativity of the design team and any planners involved. To encourage meaningful participation, the engagement process should be as simple, open, and transparent as possible, with plain English (in an English as first or common language context, naturally) used at all times. Serious consideration also needs to be given to the practicalities of managing community expectations. Building trust
by treating local stakeholders as equals through listening and demonstrating that you have done so – by explaining clearly why some of their ideas have emerged as preferred solutions whilst others don’t work as well or cost too much – is vital. Lay participants suggested that there were support materials or activities which they thought might have improved experience of their participatory design process. In order of preference they cited: computer-generated 3D visualisations, exploring ideas through art and digital media, physical models, social media, and use of Scotland’s Place Standard. They also thought that use of large-scale maps and photographs is helpful. Facilitators broadly agreed here. They added to this list using plans, sketches, diagrams, and sticky notes to develop ideas, using exemplars in the form of visual references or actual site visits, walk-and-talk site visits, storytelling, templates, visual summary boards, and fun activities.

Post-event engagement

Involvement of the lead facilitator at this stage is desirable, but not essential unless they have acted as the main front-person during the previous stages. Continued involvement of the lead facilitator in follow-up events and activities would be beneficial to the community to build momentum, kick-start a stalled action plan, create active community groups, and support communities through the implementation stages of collaborative planning. Facilitators also reported that facilitated follow-up and aftercare were beneficial in supporting local stakeholders through the implementation stages of the collaborative planning and were important in developing a more long-term community-based approach to placemaking. However, they noted that this approach would inevitably increase the work expected of facilitators and that, as a result, it would need to be properly funded.

Aftercare and post-development

Facilitators may usefully be present at this stage. But this may be less crucial if local stakeholders, in the form of trusts, partnerships, or networks, are taking ownership and leadership of delivery phases – often 6, 9, or 12 months after a design-led event. From participants’ responses and comments, it is evident that they recognised that the roles of facilitators may change and vary throughout the stages of collaborative community planning. For example, a facilitator may at one point in this process be acting to develop a shared understanding of an issue, at another to explore design possibilities, and at another helping to articulate recommendations or concretise decisions. Clarity needs to be established about whether design input is required from a facilitator or whether this is to be provided by members of the design team participating in events.

Conclusions

The results of this research point to the need to extend the period during which facilitators are asked to make contributions to collaborative planning. This period needs to begin long before the design-led events they are brought in to facilitate and should extend long after these have been held (see Figure 34.1). Specific actions and activities to be undertaken by facilitators were identified by both professionals and local stakeholders that need to be enacted throughout each of the key stages of collaborative community planning.

Facilitators should be involved in pre-event preparation to ensure that a broad range of local stakeholders are approached in their own localities and on their own terms. This is necessary to manage participants’ expectations about what design-led events can achieve and to counter concerns that facilitators can have inadequate local knowledge and expertise to guide such
events effectively, instead pursuing agendas set by those organising them. Developing a more longitudinal approach to the involvement of facilitators would require more extensive funding. It would, however, help build the inclusive solutions participants called for and then carry these forward into the reporting of such events and into subsequent implementation of decisions made at them.

The study undertaken for the Scottish government highlighted strongly divergent opinions on who should facilitate design-led events. Some respondents suggested, indeed insisted, that facilitators need a domain-based understanding of the design of the built environment. Others held that facilitators should be independent and professionally trained in facilitation in order to ensure that the process employed leads to legitimate and socially acceptable outputs capable of delivering not only desired but feasible outcomes. To play their role effectively – whether at a design-led event or through contributions made before and after – facilitators are identified as needing a broad range of skills, running from people management through technical understanding to local knowledge. Since this range is unlikely to be owned by a single individual, this signals the need to build a facilitation team whose members can contribute the range of skills required link spatial planning and community planning, to co-ordinate service provision and physical design considerations. Local stakeholders and professionals have overlapping but different expectations about what are the most important skills that facilitators will exercise in support of collaborative planning. Local stakeholders may stress the need for inclusivity through coaching, mediation, and community development; professionals may emphasise deployment of design and planning expertise. Facilitators need to recognise these differences and adjust their practices accordingly.

To be effective, collaborative planning depends on integration and synergy across professional disciplines, local stakeholders, and process stages. It requires building trust and common purpose between team members and local stakeholders from a wide range of backgrounds and constituencies. Ideally, its aim is to engender a deep, collective understanding of the places where interventions are planned through developing dialogue and deliberative participation.
Enabling this collaborative dialogue, and then empowering implementation of its resultant co-decision-making, are essential. Achieving this may require liberating facilitators from their usual time-limited role in collaborative planning – solely at design-led events – to extend their contributions across the whole time frame of planned design interventions in the built environment.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by the Scottish Government (Planning and Architecture Division) under the grant: ‘The role of the facilitator operating a participatory and community design settings in Scotland’ (2017). Our thanks go to our research team colleagues: Frances Wright, Iain MacPherson, and Kevin Murray. We gratefully acknowledge the ideas and inputs received from the wide range of people who took part in the research – in the business and community sectors, academia and practice, and the political and public policy communities – across Scotland and beyond.

References

Effective collaborative placemaking


Further reading in this volume

Chapter 2: Placemaking as an economic engine for all
James F. Lima and Andrew J. Jones
Preface: ‘Disastrous forces, accidental actions, and grassroots responses’
Tom Borrup
Chapter 9: From the dust of bad stars: disaster, resilience, and placemaking in Little Tokyo
Jonathan Jae-an Crisman
Chapter 13: Sensing our streets: involving children in making people-centred smart cities
Sean Peacock, Aare Puussaar, and Clara Crivellaro
Chapter 15: Un/safety as placemaking: disabled people’s socio-spatial negotiation of fear of violent crime
Claire Edwards
Chapter 16: More than a mural: participatory placemaking on Gija Country
Samantha Edwards-Vandenhoek
Chapter 24: Artists, creativity, and the heart of city planning
Tom Borrup
Preface: Evaluating creative placemaking: a collection of observations, reflections, findings, and recommendations
Maria Rosario Jackson
Chapter 42: Creative placemaking and placekeeping evaluation challenges from the practitioner perspective: an interview with Roy Chan
Maria Rosario Jackson
Chapter 43: A theory of change for creative placemaking: the experience of the National Endowment for the Arts’ Our Town program: an interview with Patricia Moore Shaffer, PhD
Maria Rosario Jackson
Chapter 45: How the city speaks to us and how we speak back: rewriting the relationship between people and place
Rosanna Vitiello and Marcus Willock