

Chapter 7

Lesson Learned From Public Participation in the Urban Infrastructure Projects for Engineering: Case Studies in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

Raising public awareness and participation of the local communities can have an important input for public involvement in the project design and implementation process, and it has become a major objective of sound development programs. This chapter focuses on (1) public participation in the design and adjust boundary of the underground station of the Metro line 2 in Ho Chi Minh City and (2) public awareness and participation in canal environmental protection. Research is mainly based on the results of community meetings on project information, communication to raise public awareness on environmental protection, and survey questionnaires. The study will add to several recent studies on the roles of public participation in infrastructure projects for sustainable development. There are three important lessons that stand out from the experiences using public consultants in infrastructure projects.

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INTRODUCTION

Since Sherry Arnstein, writing in 1969 about citizen involvement in planning processes in the United States, described a “ladder of citizen participation” (Arnstein, 1969), it is known that significant degrees exist in stakeholder involvement and participation and that the extent of their influence during decision-making processes is a crucial factor in determining their future stakeholders. Nowadays, stakeholder support is recognized as essential for the successful implementation of many policies and programs (Jonsson et al., 2007) (Hendriksen et al., 2012).

The roles of stakeholders and public participation in the implementation of policies and programs had been described in many aspects and spread from country to countries such as in the multi-level environmental governance of aquaculture (Anh et al., 2011) or food risks (de Krom et al., 2013), sanitation, and urban water sector (L. Zhong et al., 2008) (Van Buuren & Hendriksen, 2010), or transportation and other infrastructure projects (Pham Thi Anh & Nguyen Thi Bao Ngoc, 2019) (Li, Terry H.Y. Y et al., 2012).

The urban infrastructure projects often aim to bring benefits for the development of economic, social, and environmental to the invested area, but in other aspects, they also face the problems of investment, resettlement, and several impacts during the construction and operation of these projects. Raising public awareness and public consultation effectively can have an important input for public participation in the project design and implementation process.

Public participation in engineering has been more limited than in other fields. Meetings, where the community has the opportunity to comment on public works projects, are commonplace and the literature in this area focuses on the best way to gain support for projects (Rob Lawlor, 2016).

HCMC (Ho Chi Minh City) currently has 19 urban districts and 5 rural districts with an area of 2,095.01 km², a population of 7,995 million inhabitants, and an average population density of 3,401 people/km². HCMC is the economic center of Vietnam and accounts for a large proportion of Vietnam’s economy. Thanks to its favorable natural conditions HCMC became an important traffic hub for Vietnam and Southeast Asia, including road, railway, waterway, and airway. In recent years, Ho Chi Minh City had invested several projects on transportation and flooding improvement.

This paper focus on two groups of the project as case studies in Ho Chi Minh City; (1) Projects on public transportation in Ho Chi Minh City, the authors analyzed public participation in the design and adjusted the boundary of the underground station of the Metro line 2 - in Ho Chi Minh City, and (2) projects on the canal and sewerage improvement in the effort to reduce flooding in Ho Chi Minh City, the authors focused on public awareness and participation in canal environmental protection.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE DESIGN AND ADJUSTING OF THE UNDERGROUND STATION OF METRO LINE 2 – IN HO CHI MINH CITY

Ho Chi Minh City People’s Committee (PC) has drawn out a plan of a Metro Rail System with six main lines to link the city center of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam to outlying areas of the City. The six metro lines will be the backbone of the new HCMC public transport system and Line No.2 is a priority in the system development. It is predicted to transport over 600,000 people/day, and to provide a more environment-friendly and safer means of public mass transport in the city (MVA Sysstra Group, 2013).

The Metro line 2 (Ben Thanh - Tham Luong) is a dual-track line with a length of approximately 11.3 km, of which approximately 9 km consists of a Twin Bored Tunnel and the rest of an Elevated Section.

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