

CEPT CONFERENCE

**URBAN
DESIGN
IN INDIA**

9th-10th May 2023

**UDI Conference
Compendium
/2023**



Conference Partners



ROYALÉ TOUCHÉ
LAMINATES | WOODEN FLOORS | PLYWOOD

Royale Touche, with its heritage of over 45 years, changed the way India looked at laminates. The brand decided to create the country's first luxury laminates with unparalleled designs, textures & character. The company was built on two pillars- Ever-changing designs & never-changing quality.

Royale Touche being one of the most premium laminate brands in India, has helped transform plain structures into intimate spaces. The company's contemporary approach has driven itself towards international markets in Europe, USA, Africa, Malaysia, Hong Kong, China, Indonesia, Singapore & Australia. Royale Touche offers more than 950+ Unique Collections, 40+ Realistic Textures, New Designs Launching Every 4 Days with over 170+ stores across India & has also introduced the first-ever VR showrooms across the country.

Our legacy is built on trust, quality, and innovation and we strive to redefine elegance with dynamic designs.

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CEPT Conferences

CEPT Conferences aim to promote knowledge exchange, collaboration, and interdisciplinary research in urban design, planning, and policy and management. By bringing together stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, the conferences facilitate the advancement of sustainable and equitable urban development. The platform provides a forum for unbiased discussions, advances knowledge and new ideas, influences positive change in public policy, exposes students to professionals and policymakers, and offers networking opportunities. CEPT Conferences are dedicated to working towards solutions to India's urban challenges through collaboration and collective action.

The CEPT Conferences are organized by CEPT Research and Development Foundation (CRDF), the research arm of the University, engaged in research projects, advisory assignments and capacity building initiatives aimed at solving critical problems in the built environment and human habitats.

#ceptconferences
#urbandesigninindia

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About UDI Conference

It is an exciting moment for urban design in India. Like all new professions, the urban design profession in India is at a juncture where it is navigating its way through the complex processes, practices and demands of fast-paced transformations in Indian cities to provide meaningful and lasting design solutions for public places. Urban design education is the same in this context. It is also faced with similar challenges in preparing young graduates to integrate into the evolving profession and to operate in these complex environments. There is a growing emphasis on community participation and collaboration in the urban design process, which involves engaging with local communities and stakeholders to create more responsive and participatory urban design solutions. There are also various modes of providing services, including design, research and advocacy, and some fusion to suit the specific contextual requirement of projects.

It has long been felt that there must be a platform where urban design professionals can come together to share their experiences working on urban projects in India. This would allow cross-pollination of ideas and exposure to various modes of working in this domain that would benefit professionals and academicians and help strengthen the narrative of urban design in India. With this idea in mind, CEPT Research & Development Foundation has organized the conference on Urban Design in India at CEPT University. The goal is to make it into an annual event where urban design practice takes centre stage, and practicing firms share their perspectives on urban design in India through their work. In addition, the conference will provide a platform for networking and collaboration among these organizations, fostering a spirit of cooperation and collective action towards building better cities in India.

The conference will be relevant for urban design and planning professionals, urban design teachers and students, decision-makers in cities and citizens interested in the future of cities in India.

Conference Format

Day 1: Urban Design Practices in India

Presentations by Firms

The presentations by organizations engaged with urban design are at the heart of the conference. During these short but impactful presentations, speakers will share their unique perspectives on urban design in India, discussing their innovative projects, methodologies, and challenges. This will provide an invaluable opportunity for attendees to gain a rare insight into the diversity and dynamism of the urban design profession in India, inspiring a new generation of urban design professionals to create meaningful and inclusive urban spaces. The presentations will highlight the organizations' sustainable practices, positive impact on the urban realm in cities, and their innovative approaches to the ever-evolving field of urban design.

Day 2: Practice of Urban Design in India

Panel Discussions

On the second day of the conference, deliberated conversations with the speakers will take center stage. These discussions will revolve around the key ideas that emerge during the presentations, the challenges that urban design professionals face, and how to collectively advance the profession forward. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with the speakers, share their own reflections, and ask questions. This will provide a valuable platform for students and other members of the audience to interact with industry experts and gain insights into the urban design profession. The conference organizers have intentionally designed this aspect of the conference to foster meaningful discussions and exchanges of ideas, in order to build a stronger community of urban design professionals in India.

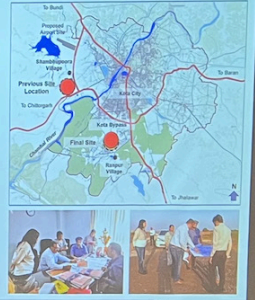


Glimpses from Urban Design in India 2023












Challenges

- Site was changed after the first stage because of land ownership issues
- Decision regarding finalisation of program and lead/ anchor components
- Consensus on Vision for Positioning of the Project
- Decision regarding soliciting EOIs from Potential Private Sector entities
- Decision regarding implementation & operation framework



Practice of Urban Design in India

Panel Discussion on

 Naresh Narasimhan Venkatramanian Associates	 Anil Prabhoo Shashi Prabhoo & Associates	 Prasanna Desai Prasanna Desai Architects	 Saumil Mevada INI Design Studio	 Mansi Sahu Studio POD
 Mophana Patel Studio Infill	 Rohit Chafya	 Purvi Patel Design & Planning Counsel	 Shobhit Tayal	

Profiles of Participating Firms

Urban design firms play a vital role in envisioning and creating sustainable, livable, and vibrant cities. Their expertise in blending architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, and community engagement helps to craft urban spaces that are both functional and aesthetically appealing. These firm profiles spotlight the inspiring work of participating firms, as well as their unique approaches to urban challenges.



01.	MOD Foundation, Bengaluru	/04
02.	Studio Aranya, Ernakulam	/06
03.	BDP India, New Delhi	/08
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12.	Urban Design Collective, Chennai	/26
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14.	Studio Infill, Pune	/30
15.	Studio POD, Mumbai	/32

MOD Foundation

10/2, O'Shaughnessy Road
Langford Gardens, Bengaluru



modfoundation.blr



@mod-foundation-bangalore



mod.org.in



About

Mod Foundation is the urban design & research team of Venkataramanan Associates (VA) headquartered in Bengaluru. The team undertakes work that is design-driven, with an emphasis on exploring and designing for underlying dimensions of the urban fabric. The focus is on cities, interpreting them by visualising data, hands-on design and mapping techniques; learning to observe and interpret them to help design them 'further'.

Presenter



Naresh Narsimhan

Co-Founder

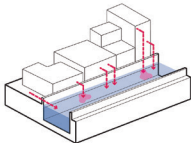
Naresh is a member of TEDX Community. He understands that creating a long-term vision for the city is a broad discipline by itself, and the path toward sensitive planning needs to be anything but traditional. His varied interests have been a great influence on how he thinks about the city and its pluralities. As co-founder of MOD Foundation - an international collective of urban designers, researchers and curators, Naresh has received acclaim for a range of strategic urban interventions, across all typologies and scales that are self-generated, experimental and innovative.

Presentation

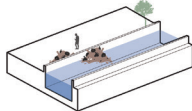
K100 Citizens' Waterway

The Raja Kaluve network in Bengaluru has suffered due to sewage and effluent discharge, unregulated building activities, and lack of maintenance. The design proposal aims to restore these storm-water drains as a vital part of the city's ecosystem with citizen involvement. By reframing the notion of storm-water drains from 'grey infrastructure' to an ecological network, it seeks to reconnect the city to its water heritage.

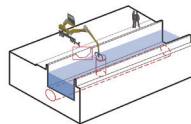
EXISTING CONDITIONS



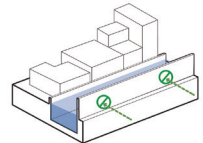
UNAUTHORISED
OUTFALLS



GARBAGE
COLLECTION

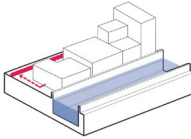


SEWER
MAINTENANCE

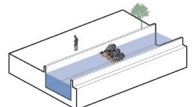


NO VISUAL
ACCESS

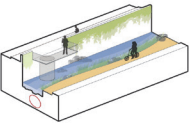
STRATEGIES



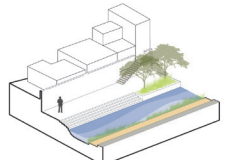
PLUGGING
OUTFALLS



TRASH
BARRIERS



INTEGRATING
MAINTENANCE



CREATING PUBLIC
SPACE & ACCESS

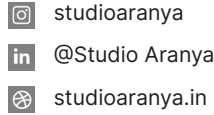
Challenges and Strategies



Public Park created as part of the mock-up for K100 Citizens Waterway

Studio Aranya

Sree-181, Erroor West, P.O,
Thrippunithura, Ernakulam,
Kerala



About

Studio Aranya is an architectural and urban design practice based in Kochi, India with a vision to create liveable cities and spaces through socially responsible architecture. Studio Aranya is Involved in various master planning, urban renewal, placemaking, hospitality and other public projects alongside private clients and public sector clients such as Cochin Smart City Mission Ltd, Kochi Metro Rail Ltd., Municipal Corporations etc.

Presenters



Thejus Augustine Principal Architect & Co-founder

Thejus was awarded the Young Urban Designers & Architects Programme fellowship in 2022 by the French Government and worked with Enia Architects in France. His notable projects include the Kochi Marine Drive Walkway and Kunnara Park Redevelopment.



Bella Ullas Principal Architect & Co-founder

Bella has received the prestigious Young Urban Designers & Architects Programme fellowship in 2021. She has also worked on various projects in India including, Patna Riverfront Development, Kochi Marine Drive Walkway and Kunnara Park Development.

Presentation

Waterfront Redevelopment Projects in Kochi

The 2.5 km Kochi Marine Drive walkway redevelopment project and Kunnara Park are place making initiatives carried out to ensure a more equitable, accessible, vibrant and pedestrian friendly recreation space along the water edge by incorporating activities for all age groups - children's play areas, open gym, yoga space, seating areas and creating more walkable zones.



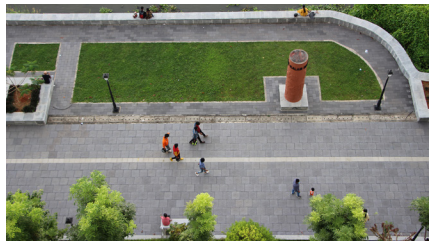
Kunnara Park - metro rail construction yard before _ after redevelopment



North end of Marine Drive walkway with inclusive activity spaces for all age groups



Marine Drive Walk Way



Marine Drive walkway _ yoga area

BDP India

203, 2nd floor
Eros Corporate Tower
Nehru Place
New Delhi



@bdp_com



/BDP (building design partnership ltd)



bdp.com



About

BDP creates places that foster wellbeing, inclusivity and sustainable futures across the full spectrum of the built environment including mixed-use, residential, workplace, retail, transit, media environments, education & health. Over past 10 years BDP has developed a strong presence in India where they have worked on a large number of projects encompassing master planning and landscape on various sectors, ranging from townships to education campuses, retail to hospitality providing high-quality design solutions.

Presenter



Radhika Mathur

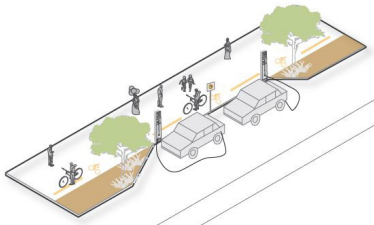
Associate Urban Designer

Radhika Mathur is an architect and urban designer at BDP in New Delhi. With 14 years of experience, she has worked on national and international master-plan projects in India and Southeast Asia, developing urban design frameworks and guidelines for multiple sectors and scales.

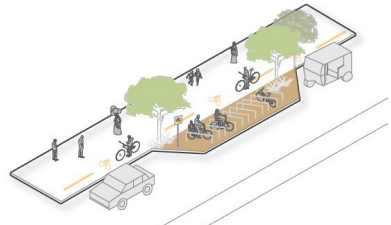
Presentation

Urban Design Guidelines - Lingua Franca of the Profession?

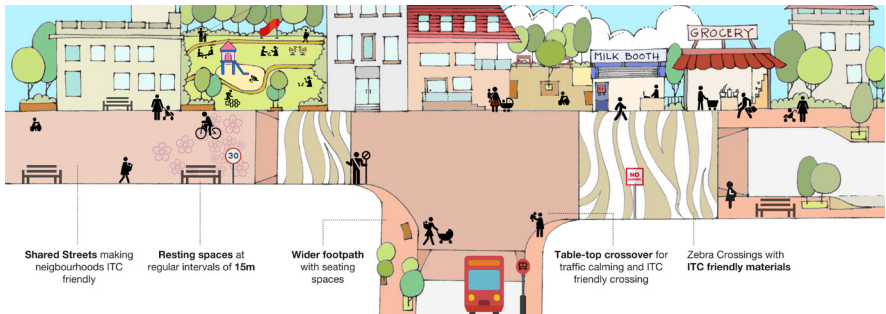
Urban design is a fledgling profession in India, lacking clear definition and scope. Creating urban design guidelines is often integral to master plans and urban design feasibility studies. However, it remains uncertain whether these guidelines have been effective or what constitutes a good set. Should there be a push to legalize comprehensive urban design guidelines nationwide?



Multi Utility Zone (MUZ) as EV charging hub



MUZ as bike share station






MUZ Sectional View



MUZ Sectional View

Design & Planning Counsel

One42, 604 South Tower,
Chhanalal Joshi Marg, Ashok
Vatika, Ahmedabad

 @Design & Planning Counsel
 @Design and Planning Counsel
 dpc.co.in



About

Design & Planning Counsel (DPC) is a Planning & Urban Design firm engaged in consultancy & research on designing cities, public spaces & large development projects. Over the last two decades, DPC has won a number of national and international awards. The firm brings together its expertise in integrating multiple facets of design and development, recommending holistic solutions for high quality and vibrant built environment. Our clients include Government Organizations, NGOs, Private Sector Companies and Developers.

Presenters



Shobhit Tayal Co-founder and Director

Shobhit has over 25 years of experience, he specializes in urban planning and design, and has completed numerous prestigious projects across India. He believes in improving people's lives and the environment through practice, research, and knowledge dissemination.



Purvi Patel Director, Research

Purvi Patel has received recognition for her work and is particularly known for creating India's first disabled-friendly riverfront in Daman Ganga. Her portfolio includes government buildings, large campuses, townships, and special needs-friendly spaces.

Presentation

New Greenfield City at Ranpur, Kota

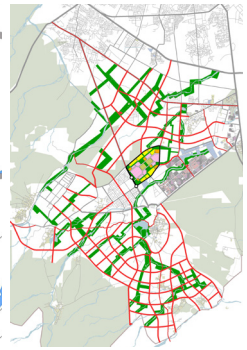
A Master Plan & Infrastructure proposal envisaging the city's economic base around Education & Health infrastructure. The project presented a unique opportunity to prepare a comprehensive Master Plan incorporating the challenges of financial viability, revenue model, land acquisition, regulatory approvals, establishing secure infrastructure systems and an economic base.



Integrating Public Transport with Blue - Green Infrastructure



Open Space System






Scalability by extending the Blue and Green network concept



Walkable, Imageable, Sustainable and Market Friendly Development

INI Design Studio

71/72, Titanium Nr.
Prahladnagar Auda Garden,
Corporate Rd, Satellite,
Ahmedabad

 @inidesignstudio
 @INI Design Studio
 inidesignstudio.com



About

INI Design Studio is a multi-disciplinary, independently owned collaborative design practice. Their work encompasses planning, architecture, engineering and design-built services for many sectors that cut across the sustainable built environment. Their Purpose is to bring the best experience to users through good design which gives the best environment to live, learn, work, play and heal. The team has a strong record of successfully delivering projects for our clients with integrity and team spirit, both in India and Internationally.

Presenter



Saumil Mevada

Director - Architecture & Urban Planning

Saumil is an architect and urban designer with over 20 years of experience in India and abroad. With a strong design focus and an aptitude of inventive problem solving, Saumil strives to create and contribute towards developing design solutions that help build better communities.

He believes in a collaborative work environment and that ideas are borne out of creative dialogue between the client and the design team. He has worked with various teams and in varied roles across the USA, UAE and India. Saumil believes that design should reflect culture, time, and place.

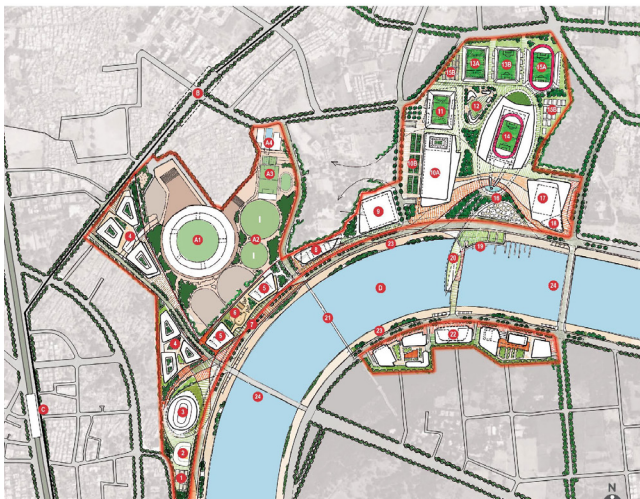
Presentation

Urban Design Framework Plan for Olympic Infrastructure in Ahmedabad

The Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (SVP) Sports Enclave will be one of its kind international level integrated sports infrastructure spread over 215 acres. It will be one of the largest contiguous and multi-sport facility in the country offering venues for 20+ Olympic games including Athletics, Football, Aquatics, and many other Indoor and Outdoor Sports.



Aerial view of the SVP Sports Enclave






Legend

- 1 Cricket Stadium
- 2 Practice Pitch
- 3 Football & Tennis
- 4 Club & Swimming Pool
- 5 Metro Stop
- 6 BRTS Stop
- 7 Sabarmati River
- 8 Volleyball Court
- 9 Beach Volleyball Stadium
- 10 Cycling Velodrome
- 11 Athletic Residential Village
- 12 Multi-Purpose Sports Areas - 1 & 2
- 13 Skate Park
- 14 Retail / Cafe / Restaurants
- 15 Natatorium (Aquatic Covered Outdoor Pool)
- 16 Natatorium (Aquatic Indoor Pool)
- 17 Indoor Sports Center
- 18 Tennis Center
- 19 Field Hockey Stadium
- 20 Amenities / Cafe / Food & Beverage
- 21 Multi-Purpose Field - 1
- 22 Multi-Purpose Field - 2
- 23 Track & Field | Football Stadium
- 24 Multi-Sports Stadium (Athletics & Football)
- 25 Outdoor Courts
- 26 Event Plaza & Public Amenities
- 27 Main Indoor Sports Arena
- 28 Signature Hotel
- 29 Boating Center
- 30 Signature Pedestrian Bridge
- 31 Raska Water Supply
- 32 Hotel / Mixed-Use / Commercial / Offices
- 33 Riverfront Promenade

Master plan of SVP Sports Enclave

Sponge Collaborative

9D, Ega Trade Center,
Arihant towers, Kilpauk,
Chennai

 spongecollaborative
 @Sponge Collaborative
 spongecollaborative.com



About

Sponge Collaborative is a multi-disciplinary planning and design firm that adopts a systems approach with focus on ecology & community. They specialise across the verticals of strategic planning, urban design, climate-responsive architecture, landscape architecture, and sustainable community development. Currently, Sponge Collaborative is engaged in projects across disciplines with various government and multilateral agencies to realize integrated planning frameworks, built & open space projects in various cities.

Presenters



Praveen Raj Co-founder and Director

Praveen has worked on award winning projects in India, Argentina, Afghanistan, Mexico, Egypt, and the US. His projects on integrated urban development & resilience have won several international awards, including the American Institute of Architects, Boston Society of Landscape Architects, The Plan, and more.

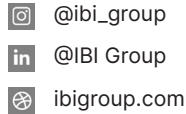


Manushi Jain Co-founder and Director

Manushi is an architect and an urban designer with expertise in urban and environmental design, architecture, and tactical urbanism. She was recently featured on Forbes '30 under 30' young leaders for 2022. She's worked on projects worldwide and was invited to speak at Asia Water Forum 2022 and TEDxSCAC, Pune.

Arcadis IBI Group

Cabin 1.24, 91 Springboard, CST
Road, Kolivery Village, MMRDA
Area, Kalina, Santacruz East,
Mumbai



About

IBI Group have been fortunate to deliver some of the most seminal work that influences city design. Their combined transport planning and urban design skills uniquely position them to drive the narrative on how urban development and design must respond to the intense investments in transit systems that characterize this century for urban India. Their aim is to continue to define the cities of tomorrow through sustainable planning practices and meaningful placemaking.

Presenter



Zohra Mutabanna Associate Director

Zohra has led a number of inter-disciplinary teams on Transit Oriented Development, Multi-modal Integration, and Streetscape Design projects. Her professional expertise lies in envisioning strategic and design-based, systems, and technology solutions to challenges associated with people, transportation, and the public realm.

Presentation

TOD - An Urban Design Tool for Better Planning

IBI Group developed growth frameworks and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) strategies for the City Plan of Hubballi Dharwad and the Mumbai Metro Line 7 Corridor. The plans aimed to improve economic vitality, sustainability, and quality of life by leveraging investments in key areas, including slum up gradation and underutilized government land holdings.



Hubballi Dharwad_Neighbourhood Node



Strategies to achieve TOD along HDBRTS corridor

Shashi Prabhu & Associates

Wankhede Stadium, Block A2
and B1, North Stand,
'D' Road, Churchgate, Mumbai



@Shashi Prabhu & Associates



@Shashi Prabhu & Associates



shashiprabhu.com



About

Shashi Prabhu & Associates is a pre-eminent Architecture & Engineering consulting firm renowned for its high-quality and innovative design solutions in the built environment including Urban Design, Architecture, Engineering, Interior Design, Project Management, and Transactional Advisory Services. Through excellence, integrity, continuous improvement and commitment to technology, the practice strives to deliver client-driven high-quality sustainable assets and people-centric solutions, which stand the test of time.

Presenter



Amol Prabhu Partner

Amol leads a top Architecture & Engineering consulting firm that is renowned for its innovative design solutions in the built environment. He brings exceptional expertise in Real Estate, Design, and Project Management with a global perspective and mission-critical project experience. At Shashi Prabhu & Associates, Amol leads the team to offer a wide range of services, including Urban Design, Architecture, Engineering, Interior Design, Project Management, and Transactional Advisory Services in India, the Middle East, and Africa.

Presentation

Design Beyond the Architect

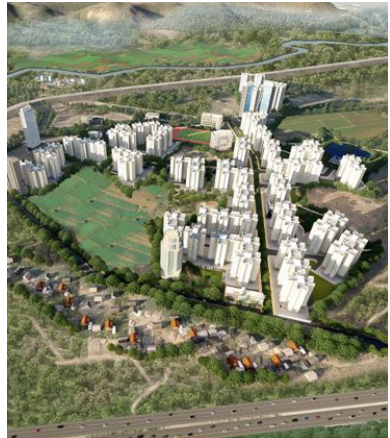
Good urban design is essential for creating livable, functional, and sustainable cities that meet the needs of their inhabitants. However, urban design is a complex and collaborative process that goes beyond the traditional role of architect to consider complexities of urban environment to realize the design into the built reality.



Wankhede Stadium



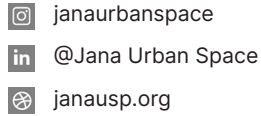
India's first inter-nodal station, Ajni Nagpur



Self-Development - Mass Housing for 10K Police Constables, Mumbai

Jana Urban Space

19/4, Cunningham Rd, Vasanth
Nagar, Bengaluru, Karnataka



About

Jana Urban Space aims to improve the quality of life in Indian cities by working towards sustainable urban development. It has been involved in various projects related to urban planning, infrastructure, and policy-making. They work with various stakeholders, including governments, private sector organizations, and citizens, to create more livable and equitable cities.

Presenter



Nithya Ramesh Director, Urban Design

Nithya Ramesh leads transformative projects of great public value to improve India's cities. She spearheaded the execution of the first set of Tender SURE roads in Bengaluru, conceptualized and developed Tender SURE roads in different cities in India, waterfront development projects, and social infrastructure projects.

Apart from managing design and drawing delivery, she handles client, government liaison, and community participation. Nithya engages with various organizations within the urban development sphere, reflecting the ethos of her organization.

Presentation

Tender S.U.R.E - Journey of Transformation

The Tender S.U.R.E (Specification for Urban Road Execution) guidelines released in 2011, outline design principles, technical guidelines, and contract agreements for designing and executing urban streets. They were piloted in Bengaluru in a 10 KM stretch. Since then Jana Urban Space has supported design and execution of 100KMs of urban streets in multiple states.



Cunningham Road, Bengaluru



TENDER S.U.R.E. Road Locations in Bengaluru

Prasanna Desai Architects

13, Praniti Apartments,
Baner Road, Aundh, Pune,
Maharashtra



prasannadesaiarchitects



Prasanna Desai Architects PDA

About

Prasanna Desai Architects is an Architectural and Urban Design practice that works in public domain to create Healthier and Socially Integrated Cities. The practice emphasizes the role of an architect in the public domain. Their efforts have led to numerous success stories of well-designed and implemented streets in India, where these streets have turned into vibrant public spaces for the neighborhood & have helped in resolving conflicts and improving the character & quality of life.

Presenter



Prasanna Desai

Architect and Urban Designer

Prasanna Desai emphasizes the role of an architect in the Public Domain with a people-participatory approach focusing on Equity and Empathy. He is an inspiring teacher and has been active in academics for the last 4 decades. He firmly believes that an Architect who is trained to be a sensitive person also needs to be an aware citizen, thus playing a much more significant role in the development of society and contributing considerably to the betterment of the quality of the built environment in the cities.

Presentation

Creating Healthy and Humane Neighbourhoods Through Participatory Approach




Prasanna Desai Architects have been involved in the designing of several streets, public spaces and social housing projects with peoples' participation. Their goal is to use design as a tool to create more humane, healthier and socially integrated cities.



Walking and cycling friendly streets in Aunnsh, Pune developed as part of Healthy Aunnsh neighborhood development.

HCP

Paritosh
Usmanpura
Ahmedabad

-  [hcp.architecture.urbanism](https://www.instagram.com/hcp.architecture.urbanism)
-  [/hcp design, planning & management pvt. ltd.](https://www.linkedin.com/company/hcp-design-planning-management-pvt-ltd)
-  hcp.co.in



About

HCP is a multi-disciplinary design practice that provides professional services in architectural design, interior design, engineering, urban design, urban planning, communications, project management, and construction management. Their design philosophy and collaborative approach allows them to offer an expansive array of non-traditional design services and ensure specialized technical knowledge application, in turn, building credibility for the long term.

Presenter



Niki Shah

Director - Urban Design

Niki leads the Urbanism studio and mentors a multidisciplinary team of architects, urban designers, planners, and landscape architects. With an eye for detail and a deep understanding of urban development issues, he brings a unique direction to the practice. He led a team of designers, experts, and advisors for Kartavya Path redevelopment, and also the overall Central Vista Masterplan. He is also involved in riverfront/waterfront projects across the country.

Presentation

Making of Kartavya Path

The process of transforming large-scale public spaces like Kartavya Path, requires expertise in various segments to research, design, and implement the proposal. It involves an in-depth study of how various user segments utilize these spaces and, accordingly designing infrastructure facilities, signage, lighting, landscaping, and public streets that are functionally appropriate, inclusive, and accessible.



Kartavya Path in India Gate Precinct



Parking and Vending Zone, Before



Parking and Vending Zone, After

Urban Design Collective

94, Kamaraj Avenue- 2nd
Street, Adyar,
Chennai



udc_gram



@Urban Design Collective



urbandesigncollective.com



About

The Urban Design Collective (UDC) was founded as a platform to mobilize those who want to change the way our cities are built. UDC provides an open platform for young design professionals, who otherwise as individuals are excluded in the city building process, to create and disseminate content, and voice themselves as change-makers for better cities. As a result, UDC has come to be a global community of architects, designers, engineers, artists, writers, photographers and many others who are passionate about cities.

Presenter



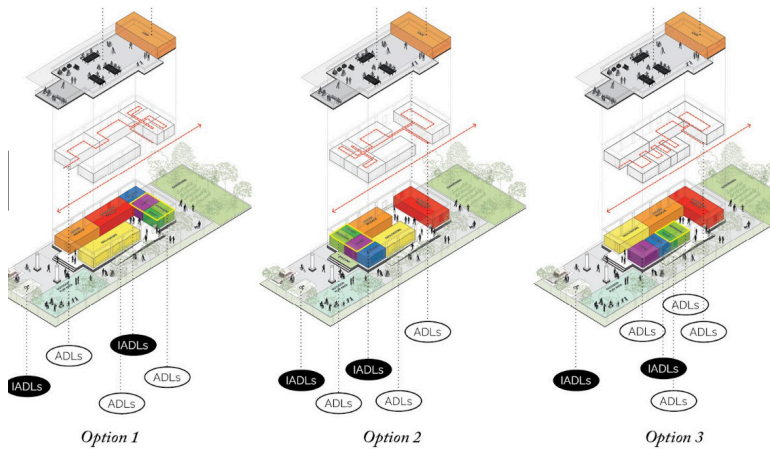
Vidhya Mohankumar Founder and Principal

Vidhya Mohankumar has 18 years of work experience focused on creating cities that are people-oriented and centered around transit. She is passionate about sustainable development and participatory design and planning. Her approach is driven by research that is grounded and inter-sectional as a way to understand the everyday urbanism of cities.

Presentation

Inclusivity in Public Spaces

Public spaces need to be fully accessible, both physical and socially, to be truly inclusive. UDC has been actively promoting the incorporation of universal accessibility standards in built environments through research, advocacy, and demonstration projects. A recent example of UDC's efforts is a pathway for people with disabilities at the Marina beach, enabling them to enjoy the water.



Designed according to the Live – Work – Play module, the Museum of Possibilities is a space designed to showcase universal accessibility standards in built space.



Pathway for persons with disability at Marina Beach, Picture Credits: Greater Chennai Corporation



3rd Floor, Room No.1, Pasco
Patil Chawl, opp. Sholay Hotel,
Dharavi koliwada, Dharavi,
Mumbai

- urbznet
- urbz
- urbz.net



About

urbz is an action and research collective specialized in participatory urban planning and design, governance and architecture. They believe that residents are experts of their neighborhoods. Their everyday experiences constitute essential knowledge for architecture, planning, urban development, and policy-making. They engage and work in cities through a user-generated approach using a combination of research, workshops, plans, construction projects and exhibitions.

Presenter



Matias Echanove

Co-founder

Matias Echanove is the co-founder of urbz and a globetrotter based in Mumbai and Geneva. He is passionate about participatory governance, urban and economic development, mobility, and culture.

His work has been exhibited worldwide, and he's a sought-after speaker at top universities and forums. Matias holds degrees from the London School of Economics, Columbia University, and the University of Tokyo and regularly contributes to prestigious publications.

Presentation

Homegrown Neighbourhood - Urban design in Dharavi, Mumbai

The project recognizes the talent and skills of local builders in homegrown settlements by providing a space for showcasing their ideas and design imagination. The project's departure point is the recognition of the role of local actors in the production of their own habitats.

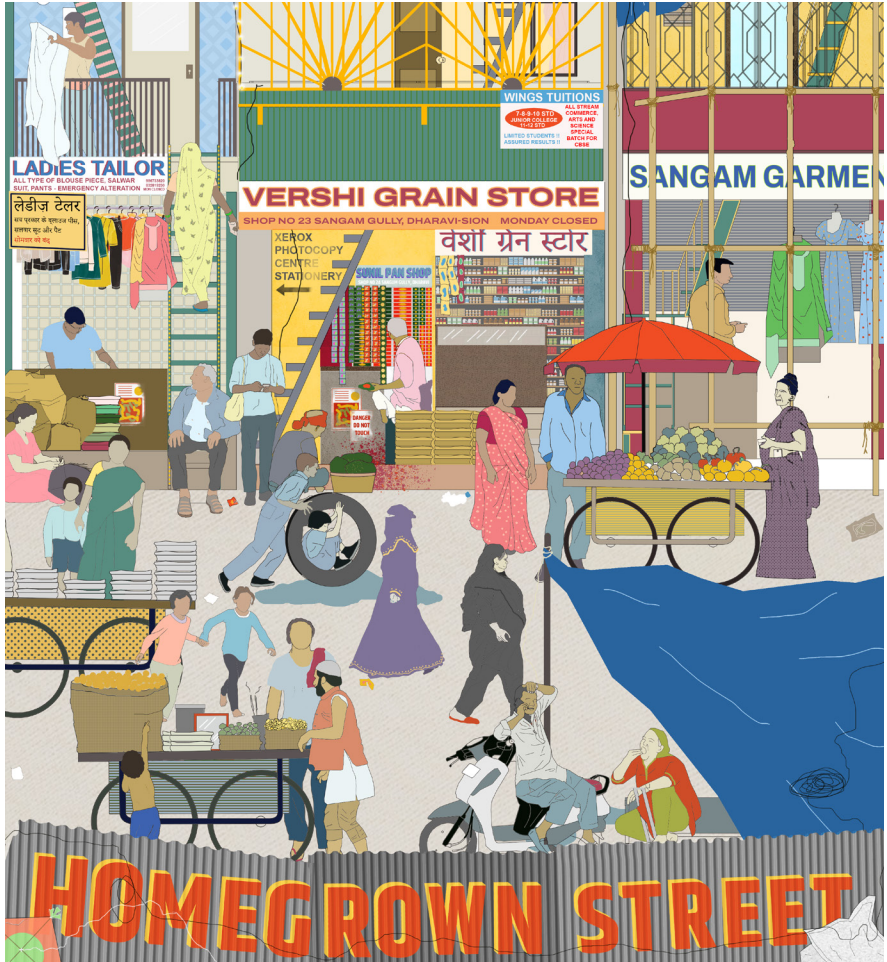




Illustration: Livability in a low-rise, high-density typology , Improving quality of built environment Sangam Galli in Dharavi with participation of local contractors and artisans.

Studio Infill

A-703, Isha Emerald,
Bibwewadi Kondhwa Rd, Pune,
Maharashtra

 studio_infill
 @ Studio Infill



About

Studio Infill have won several urban design competitions, they are currently executing projects for the city governments of Mumbai, Pune, and CSR projects for Corporate Groups. Two of their urban design projects received a special mention at the prestigious HUDCO Design Awards 2022-23. At Studio Infill, it is their constant effort to create people-oriented designs and craft experiential spaces that are in close harmony with nature, climate, and the local context.

Presenters



Rohit Gadiya Principal Designer

Rohit is passionate about working in the public realm. Before co-founding Studio Infill, he worked with design practices in Ahmedabad, Pune, and has experience of working in the non-profit sector, engaging closely with the government. He believes, sensitively created urban design projects have the potential to influence civic and social behaviour, creating better citizens.



Meghana Patel Principal Designer

Meghana has led several urban design projects including public parks, tactical initiatives & street design competitions. She believes in designing experiential spaces which are in close harmony with nature and respond to its users, climate and the local context.

Presentation

Reclaiming Urban Spaces for Indian Cities

Claim – Reclaim – Recreate is the brief story of most of the urban design projects at Studio Infill. India is poised for rapid urbanization, and urban design has a vital role to play in shaping our urbanscapes, creating liveable, inclusive cities. With the optimization of available space, opportunities ought to be created to craft spaces to celebrate public life.



Public life at park of Arches, Mumbai



TU trial of Pune Municipal Corporation's School Travel Improvement Plan



Deepstambh and amphitheater at Linear Park, Mumbai






Realignment of Haji Ali Chowk, Mumbai (Under CSR)



Kund as play space at Park of Arches, Mumbai: A vacant traffic island converted to a public park

Studio POD

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Bandra West, Mumbai,
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About

StudioPOD specializes in creating vibrant, sustainable, and community-driven urban spaces, collaborating with all stakeholders to deliver design excellence. Based in India, StudioPOD champions urban design and landscape urbanism in the public and private sectors, advocating for the importance of a high-quality public realm. The team is composed of multi-disciplinary professionals with different skill sets, working together on innovative projects of varying scales.

Presenter



Mansi Sahu

Director & Co Founder

Mansi is the co-founder of StudioPOD, an award winning international multi-disciplinary firm specializing in city planning, urban design, landscape urbanism, and transport planning. With more than 15 years of urban planning and design experience, Mansi's focus lies in creating innovative, sustainable, community driven and dynamic urban places for people, while working extensively with the local communities, city governments, private developers, public agencies, and stakeholders.

Mansi is a passionate urbanist who has been advocating through her work the importance of equitable public realms and creating sustainable balanced environments.

Presentation

Reshaping Public Spaces in Indian Cities

The presentation focuses on the journey of an Urban design studio committed to creating people oriented urban environments. Integrating different scales of public spaces with infrastructure, planning, management and design upgrades to transform them from spaces into places is the core of the practice.



Re-imagined streets and public spaces at Karla Phata near Lonavala



Tactical urbanism strategies to enhance the safety for all road users at Karla Phata near Lonavala on the NH-48 highway

Doodle Notes by Students

During the conference several students captured the presentations through doodle notes that brought the conference content to life. The exercise encouraged students to engage deeply with the conference material and translate, analyze, synthesize, and distill the information into concise and meaningful doodles. The doodles also provide a vivid reference for later reflection.



Key Insights and Takeaways

These takeaways that have emerged from the collective discussions over two days encapsulate the diverse perspectives, ideas, challenges and solutions, that shape the practice of urban design in India. They reflect the commitment and passion of professionals dedicated to creating sustainable, inclusive, and livable urban environments. These key takeaways from this conference will serve as a valuable resource for further exploration and advocacy in the realm of urban design. It will help guide the agenda for future research, engagement and collaborative efforts.



- **As cities become more politically influential and prosperous, there has been a noticeable increase in interest and investments implementing urban improvement projects.**

Urbanization is rapidly transforming the Indian landscape, with cities emerging as vital hubs of opportunity. Within these urban centers, public spaces play a crucial role as meeting points, social hubs, and cultural landscapes that bring people together from diverse backgrounds. However, the neglect of the public realm in Indian cities has been a persistent challenge for many years. Fortunately, there is now promising progress as governments prioritize investments in public realm improvement projects. And the interest in urban design extends across all levels of government.

At the national level, initiatives like HRIDAY (Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana), Smart Cities, and more recently the Streets for People Challenge and Nurturing Neighborhood Challenge have opened up avenues for cities to showcase innovative solutions and design ideas that promote more inclusive streets and public spaces. Moreover, governments at both national and state levels are financing large-scale urban infrastructure projects, including new satellite towns, multi-modal transit hubs and sporting facilities. Local councilors and administrators are also actively commissioning projects that emphasize urban design, recognizing the positive impact of well-designed public spaces on community well-being, social cohesion, and economic vitality.

When I began my practice 25 years ago, India's focus was primarily on its villages. In the last decade there has been a growing recognition of the significance of urban areas, their improvement, and the role of urban design. As cities continue to grow and become richer, there will be increasing demand and resources to do more!

-Bimal Patel, HCP

We have witnessed significant changes, and there are more opportunities to engage with public spaces and infrastructure. With investments in transportation as a sector, Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) for example has emerged as a key area of practice. We are excited about the next decade and whats to come!

-Amol Prabhu, Shashi Prabhu and Associates

- **With their specialized skills and multidisciplinary approach Urban designers play a pivotal role in improving the quality of the public realm.**

Urban design, as a profession, is primarily concerned with the design and enhancement of the public realm. Though not formalized yet in India, the profession occupies an essential position bridging the realms of urban planning and architecture, integrating the strategic vision of planning with the creative and tangible aspects of architectural design. The specialized training of urban designers equips them to study and analyze the complexities of the public realm and navigate the interactions between people buildings & infrastructure, social dynamics, community needs and environmental sustainability. They bring together specialized skills in architecture, landscape architecture, infrastructure, urban planning, social sciences and communication that allows them to envision, plan, and design communities and public spaces with a holistic approach.

Urban design is a profession that is generated out of overlaps. It can be likened to a Venn diagram, finding its place at the intersection of architecture, landscape design, planning, and regulations. Yet, at times, it carves out its own distinct meaning

-Radhika Mathur, BDP

The process of transforming large-scale public spaces requires expertise in various segments to research, design, and implement the proposal. It involves an in-depth study of how various user segments utilize these spaces and, accordingly designing infrastructure facilities, signage, lighting, landscaping, and public streets that are functionally appropriate, inclusive, and accessible.

-Niki Shah, HCP

It is acceptable and even advantageous for the urban design discipline to be shifting and evolving, as it presents us with opportunities. At its core, urban designers will continue to address pressing challenges such as walkability, inclusive public spaces, environmental sustainability, and social equality. While some recognition is significant, urban design is always going to be influenced by the ever-changing context in which we operate.”

-Praveen Raj, Sponge Collaborative

- **India's emerging yet diverse urban design practice is already demonstrating its crucial role in catalyzing trans-formative changes within public spaces.**

The dynamic urban landscape in India necessitates innovative solutions that effectively balance infrastructure development, social inclusivity, and environmental sustainability. Urban design practitioners are continuously adapting their approaches, embracing the country's diverse contexts and aspirations for the future. This adaptability is evident in the wide range of projects they engage in, varying in scale and nature. Large-scale master planning and infrastructure development projects such as the Master Plan for Olympic Infrastructure in Ahmedabad by INI Design and the Infrastructure Development Plan for New Greenfield City at Ranpur, Kota by DPC exemplify the comprehensive approach taken to shape urban environments. The design of streets and public spaces, as seen in the transformation of Kartavya Path by HCP and the Tender SURE Streets in Bengaluru by JUSP, demonstrates a focus on creating vibrant and functional public realms. There is a growing emphasis on rejuvenating natural resources and systems. Examples include the Sponge City Feasibility Studies for Thiruvottiyur and Mathur by the Sponge Collaborative and the K100 Citizens' Waterway project in Bengaluru.

We have dedicated several years to the implementation of Tender S.U.R.E streets in Bengaluru, leading to a remarkable transformation of the city center into a highly walkable area. A notable example is the redevelopment of Richmond Road. Furthermore, we actively collaborated with city engineers, building their capacities to understand and design urban streets.

-Nithya, Jana Urban Space

We are very concerned about climate change and how urban development can exacerbate it. Our practice focuses on leveraging open spaces, streets and buildings to create a resilient future. We work on climate resiliency, climate adaptation and water-sensitive infrastructure in our projects. We advocate for the sponge city approach, which is an interdisciplinary planning and integrated infrastructure approach to managing water in urban areas.

-Praveen Raj, Sponge Collaborative

Practitioners are also actively engaging in socially responsible projects that aim to enhance communities and improve the quality of urban settlements. For instance, organizations like Urbz have undertaken initiatives in Dharavi, involving local artisans and contractors to revitalize and reimagine the dense urban fabric. Prasanna Desai Architects have contributed to participatory housing design interventions in informal settlements in Pune, empowering residents in shaping their living environments. The Urban Design Collective's creation of a pathway for people with disabilities at Marina Beach exemplifies their commitment to inclusive design, promoting accessibility and inclusivity in public spaces.

Healthy, hygienic, humane neighborhoods can only happen when we start designing with people using a participatory approach. In our slum development project in Netaji Nagar in Pune engaged closely with the community using models and mock-up and to determine their preferences and validate their choices.

-Prasanna Desai, Prasanna Desai Architects

Crafting design guidelines and regulations is another significant way urban designers are contributing in shaping the physical form and development of cities. For instance, the Arcadis IBI Group's 'TOD (Transit-Oriented Development) strategies for the Mumbai Metro Corridor' project provides a framework for creating vibrant and accessible urban spaces around transit hubs. Similarly BDP as worked with several

Urban design outcomes are visible only in the long term. It takes time to create a coherent yet dynamic city environment. Guidelines help structure the decision making across time of 15, 20, 40 years. We have worked on framing guidelines for several projects ranging from development around airports, educational institutions and privately developed communities to guide future development that creates vibrant public places and is also climate resilient.

-Radhika Mathur, BDP

The diversity of urban design practice is also evident in the wide range of organizations engaged with practice, encompassing international design consultancies, small to mid size professional firms, non-profit collaborations, and advocacy organizations. Despite their varied backgrounds and approaches, they share a common objective: to enhance public spaces throughout India.

- **Productive engagement with government actors is key to implementing projects and demonstrating the value and potential of the profession.**

Urban designers must perceive elected representatives and administrators as valuable collaborators rather than impediments. Elected representatives serve as the voice of the people, entrusted with the responsibility of making decisions that shape the future of cities and communities. Engaging in an open and constructive dialogue with government entities allows urban designers to bridge the gap between the design vision of a project and the political realities of governance.

The priorities in a democracy are determined by the elected representatives, who are chosen by the people. While you may not agree with the government's agenda on certain aspects, there may be other areas where you do agree. You have the choice to either challenge the government on the issues you disagree with or focus your efforts on supporting the aspects you agree on. Practice will advance through active participation and collaboration rather than solely focusing on opposition.

-Bimal Patel, HCP

Urban designers can find opportunities to work with government by tailoring their messages to align with the priorities of local government. By avoiding technical jargon and using language and concepts that resonate with elected representatives, designers can effectively communicate the value and relevance of their proposals. The use of compelling visuals helps government actors visualize the potential benefits of urban interventions, fostering better understanding and support. Additionally, designers can bolster their proposals with data and logical arguments, that demonstrate the feasibility and positive impact of their ideas.

You cannot build a project unless you align yourself with the political and municipal bodies. You have to be able to convince them. If you are able to give them the logic and the law behind, then you are able to achieve what you set out to do. Throughout our experience, we have found that even the most resistant individuals can be swayed to support our objectives when provided with a sound and logical explanation!

-Amol Prabhu, Shashi Prabhu and Associates

- **Collaboration with communities and a diverse range of stakeholders, both technical and non-technical, is integral to urban design practice.**

The urban designer often serves as the anchor and catalyst, bringing together multiple partners, and leveraging their resources, expertise, and financial support to bring the design vision to fruition. Throughout the design process, the urban designer plays a vital role in facilitating communication, managing expectations, and resolving conflicts among the various partners. The urban designer also acts as a representative of the community's interests and perspectives, engaging with local residents to understand their needs, aspirations, and concerns. This collaborative approach is critical to promoting cross-disciplinary innovation and cultivating a collective responsibility towards maintenance of public spaces.

We worked with 15 different consultancies, and engaged with multiple municipal departments for the implementation of the Green Mile Project, We also engaged with communities to seek their feedback and inform our design interventions.

-Mansi Sahu, Studio Pod

Urban designers act as arbitrators in the public realm, they are bridge builders between multiple organizations. In our projects we engage with private entities, governments, and even take on the role of representing environment and under privileged communities.

-Praveen Raj, Sponge Collaborative

Urban Design is more than place-making. Place making focuses only on 'surface design'. Urban design deals with aspect of urban infrastructure, ensuring long-term efficiency of a public space. You have to collaborate with environmental engineers and to successfully implement projects.

-Naresh Narsimhan , MOD Foundation

Collaborating with technical consultants helps you bolster arguments in favor of your design. Get traffic engineers on your team for a street design project. They will bring the right language and rationale to convince public engineers on the other side!

-Zohra Mutabanna, Arcadis IBI Group

- **There are multiple avenues for young urban designers practices to start making a tangible difference, from participating in competitions, collaborating with other design practices, to actively initiating dialogues with decision-makers around potential projects.**

Young practitioners face a pivotal question at the beginning of their careers: where should they start their journey in the field of urban design? There is no one-size-fits-all approach, and each practitioner must carve out their own unique path that aligns with their goals and aspirations. Many young practices such as Studio Infill and Sponge Collaborative have found success through participating in competition, using it as a launching pad for their careers. Competitions provide a platform to showcase ideas, interact with politicians, and propose logical solutions. Another approach is active engagement with government projects and officials. By having a range of ideas ready, one can actively pursue opportunities, increasing their chances of securing projects. They also have the option to join existing practices and offices. By becoming part of established teams, they can gain valuable experience, and expand their skills and networks.

During our initial years, we used to pitch around 30 projects a year! We worked as part of larger collaboratives as illustrators, putting together reports and presentations. We also approached governments. We were willing to work on anything from reviewing contracts and tenders, language corrections, to small design interventions. Slowly our work was recognized and we got a seat at the table. If you have intent, there is a way!

-Mansi Sahu, Studio Pod

Competitions can be a good breakthrough. We participated and won 7 competitions. The projects did not materialize. However, they really opened up a number of avenues for us to engage with the city government. And consistent engagement and dialogues with government can open pathways. One of our successful public park project started as a small commission for a sculpture in a traffic island, and grew into a junction improvement and public space intervention.

-Mansi Sahu, Studio Pod

- **Developing robust systems to build team capacities, foster effective collaboration, and implement efficient resource and funding management strategies is essential for enabling urban design practices to scale and thrive.**

Urban design projects frequently face resource constraints and involve substantial time commitments for design and execution. Consequently, urban design practices must navigate challenges such as limited fees, extended timelines, and potential payment delays. To overcome these obstacles, it is imperative for practices to establish efficient internal systems that optimize resources and streamline operations. This includes building team capacities and proper data management to ensure continuation of projects.

Practices also differently adopt approaches to maintain a consistent revenue stream from exploring alternative funding sources, such as engaging in private architecture projects, maintaining contingency funds and implementing sound financial planning.

Documenting and archiving is critical. We have implemented a robust file management system that helps us access any project information easily and facilitates seamless collaboration among team members. Additionally, we ensure that pitch decks are readily available, allowing us to capitalize on any potential opportunity that may arise.

Recognizing the significance of financial planning and management, we have engaged a dedicated financial consultant who assists us in setting targets and working towards achieving them.

-Mansi Sahu, Studio Pod

In our practice, having a solid business model allows us to explore diverse avenues for revenue generation. While our expertise primarily lies in urban design, we also venture into related areas like infrastructure planning and transaction advisory. We adapt and manage these different projects to ensure the overall success of our practice.

-Shobhit Tayal, DPC

- **Urban designers must leverage their collective expertise to advance the profession. Universities can play a crucial role by creating spaces for dialogue, and interdisciplinary learning among practitioners.**

It is evident that there is a pressing need to build recognition for the profession of urban design in India. Currently, there is a lack of clarity regarding the role of urban designers in various projects. In government tenders, for instance, urban planners are often listed instead of urban designers, creating confusion and limiting the potential contributions of the profession. Additionally, issues related to tendering processes, fee structures, and payments further complicate the landscape for practitioners. To address these challenges, it is crucial for practitioners to come together as a peer group and collectively reflect on these issues. Universities can provide this platform and complement their efforts by actively engaging in research, advocacy, and the development of resources that address the challenges faced by the profession of urban design.

When engaging with politicians or bureaucrats, it becomes evident that there is often limited knowledge about urban design, its scope, and where to access resources on the design of streets and public spaces. Their familiarity lies more with building codes and national IRC guidelines. Integrating design guidelines into national regulatory frameworks becomes a crucial question.

- Bella Ullas, Studio Aranya

The scope of work in the field of urban design is vast, and we are still only scratching the surface. Universities play a crucial role in supporting us by facilitating outreach and engagement, as well as identifying key problem statements that demand the attention.

-Zohra Mutabanna, Arcadis IBI Group

Universities play a crucial role in advancing the profession. Their contribution extends beyond educating and preparing future urban designers for professional practice. They can also provide platforms for knowledge exchange, and conduct action research on critical practice areas such as best practices, tendering processes, fee structures among others.

-Brijesh Bhatha, Program Chair, MUD, CEPT University

Epilogue

Understanding the importance of bringing urban design professionals together to exchange their experiences and ideas related to Indian projects, the CEPT Research & Development Foundation initiated the Urban Design in India conference at CEPT University. This event, planned to occur annually, places urban design practice in the spotlight, offering practicing firms a canvas to articulate their unique perspectives through their accomplished work.

Beyond a showcase, this conference served as a hub for networking and collaboration, fostering a collaborative ethos among urban design practitioners. The discussions and conversations brought forth crucial ideas that will help promote and improve the profession, propelling collective efforts towards enhancing cities in India.

A big thank you to all the participating firms, urban design professionals, teachers, and students who joined the conference and engaged in its enriching conversations. Join us in spreading the message and igniting further interest and participation in this initiative. We look forward to seeing you next year!





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