Building a World-Class City: Community Connections

Best practices from around the world

Excerpt:

Introduction – The Power of Community Connections



The mission of Telosa is to create a more equitable and sustainable future. We are striving to establish a new model for how we work, live, and interact together. To accomplish our goals of a higher quality of life and greater opportunities, it is absolutely essential to have a strong sense of community - one that is of, by, and for the people.

Analyzing and learning from the best practices worldwide, one common characteristic is that all thriving, flourishing cities have a strong sense of community. To build a people-centric community the starting point is to listen and give everyone a voice to co-design and co-create a new model. We are focused on building a new city where everyone has a stake, and no one is left behind. Since the residents generate the value in a city, they should benefit from the growth and economic gains created. This helps to develop a culture of shared values and beliefs, a sense of ownership, a notion that they are part of something bigger than themselves, and gives purpose.

Telosa is based on three fundamental core values: open, fair, and inclusive. These values are integrated into our co-design as we engage our community. We have organized a Town Hall meeting, conducted a series of surveys, facilitated numerous focus groups, held interactive webinars to share information, exchanged ideas, and incorporated feedback into our planning.

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The name Telosa comes from the Greek word Telos, which means ultimate aim or highest purpose. The Greeks believed that for an individual to reach their full potential, it is not enough to achieve personal success, but the greater community must also thrive and flourish. History has demonstrated that community is vital to the success of Telosa and other cities worldwide.

Over the past several decades, a growing body of research has shown that community connections and social bonds are a very real and demonstrably beneficial aspect of every city, region, and nation. The networks among people's personal connections and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise form the basis of a well-functioning society. A strong community translates to an enhanced economy, more job opportunities, better health, improved safety and security, education, and family life. It has a meaningful impact on our quality of life and access to opportunities.

More specifically, as Robert Putnam, a Harvard professor and leading scholar on the subject, a systematic analysis of these core aspects of community has been repeatedly shown to have a direct impact on the quality and success in several crucial areas such as child welfare and education/life-long learning, active and sustainable neighborhoods, economic prosperity, health, happiness and well-being, active democratic participation and government's ability to deliver enhanced quality of life to citizens. There is extensive empirical data that shows direct linkages between strong communities and the economic and social benefits to individuals and society as a whole.

There are five key areas in which strong community connections have a proven empirical benefit:

1) Diverse groups overcome barriers and disagreements through collective solutions versus individual interests. This creates a safe and productive environment for decision-making;
2) Trust facilitates shared connections and interests, resulting in fair business and financial transactions. This contributes toward lowering the legal costs, time, and expense of enforcing contracts, leading to greater prosperity as resources are put to productive use.
3) Increased participation in community decision-making leads to expanded civic engagement and more effective governance. Mutual connections and reciprocity give people a voice and a sense of belonging. When people are heard they are more active and connected to their community.
4) Enhanced communication and reliable information help people work together to achieve community goals. People feel more knowledgeable and informed to exchange ideas and address common concerns and opportunities.
5) Improved mental and physical well-being through social interaction and human connections. This creates a healthier and happier community, where members feel a sense of place and purpose.

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The Telosa Community Foundation's approach is to find best practices around the globe we can learn from to build world-class cities, improve society, and co-create equitable and sustainable communities. We will apply our research in building the city of Telosa and share our findings to benefit existing cities around the world. This blueprint will demonstrate how we can create a new model for society with a higher quality of life and greater opportunity for everyone today and into our future. It all starts by focusing on community and leading with people first.

Why is community so vital in creating a thriving society?

Please stay tuned for our full findings report and our Community Connections webinar+ online event on 9/28/23 to participate in the discussion and learn more about this topic. For more details:

https://cityoftelosa.com/we-hear-you/#webinar