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Session 2: Communication 4:

A Practice Perspective on Social Value in the Built Environment: Aligning Planning, Design, the Client, Contractor, and Sub-contractor Placemaking Interventions in the Midlands, UK,

Ani Raiden, Andrew King, Sir John Peace, Laura Alvarez and Kevin Osbon

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Session 2: Urban Built Environment and the SDGs

Chaired by Prof. Mark Lemon, IESD

Social Value in the Built Environment: Aligning Regional Strategic Influence, Design, Planning and Consultant Placemaking Interventions in the Midlands, UK, with SDGs 11, 13 and 16

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Abstract

Social value in the built environment refers to the social impact any organisation or project makes to its many and varied stakeholders. We examine social value activities with a focus on placemaking, and show how regional strategic influence, design, planning and consultant efforts align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 11, 13 and 16. We highlight how the agents collectively: help ensure that Nottingham is one exemplar city with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically (SDG 11.3.2), how their activities help improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning (SDG 13.3) and ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels (SDG 16.7).

Key words:

social value, built environment, placemaking

Introduction

Social value in the built environment is the social impact that any organisation, project or programme in that industry makes to the lives of the stakeholders affected by its activities (Raiden et al, 2019). This invariably involves many different agents, such as design and planning professionals, engineering and construction professionals and workers, trades, facilities management providers and their personnel, and community groups and their members.

Purpose and research objectives

We examine different agents' social value activities with a focus on placemaking and show how their activities and interventions in the Midlands, UK, align multiple stakeholders' efforts and thus collectively achieve social value. Our discussion will relate to the following United Nations (UN) global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable), 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts) and 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels). We recognise social value is really about all the SDGs, at least indirectly. The focus on SDGs 11, 13 and 16 allows us to depart from the interests related to achieving improvements in industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9) which features in many discussions about social value in the built environment. Elsewhere we discuss social value in relation to poverty (see Raiden and King, 2019).

We table the SDGs, targets and indicators that are most relevant to our discussion of social value and placemaking in the built environment below (see Tables 1, 2 and 3).

Table 1. SDG11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (United Nations, 2020a)

TARGETS	INDICATORS
11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries	11.3.1 Ratio of land consumption rate to population growth rate 11.3.2 Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically
11.6 By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management	11.6.1 Proportion of urban solid waste regularly collected and with adequate final discharge out of total urban solid waste generated, by cities 11.6.2

	Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM2.5 and PM10) in cities (population weighted)
11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities	11.7.1 Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disabilities 11.7.2 Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months
11.A Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning	11.A.1 Proportion of population living in cities that implement urban and regional development plans integrating population projections and resource needs, by size of city

Table 2. SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (United Nations, 2020b)

TARGETS	INDICATORS
13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries	13.1.1 Number of deaths, missing persons and persons affected by disaster per 100,000 people 13.1.2 Number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies 13.1.3 Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies
13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning	13.2.1 Number of countries that have communicated the establishment or operationalization of an integrated policy/strategy/plan which increases their ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development in a manner that does not threaten food production (including a national adaptation plan, nationally determined contribution, national communication, biennial update report or other)
13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning	13.3.1 Number of countries that have integrated mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning into primary, secondary and tertiary curricula

	13.3.2 Number of countries that have communicated the strengthening of institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions
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Table 3. SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (United Nations, 2020c)

TARGETS	INDICATORS
16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels	16.7.1 Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions 16.7.2 Proportion of population who believe decision-making is inclusive and responsive, by sex, age, disability and population group

Method

We present insights from different stakeholders, all directly involved with placemaking, including a regional strategic influencer, a charity dedicated to connecting people with the design of their places, a city council (urban design) officer, and a professional consultancy firm. We describe their activities relating to creating social value through placemaking using extracts from phenomenological conversational interviews (after Given, 2008; Berner-Rodoreda et al., 2018), which were conducted face-to-face and via telephone during winter and spring 2019-2020, in addition to written research correspondence and published material available from the organisations' web pages. The research process, akin to action research, has been a developmental journey to co-create and refine our collective understanding of social value and the SDGs through continuous critical reflection. Aligned with this philosophy, we have co-authored this research paper with the following research participants at the centre of practice:

- Sir John Peace, Chairman of the Midlands Engine Executive Board, a regional strategic influencer
- Sophia de Sousa, Chief Executive, The Glass-House Community Led Design, a national charity that connects people with the design of their places and connects design with people
- Dr Laura Alvarez, Senior Principal Urban Design and Conservation Officer, Nottingham City Council
- Kevin Osbon, Founder Partner, Focus Consultants, a national professional consultancy firm.

Findings

We describe each of the stakeholders' social value activities and how they link to the SDGs in turn, before discussing how their voices align with the SDGs 11, 13 and 16.

Regional strategic influence

The Midlands has a population of some 10.6m people; 816,000 businesses; 5.3m jobs and an annual economic output of more than £233bn (Midlands Engine, 2020a). The Midlands Engine (2020b) is an apolitical partnership that seeks to increase economic growth and improve the quality of life across the region. It does this by drawing together public sector partners and businesses together to complement the activity of local and combined authorities, LEPs, universities, businesses and others. In particular, the Midlands Engine Partnership focuses on pan-regional issues, such as transport, innovation and enterprise, digital, connectivity, internationalisation and amplifying the voice of the region. More specifically, Sir John Peace advocates for a new long-term industrial strategy that focuses on building resilient, locally based value for money supply-chains that employ a skilled and well-trained workforce. Education, training and retraining people migrating from other sectors lies at the heart of the vision and relies on an integrated network of collaborative employer-facing interventions that meet the needs of the 4th industrial revolution and fuel the recovery from the current and developing economic crisis.

During a telephone interview, Sir John Peace discussed an example to contextualise this vision: in the spring of 2020, at time of the global COVID-19 pandemic (WHO, 2020), the UK experienced severe Personal and Protective Equipment (PPE) sourcing problems, which demonstrated that UK supply chains lack resilience and are not fit for purpose. While globalisation and a corresponding focus on efficiency has led to many benefits, it has also led to many failures, such as a reliance on just-in-time imports from overseas and consumers being encouraged to base their buying decisions on the lowest capital cost. This is not sustainable.

Building resilience requires skilled and well-educated local supply-chains that can deliver sustainable benefits over the long-term. Developing the right skills is key, with apprenticeships and other forms of on-the-job learning (such as the new T-levels) taking the centre stage to train and retrain people of different age groups with retraining becoming increasingly important. Moreover, there needs to be an integrated approach to training, education and skills programmes that can no longer be delivered in a piecemeal fashion that differs across the region. Instead, provision needs to be managed and delivered through joined-up local approaches that simplify engagement and provide cross-region consistency to meet the needs of local employers including huge global brands such as Rolls Royce and JCB. In this way, placemaking is about capitalising on the regional community assets and potential, with the intention and strategic direction to create a sustainable environment that promotes people's health, happiness, and well-being.

Further, in relation to the built environment, an infrastructure example was provided. Aggregates are a key constituent of the built infrastructure supply-chain and are currently often imported from overseas, including African countries, which represents an environmental burden. Tarmac, the UK's largest supplier of building materials, has facilities in the Midlands to produce aggregates, yet has suffered from a lack of skilled workers. To meet the demand for infrastructure across the UK, they have focused on developing their own highly skilled local workforce through their investment in their Midlands-based National Skills and Safety Park,

which provides a range of training opportunities, including apprenticeships, to local people of different ages who often retrain from other industries.

This regional strategic influence links to multiple SDGs. Firstly, the activities are well aligned with SDG 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) in that, the Midlands Engine is clearly focused on enhancing inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management (11.3), by operating a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operates regularly and democratically (11.3.2). They draw together key stakeholders within the region with ambitions to invest in major transport projects, innovation and enterprise, and digital connectivity. The strategy that Sir John Peace advocates clearly articulates the aspiration and drive towards co-creating social value and aligns well with (11.A): to support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning. Finally, focus on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable is evident in the recognition that transport, and the global/local movement of materials and people, feature at the heart of a sustainable future. The Midlands Engine are focused on reducing the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities (11.6). This is evident in the indirect appreciation of the need to reduce annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (11.6.2).

In terms of SDG 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts), the strategic focus on localised action and mobilising resources in a sustainable fashion helps strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters (13.1). Sir John Peace outlines a specific disaster risk reduction strategy (13.1.3), using the example of the COVID-19 pandemic, and suggests that appropriately educated and skilled local networks of workers and supply-chains present a future proof solution to disaster mitigation. Improving education, and human and institutional capacity, is central to the regional strategic influence (13.3), including advocating the strengthening of institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building explicitly (13.3.2).

Since the Midlands Engine draws together key stakeholders within the region, they actively contribute to achieving SDG 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels) by encouraging and advocating responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making regionally and beyond (16.7).

Design

Public narrative and policy on community engagement in design and placemaking is evolving. Early meaningful community engagement to shape design at key decision stages helps local people shape better places and empowers, builds capacity and provides employability through design (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2019). This shift in planning policy guidance, where community engagement is seen as an opportunity for co-designing change and embedding social value lies in stark contrast to how it has often been seen as an obstruction to navigate.

The Glass-House Community Led Design focuses on generating social value to local people by facilitating discussion and debate and actively practicing collaborative and participative design. It does this by bringing different sectors, disciplines and scales of placemaking initiatives together for mutual benefit.

They apply mostly basic and easily replicable techniques to support the dialogue, networking and ideas generation required to enable a collaborative economy approach to placemaking. They act as the convenors in many sessions, such as a recent debate in Nottingham ‘*Place: a shared responsibility? What are the rights and responsibilities that we have in shaping our places?*’. During the debate, many people in the audience raised the importance of building, managing and evolving relationships between those who live in places, and those who play a role in their design and management (de Sousa, 2016). A desire for inclusive and participative systems of decision-making (rather than traditional paternalistic mechanisms) was voiced, together with the need to consider neglected places as well as investment in grand designs, to ensure that places are created “for everyone” (ibid). ‘Everyone’ includes stakeholders as wide ranging as universities, schools, local SMEs, city councils, professionals, local neighbourhood forums, citizens, school children and tenants in council housing, etc.

Sophia de Sousa argues, however, that there is no reason why any sector could not take on this role. Through their own practice they showcase how models can be applied to a wide range of contexts to help foster locally based dialogue that informs, co-designs or tests local policies, strategies and the visions and briefs of projects.

Such placemaking activities link clearly to SDGs 11 and 16, specifically 11.3.2: Proportion of cities with a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically, and 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels. These also help towards SDG 11.7 with the aim to provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

Local Authority (Urban Design) Officer

Laura Alvarez’s view as a City Council Officer is that social variables of place are not considered fully in the industry and, despite an increasing interest in environmental issues, there is a strong bias towards economic factors in the UK. The National Planning Policy Framework (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012) sought to reform planning and initiate a period of increased neighbourhood engagement and governance through the introduction of Neighbourhood Plans, Local Development Orders and Local Listing. However, the majority of changes were optional and underprivileged communities often found themselves lacking the skills and resources to deliver owing to the technical complexities of the British planning system.

Local government is responsible for delivering community empowerment through the planning system at two core levels:

Policy making:

- a. incorporating social structure analysis as part of the baseline studies for policy development;
- b. delivering continuous engagement strategies that focus on targeting social variables through the process itself.

Placemaking:

- a. incorporating social assets analysis as another technical requirement of planning submissions;

- b. requiring that developments with a public or shared place component offer opportunities to meet local social targets.

To help meet critical social targets and support their ambition to become Carbon Neutral for 2028, Nottingham City Council is keen to deliver high quality socially valuable developments by focusing on two main strands:

- social resilience – resolving problems and creating wealth through the communities’ capacity to work together
- social capital – social norms, mutual trust and the capacity of communities to form relationships and networks.

In order to achieve this, a process of internal and external transformation was initiated which requires a cultural shift and cross-sector engagement and education to change attitudes and behaviours. Communities have been involved in shaping new design guidance through a process of empowerment that gave voice to minorities and groups that were previously excluded from policy development.

These planning interventions and activities link to SDGs 11, 13 and 16. Strengthening of institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building (11.3.2) is a clear focus and a key area of responsibility for the City Council, driven by national policy framework. Ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making (16.7) similarly features at the heart of the Council’s plans and activities, evident in the form of cross-sector engagement. Alongside this, an important vehicle to achieving the Council’s ambition to become Carbon Neutral is improved education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning (13.3). Becoming Carbon Neutral is the Council’s most explicitly expressed aim, thereby integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning (13.2) and to reduce annual mean levels of fine particulate matter in cities (11.6.2).

The efforts and activities directed towards engaging communities can help provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities, indirectly (11.7)

Consultant

Focus is a Midlands based multi-disciplinary construction consultancy operating nationwide. They work on community, public sector, socio-economic, and people-focussed regeneration programmes with social value at their core.

Focus are keen to give back to the communities in which they serve. Education and skills training are central to their approach. They deliver pro bono lectures, seminars, training and workshops on a wide range of built environment topics to university students, industry practitioners, local people, community groups and the third sector. Their work extends to include work experience to school children, apprenticeships, sponsored education to Masters level, and supporting the Prince’s Regeneration Trust ‘BRICK’ heritage education programme. The multiplier effect of local expenditure drives Focus to require their contractors to use local supply chains, guarantee that an agreed percentage of site labour is sourced locally, and provide training programmes and apprenticeships for adults and young people. The company itself is also committed to:

- Employing local staff - all equity partners live and work in the local community and they generate jobs for people living in the local area.
- Recruiting young people direct from local education providers in order to develop and retain core skills in the local community and providing personalised training throughout their careers.

More specific examples of Focus' social value initiatives specifically related to placemaking include:

- Securing funding to help a local Parish Council develop a Parish Plan that in turn guided a District Council Local Plan.
- Advising District Councils on custom and self-building throughout North Derbyshire and supporting a local school to secure £7,500 to create an allotment-style school garden.

In terms of 'the environment' Focus have combined their commitment to minimising the effect of their operations on the environment with a recognition that this can make sound commercial sense to all parties. Specifics actions include:

- Leading sustainability reviews for professional project teams that promote client awareness of reduced energy consumption in the construction and operation of buildings.
- Delivery of Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM), which assesses, rates, and certifies the sustainability of buildings.
- Promotion of electronic tendering on all projects.
- Reduced travel through homeworking, videoconferencing and maintenance to minimise harmful vehicular emissions.
- Built-estate energy efficiency and energy saving includes consolidated stationary orders, continual reduction of utility use including, low energy lighting, high efficiency boilers, improved insulation, use of renewable energy suppliers and reduced paper use.

SDG 13 is central to the Consultant's social value interventions; both internally and in managing their supply-chain. Their impact on the environment is recognised and actively considered in the way the business is operated and how they advise their clients (13.1 and 13.2). This helps reduce annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (11.6.2). Education, training and enhancing institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation and impact reduction (13.3) are important tools for the business. Furthermore, the strong value base that drives Focus' approach to social value supports achievements towards enhancing inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries (11.3); ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels (16.7); and, indirectly, securing universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities (11.7).

Social value in the Built Environment and the SDGs

The different stakeholders' activities, and how they voice social value in terms of placemaking, align in aspirations towards, and commitment to, achieving SDG 16.7 (Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels). All the agents

communicate their efforts in this regard, and it is especially important for the local authority officer.

All the stakeholders also explicitly and frequently connect with SDG11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) but we find variation in their priorities and focus. Whilst target 11.3 (Enhancing inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management) is important to all, regional strategic influence, design and planning agents specifically and actively talk about mechanisms to achieve 11.3.2 (A direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically). Quite naturally, since this indicator refers to the societal level systems that support the achievement of the SDGs, the activities of the consulting organisation are less focused on this indicator.

Target 11.6 (Reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities) is relevant to the accounts of all but one respondent; the designer. Similarly, 11.7 (Universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces) is relevant to the accounts by all but one respondent; regional strategic influence. 11.A (Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning) was mostly evident in the accounts of the regional strategic influencer and the consultant. These variations are likely to be explained by limitations in our data (focus on social value and placemaking instead of the SDGs specifically).

SDG 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts) is clearly and explicitly important to both the regional strategic influencer and the consultant. Specifically, target 13.1 (Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries) and 13.3 (Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity) feature as important elements of practice. The local authority officer is also focused on 13.2 (Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning) and 13.3.

Conclusion

We show how regional strategic influence, design, planning and consultant placemaking efforts and interventions align together and thus collectively achieve social value and link to the SDGs 11, 13 and 16. We highlight how the agents together help ensure that Nottingham is one exemplar city developing a direct participation structure of civil society in urban planning and management that operate regularly and democratically (SDG 11.3.2), how their collective activities help improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning (SDG 13.3) and ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels (SDG 16.7).

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A Practice Perspective on Social Value in the Built Environment: Aligning Planning, Design, the Client, Contractor, and Sub-contractor Placemaking Interventions in the Midlands, UK,

by Dr. Andrew King (on behalf of Ani Raiden and Andrew King, Nottingham Trent University)



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Ani Raiden, Andrew King, Sir John Peace, Sophia de Sousa, Laura Alvarez, and Kevin Osbon

Dr Andrew King

Conference on Aligning local interventions with the UN SDGs

Today's talk

- Social Value
- Methodology
- Findings:
 - Regional Strategic influence
 - Design
 - Local Authority (Urban Design Officer)
 - Consultant
- Conclusion

Social Value

The social impact that any organisation, project or programme in that industry makes to the lives of the stakeholders affected by its activities

(Raiden et al, 2019)

- SDG's – universal call to action – end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity
- Social Value - vehicle and goal - positive contribution now and over longer-term

Raiden, A.B., Loosemore, M., King, A. and Gorse, C. (2019) *Social Value in Construction*, Abingdon: Routledge, ISBN: 9781138295094

Methodology

- Phenomenology: Study of an individual's lived experiences within the world
- Active participants in practice AND engaging in academic reflection on their practice
- Methods:
 - Face-face interviews
 - Correspondence – seeking clarity, exploring ideas
 - Published material

Regional Strategic Influence

- Pan-regional issues – transport, innovation and enterprise, digital, connectivity, internationalisation and amplifying the voice of the region.
- Resilience – skilled and well-educated local supply-chains, sustainable over the long-term.
- Integrated approach to re/training, education and skills
- Aggregate example
- SDG 11/13/16

Design

- Engagement – start early with local people, empower, build capacity & employability
- Glasshouse – collaborative economy placemaking, collaborative and participative design, easily replicable techniques
- Debate – relationships, inclusive and participative systems of decision-making, neglected places & grand designs for everyone
- SDG 11/16

Consultant

- Multi-disciplinary construction consultancy – public sector, socio-economic, and people-focussed
- Education and skills training lectures, seminars, training and workshops
- Work experience, sponsored education, local people
- Funding support and advice to local organisations
- Sustainability reviews, BREEAM, work methods, efficiency and energy saving
- SDG 11/13/16

Local Authority (Urban Design Officer)

- Planning reforms – optional & lack of skills and resources to deal with complexity
- Local Govt planning – policy & placemaking
- Nottingham – social resilience & social capital
- New design guidance – process of empowerment, voice to previously excluded minorities and groups
- SDG 11/13/16

Conclusion

- Commonalities and Differences
- Nottingham as an exemplar
- Collective Social Value
 - 11.3.2
 - 13.3
 - 16.7