South African CitiesNetwork

MAY 2018

BUILT ENVIRONMENT INTEGRATION REFERENCE GROUP

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Introduction

On the 16th May 2018, a team of Built Environment practitioners, from departments in eThekwini, City of Johannesburg, Msunduzi and Nelson Mandela Bay responded to an invitation from the South African Cities Network to "Bring together a community of practitioners who are willing to listen to each other, be in generative conversation with each other, learn together, fail forward and reflect on how we change the institutions tasked with transforming our cities".

The venue for The Task Team meeting the Trevor Huddleston Memorial Centre in Sophiatown. It was a fitting backdrop for the days deliberations given that it houses a museum that captures the stories and spirit of the community of Sophiatown that was torn apart by the forced removals. The centre also houses a newly built, environmentally conscious, entrepreneurship hub and mixed-use venue. It was an apt location that highlights the challenges practitioners face in undoing past spatial injustices and the legacy of the apartheid spatial planning policy whilst trying to build not just bricks and mortar infrastructure, but institutional capacity to respond to the creation of communities that are befitting of a transformed society.

The workshop was facilitated by "The Barefoot Facilitator" - Rehana Moosajee and the methodology was deliberately designed to create a safe space for reflection and generative conversation amongst participants.

Extreme Conversations

This was an ice-breaking session that invited participants to bring their whole selves and entire life experiences into the days proceedings. Participants paired with others and had quick conversations about a variety of topics – changing partners a number of times.

Thereafter it was realized that the practitioners collectively had almost 2 centuries of experience amongst them in local government.

Participants also had the opportunity to discuss the recent GIBS Executive Leadership Programme as well as reflect on why they attend sessions such as these.

Some of the reflections included:

The value of knowledge sharing platforms

Some of the reasons cited for participation, included:

- Networking with fellow practitioners and knowledge exchange based on real-life issues cities are grappling with;
- Benchmarking based on sharing and learning;
- Useful content and getting a deeper understanding on how theory, techniques and tools can help practitioners do their jobs better.
- Reinvigorate consciousness and energy to apply the taking away of the sessions within own municipality boundaries.
- Spaces for reflection and deeper understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses.
- Solutions are everywhere around us, the key is to tune in and start connecting the dots. Look at opportunities rather than obstacles.

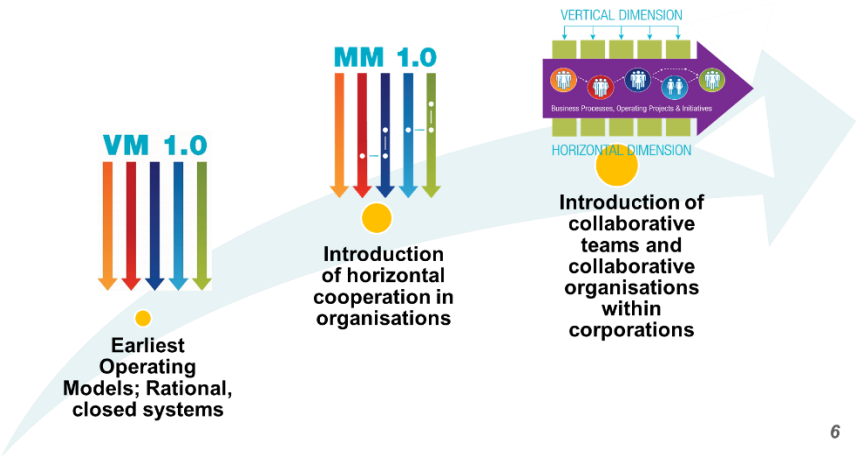
There was robust discussion on why things feel so easy in these safe spaces and a lot more difficult to implement in the real-world context. Some of the deliberations included:

- The political / administrative interface and the need for greater clarity on responsibilities;
- Hierarchies impact on innovation and creativity;
- Linkages between budgets and spatial planning;
- Need for a deeper understanding of the communities being served and their aspirations;
- Need for more robust conversations with National Treasury
- Are planners exercising sufficient authority for spatial transformation?
- Influence of developers

CSP Transversal Management Project

The National Treasury City Support Programme presented on their current transversal management project concept and status:

The transversal management project is utilizing a methodology called matrix management 2.0 to inform a strategy process around shifting municipal organizations from vertical based performace (optimizing performance in individual departments) towards horizontal performance (optimizing overall organizational priorities and goals).



The project was piloted in Ethekwini and has since been started in some other metros. Where a diagnostic assessment using SPARC framework is carried out.

sparc™

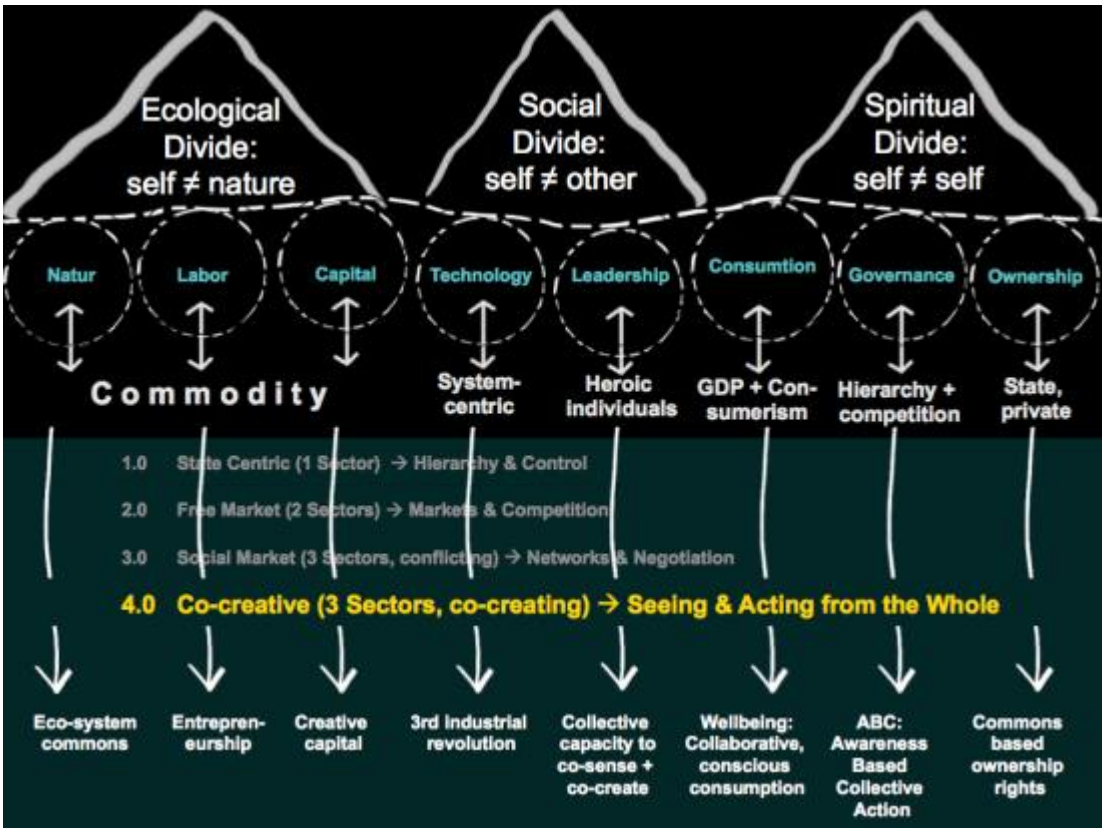
Structure	Productivity	Accountability	Relationship Management	Collaborative Leadership
Structuring the horizontal dimension	Team productivity and prioritization across the enterprise	Proactive, team-based accountability	Partnership-based, win-win relationships	High performing teams, self-directed and empowered adults
Organizational Lever: Focuses on how the organization is operating as a system			**Leadership Lever:** Focuses on leading and working collaboratively without authority	

This CSP project closely relates to the work of the SACN BEITT and will be drawn on to supplement, inform and discuss the state of integrated built environment practice.

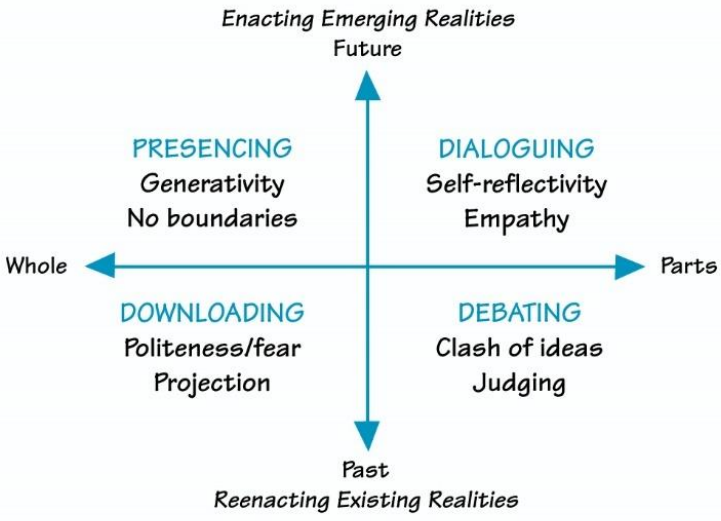
Approaches to integrated practice

Participants were introduced to tools from Otto Scharmer's Theory U:

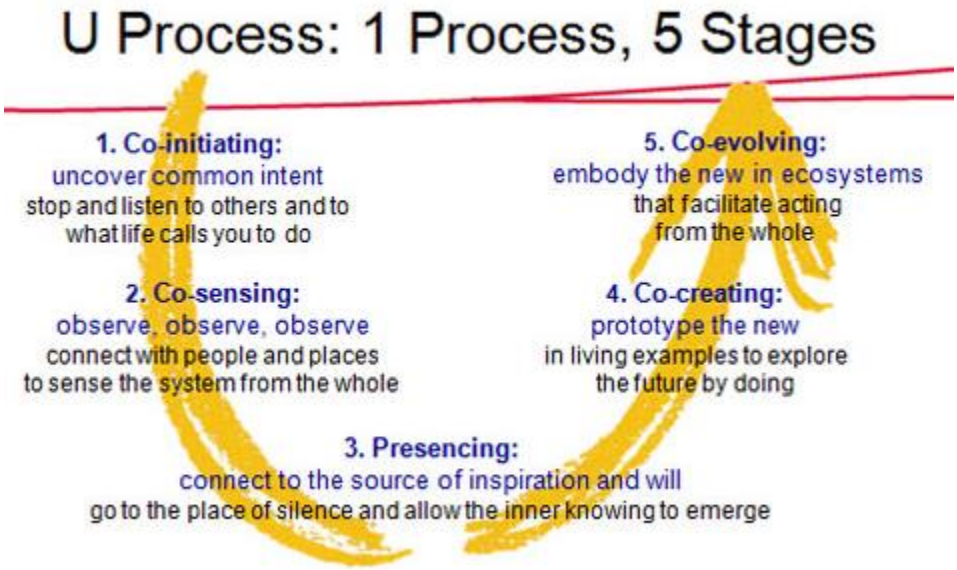
The Three Divides: Ecological, Social and Spiritual



Four Ways of Talking and Listening



Theory U



Objective of the Task Team

The main objective of the BEI task team is to determine and strengthen the role of metros in guiding and enabling spatial interventions that will result in more equitable, just and sustainable spatial outcomes. Other objectives include:

•Develop a relationship between Built Environment departments

•Provide a peer learning forum to encourage sharing of good practice on spatial transformation

•Provide guidance on what the critical areas are research and knowledge is required

The Future Quality Built Environment

Often when considering a quality built environment there are many buzzwords used which don't necessarily operate based on shared meaning. Also, the focus is on outcomes but not on the institutional culture that can lead to those outcomes. For this session a model was presented on 5 hypothetical protagonists representing stories of a diverse residents in the future functional built environment.

Discussion Points

•The realities in South African Cities need to be taken into consideration when planning for the quality-built environment as well as its harsh past. It is also needs to be put into context because South African cities are different in nature, population and dimension. How do we deal with issues of land, race and distrust in the country now?

•The question that needs to be addressed is what are the critical things that need to be changed and can be changed. It is not really about what an ideal city looks like, it goes back to what are the things that make a difference in people's lives.

•Authorities in charge of planning city never consider for people. They go to first world countries and applaud their pedestrianised roads but fail to implement them in South Africa.

•There is a systematic issue that needs to be understood and unpacked

• "You want the community to care about your station, but you don't care enough about them to allow them to work in it? Before people can care what is most important to you, you need to start thinking what is important to them and it's not so much about the safety of the station, it is about the safety of the neighbourhood."

•We are poor communicators as the government and we need to find effective ways to communicate our ideas to the people.

•What do people want? We tend to make things complicated when the people's requests are very simple. We need to embrace informality

•Communication is the ability to listen while spoken to.

Way Forward

Participants requested that inputs from the 29th August 2017 meeting be categorised into a first level analysis of challenges and possibilities for mitigation;

That these sessions find ways of inspiring,

That these sessions become working sessions where the group can use their time to address issues and contribute to knowledge generation,

That case studies be identified that can be used to learn from.

What should we do differently?

•Categorise challenges and have creative ways of thinking about how to start addressing them

•Create mutual beneficial relationships through working spaces

•Have research programmes of cities like more reference groups, keep up to date with city statistics

•Stronger working relationship with CSP and South African Cities Network

•Keep consistency

•There is a need to develop new business and institutional models

•Encourage diagnostic city-based research to understand day to day-built environment and to also have a deeper understanding of projects on the ground

•Build a body of knowledge which can be shared across the country.

Next Meeting

It was suggested the next meeting be scheduled for July/August, Ethekwini agreed to host and there was group support to find a venue, similar to the Trevor Huddleston Memorial, with meaning.

Agenda

TIME	DURATION	TOPIC
08h00	60 mins	Arrival at Park Station and travel
09h00	60 mins	Extreme Conversations
10h00	30 mins	Individual Exploration of the Sophiatown Museum
10h30	30 mins	Tea and Dialogue Walk
11h00	60 mins	• CSP: Transversal Management Project • Gallery Walk: Insights from 29th August 2017 meeting and what has emerged since.
12h00	1h 30 mins	• What kind of institution do we need if we want to create this quality of built environment? • What will it take to get us there?
13h30	30 mins	Lunch
14h00	1h 45 mins	Next Steps- BEI diagnostic study. What We Think. What do you Think?
15h45	15 mins	Closure

Attendance

SACN Built Environment Intrgration Task Team - Sophiatown Trevor Huddleston Memorial - 16-May-18					
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15	Timm	Jeremy	National Treasury		jeremy.timm@treasury.gov.za

Participant Feedback

Date: **16-May-18**

Event name: **Built Environment Integration Reference Group**

What was the high point of the debate?

- Getting space for reflection.
- Discussions on the CIF.
- Discussions on the Transversal Management.
- Establishing a process for moving forward.
- Broad reflection on the model built, and what it means for our skew way of thinking. --

Do you have any comments for the organisers on how to improve any future debates?

- Consider the use of video conferencing to improve frequency of engagements.
- Reading - notes before each session.
- Try to bring more cities on the sessions.
- It was good - good pace, timing, agenda etc.
- Thank you.
- Strong linkages with other work (CSP, etc). Discussion.

Evaluation of the event

Category	Most Satisfied	Satisfied	Partly Satisfied	Rather Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
1) Was the information you received today relevant and useful to you?	3	3			
2) Do you feel that you have learned anything that would assist you in thinking about your work?	2	4			
3) Are you likely to use any of these Lessons in your own work?	4	1	1		

6 delegates completed the questionnaire