



Citizen-led air quality engagement: participative design in practice

Participative design approach

Air quality programs that put the needs of citizens front and centre are the most successful. Local governments can create spaces and opportunities for citizens to come together and help lead the design of a project to secure project outcomes that genuinely meet community needs while also educating and empowering people.

Participatory design is an approach to project design that actively involves all stakeholders (e.g. employees, partners, customers, citizens and end users) in the project design process to help ensure that outcomes meet their needs. Local governments can adopt a participative design approach to ensure citizens are not just heard but also feel empowered through actively contributing to shaping their local air quality monitoring project.

People are experts in their own lives. They are creative, they are capable, and they may just be your greatest asset.



Image: Community participants attend a participatory design workshop focused on air quality citizen sensing at FabLab Barcelona in 2019.
Source: Creative Commons



Why is Citizen participation important?

Air quality impacts the health and wellbeing of citizens and their families, making it a direct personal concern.

People often seek ways to help or get involved with their local community. Participative design involves working with citizens from day one, so that their priorities, ideas, and creativity are brought to the fore, guiding the shape and evolution of your air quality monitoring project. This can be empowering for individuals and can help to form the basis of a strong and cohesive society.

Further reading

The OPENAIR Best Practice Guide chapter *Participative design practice* discusses participative approaches local governments can use. The chapter emphasises the value of adopting the methodology early and introduces some of the common approaches.

For more information on engaging citizens and citizen science refer to the Best Practice Guide chapter *Citizen sensing* and Best Practice Guide chapter *Engaging your organisation with air quality data*.

FIND OUT MORE AND ACCESS OPENAIR RESOURCES

This factsheet is part of a suite of resources designed to support local government action on air quality through the use of smart low-cost sensing technologies. It is the first Australian project of its kind. Check the project website for resources and updates on post project collaborations: www.openair.org.au



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