

Sharing lessons from city engagement in the Research Hub for Urban Sustainability, Health and Equity (RHUSH)

Report on the RHUSH city engagement workshop on 23rd April 2020

Compiled by: Gemma Moore, Camilla Audia, Nici Zimmerman & Jo Hale

Summary

This report highlights key insights from a collaborative workshop held by the Research Hub for Urban Sustainability, Health and Equity (RHUSH) bringing together members of Pathways to Equitable Cities and Complex Urban Systems for Sustainability and Health (CUSSH) projects. It was held online on April 23rd 2020 with the goals to share learnings, reflections, challenges and opportunities of engaging in different cities to impact on equitable urban development and health.

After brief presentations exploring the two projects' theoretical framework for engagement and most recent activities, participants were asked to reflect, in small groups, on their own experiences of engagement, highlighting best practices, pitfalls and difficulties in the current COVID-19 situation. A brief plenary discussion followed, highlighting these key insights:

1. Engagement is necessary to ensure that research on health and equity is salient and integrated into policies.
2. "One size does not fit all": engagement allows for a more precise knowledge of the social and policy context of each city.
3. Face-to-face events are key in building trust and open dialogue that supports sustainable relationships. These events create both formal spaces to learn and informal time to network.
4. Building common ground and ensuring that everyone gets something out of engaging are key steps in ensuring that research and policy can communicate and jointly evolve.
5. Engagement can provide tools to link short-term actions to long-term sustainable goals, outputs to outcomes and catalysing change in complex systems. However, it requires time, resources and can be risky.
6. COVID-19 has affected both the way that research is thought of and carried out and the way policy is being made. There are opportunities to further reflect on what engagement means in a COVID-19 world and RHUSH is a good place to start exploring what it could look like.

As we found this engagement between the projects useful, further activities to update and learn from each other will follow.

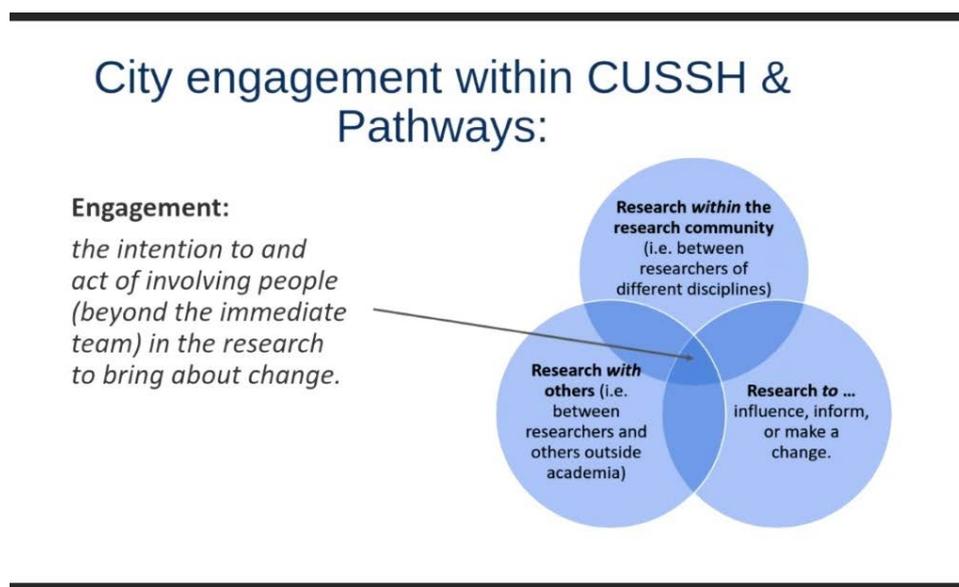
1 Introduction

Members of the CUSSH and Pathways community virtually came together to share lessons from their engagement in partner cities in a workshop held on Thursday 23rd April 2020, as part of the Research Hub for Urban Sustainability, Health and Equity (RHUSH).

The overall goals for the workshop were to inform each other about how CUSSH and Pathways engage with their partner cities; to share lessons and learning from specific projects; and to start investigating whether there might be recommendations and best practices for city engagement.

Both CUSSH and Pathways are using models for engagement and co-production with stakeholders in cities. Engagement can mean different things to different people, and each programme takes a specific approach. For the purposes of the workshop, a shared definition of engagement was used (see Figure 1). Engagement was understood as *the intention to, and act of involving people (beyond the immediate team) in the research to bring about change.*

Figure 1: Shared definition of engagement



This report outlines the findings of this workshop, identifying the programmes' current approaches, challenges and opportunities to build upon. An insight from the workshop is that cross-project communication is key to generate ideas informing the approach to engagement within CUSSH and Pathways. The document concludes with suggestions of things the programmes can do next.

2 The workshop

2.1 Workshop aims

The specific aims for the workshop were to:

- Create an opportunity for those working on CUSSH and PATHWAYS share their emerging insights from their different programmes and projects
- Bring together the learning from CUSSH and PATHWAYS to generate recommendations for successful city engagement
- Consider how to share and take advantage of opportunities as well as learn from and overcome challenges

2.2 Workshop format

The workshop was held online, using the software Blackboard Collaborate. The workshop was led by facilitators from both programmes. We hoped that this would enable participants to feel comfortable to contribute and share their experiences in an informal virtual setting.

The workshop was designed around an interactive activity to elicit participants' experiences of engagement: a list making exercise. The goal of the exercise was to enable the members to share their insights – broadly the benefits and challenges of engagement. In particular we aimed at finding out about reasons for city engagement, what did and did not work, and the impact of COVID-19. Participants felt the small group discussions using Blackboard Collaborate software well served their purpose. The workshop agenda and some detail on each session is shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Agenda for the workshop

Time	Details
8.45	Log on/online joining
9.00	Welcomes and Introduction
9.10	Sharing what we are doing and our approaches to city engagement Presentations from city leads from CUSSH and Pathways to give an overview of their city engagement followed by questions
9.40	Small Group discussion: Your projects, your lists Break out into four small groups (mixing the members from both projects)
10.20	Sharing your lists and your learning Whole group discussion
10.50	Concluding remarks from the Principal Investigators of CUSSH and Pathways
11.00	End

2.3 Workshop attendance

There were 20 participants at the workshop. There was a spread across both programmes, and members represented most of the different cities that the programmes are working in. The list of the attendees is outlined in Appendix 1. Some members who could not attend due to time difference issues sent some thoughts on the list ahead of time and those were integrated in the breakout group discussions.

2.4 Information collection

We gathered information throughout the workshop through recording the group discussion and using Google documents to capture participants' group discussions. A Google document template contained four prompt questions to ensure group discussion was focused, and each separate group focused on the same questions. A facilitator was allocated to the group.

Following the workshop, the collated participants' feedback was captured on a single document grouped by questions. The analysis pulled out common themes relating to partnership working, collaboration, co-production and engagement. This report provides the summary feedback gathered from the workshop, grouped according to inductively derived themes.

3 Workshop Findings

Below is a summary of the key themes that emerged from the discussion, example comments and reflections to illustrate the themes. The full list of questions and complied answers are in Appendix 2.

3.1 Reasons for city engagement

The first question posed was "Drawing from the cities you have engaged with, what are your different reasons for doing engagement and what do you hope to achieve?" Although the specific geographic, socioeconomic and cultural contexts might be different, both between and within the projects, participants were asked to discuss their experiences and explore potential commonalities and differences.

Several key themes came up in the workshop, shared by both programmes concerned with city engagement. These are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Reasons for undertaking engagement

Key Theme	Example comments
Scoping and understanding	<i>"To understand priorities, objectives and values of decision-makers"</i>

	<p><i>“To understand some of the policy environment”</i></p> <p><i>“To understand how different sector are approaching similar topics like tenure security”</i></p> <p><i>“Onsite engagement allows for a grounded understanding on a challenge”</i></p> <p><i>“Collect as diverse set of knowledge as possible from various stakeholders’ mental models, e.g. knowledge concerning the structure of the system of how things work, but also numerical and other data”</i></p>
Influence	<p><i>“To ensure the research gets used”</i></p> <p><i>“To accelerate policy decisions and implementation”</i></p> <p><i>“To reach a common understanding among all stakeholders for a more holistic picture”</i></p> <p><i>“To shape the agenda”</i></p>
Trust and relationships	<p><i>“Processes aiming to develop trust have been different according to the cities”</i></p> <p><i>“Buy-in and commitment, ownership and trust”</i></p>
Access (to different data, knowledge and people)	<p><i>“Different sources of data have been accessed”</i></p> <p><i>“To find out civil society groups to engage”</i></p> <p><i>“Engaging city partners bring insights on the issues that the data might not tell at first hand, which are stories that may be particular to the location/context and partner’s experience”</i></p>

Common features for why the programmes were using engagement methodologies were linked to achieving meaningful, relevant and worthwhile impacts from the programmes. Engagement was identified as a means to ensure that the research that is contextual, relevant and addresses real world issues.

3.2 What worked well

The second question posed was “What are the pathways that have worked well to engage cities and what are future opportunities to build upon or further strengthen city engagement?”

The discussion touched upon factors which influenced the processes and outcomes of engagement, in relation to its planning, implementation and desired impacts. Three key

themes emerged from the comments, all relating to the “boundaries” of the engagement: planning, focusing and carrying out engagement.

Table 3: Things that have worked well to engage, and future opportunities to build upon

Key Themes	Example comments
Plan, plan and plan	<p><i>“Stakeholder analysis of stakeholders within cities”</i></p> <p><i>“Scoping to find out what the issues are”</i></p> <p><i>“Having a local partner who serves as a gatekeeper and knows the local policy environment and stakeholders (e.g. APHRC in Kenya, EHESP in Rennes)”</i></p>
Focus	<p><i>“Having a geographical focus of engagement”</i></p> <p><i>“Working in different themes (e.g. housing and neighbourhood, inequalities) of the project and each themes works on a policy scenarios”</i></p> <p><i>“Focusing on the factors in each theme that affect health outcomes”</i></p>
Collaborative mechanisms (i.e. workshops, placements)	<p><i>“Ensuring range of voices to be included in the workshops ... inclusive”</i></p> <p><i>“The onsite workshop in Accra was helpful for the housing and health research, led to several research activities (ex. housing and tenure)”</i></p> <p><i>“Embedding people in cities/stakeholder organisations”</i></p>

When answering the second question, some participants noted specific mechanisms to engage, noting the role of workshops and face-to-face events. It was felt that these mechanisms provided opportunities to network, encourage cross-organisation working and bringing together different stakeholders and decision makers. It was felt that these collaborative mechanisms worked well, with participants indicating that this stage was key in creating trust and shaping the next stages of the research. One member of Pathways who was involved in a workshop in Accra highlighted the positive impact it had on their motivation in relation to their involvement in the project, and overall feelings of bringing about change in the cities.

3.3 Challenges to city engagement

The third question posed to workshop participants was: “What are the challenges for deepening city engagement for your own research project?”

A few challenges were listed, however, a key challenge raised by some related to the overall topics of health, wellbeing and equity, and how these link to complex and contested issues: i.e. climate, economic growth, behaviour change. The complexity and sheer breadth of issues that come under “health and wellbeing” proved challenging for some in engaging with different actors. One participant noted the tension is responding to local priorities, many of which are framed as single issues, whilst encouraging connections to wider issues and systems to be explored.

Table 4: Challenges for deepening engagement

Key Themes	Example comments
Finding people and shared agendas	<p><i>“[It can be challenging to] accept local priorities and [then] think about how to build synergies with wider perspectives / issues ... we had the chance to do this with Kisumu project”</i></p> <p><i>“Difference between timeframes (short/long agendas)”</i></p> <p><i>“(In Rennes) It was difficult to deeply engage the city with the research and a solution to address that was to include the School of Public Health as a formal partner. That increased the chances of having meaningful impact on policies”.</i></p> <p><i>“Policy maker continuity”</i></p>
Capacity and resource	<i>“institutional stakeholders are overwhelmed with other activities”</i>
Practicalities	<p><i>“Availability (time zones, busy schedules, etc), time, connectivity (weak internet connection), and current travel limitations are some of the challenges limiting deepening city engagement in the project”.</i></p> <p><i>“Red tape, MoUs, time, resources can also be limitations in deepening engagement”.</i></p> <p><i>“Communication challenges, too scientific?”</i></p>
Tracking and evaluating (tools to capture engagement)	<p><i>“Measuring influence becomes more difficult as we are more deeply engaged”</i></p> <p><i>“Recording and capturing engagement for continuity and handovers”</i></p>

If the goal of engagement is to open up the research to a range of stakeholders, then it needs to be recognised that diverse actors may find it difficult to find the common ground, and ultimately reach consensus. It was clear that both CUSSH and Pathways understood that different stakeholders in cities are different and all have different aims and objectives. Thus,

crucial to effective engagement is time to build common understanding, discuss through open, two-way communication and reach agreement on issues to be explored and how.

Although at this stage of the programmes it is not possible to know if the results of the engagement have been/will be translated into action (i.e. policy change), there is a clear commitment from both programmes to keep ensuring that stakeholders and partners feel a sense of ownership and connection to the projects' themes, research and outputs.

3.4 Impact of COVID-19

The final question posed to participants was related to the future, in the current context of COVID 19: Thinking specifically about the impact of COVID-19 on city engagement. What are the challenges that we are facing? And how can we overcome these challenges? (i.e. opportunities for remote/online engagement). Participants were encouraged to reflect from within and outside the programmes. The key themes and example comments are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4: Impact of COVID 19 on city engagement

Key Themes	Example comments
Adapting	<p><i>"Move online the modelling workshops - making it shorter in time"</i></p> <p><i>"Risk of 'covid-ization' of research and engagement"</i></p> <p><i>"Adapt the methodologies"</i></p>
Practicalities	<p><i>"Some of the challenges for city engagement are on the technical aspects, for instance if there is a weak internet connection, and on the substantive aspect, typically, the discussions tend to be more limited online".</i></p>
Competing Agendas	<p><i>"Big change to societal and government agendas - e.g. economic pressures, employment - this can make engagement harder"</i></p>
Emerging interest areas	<p><i>"City developers (private companies) are also open to new, health-focused approaches and healthy community development"</i></p> <p><i>"People discussing future of public transportation"</i></p>

4 Discussion

The findings from the workshop highlight the things that have worked well with the engagement undertaken so far, alongside recognising the difficulties within this process.

The workshop brought to the fore the experiential elements of engagement, framed around specific contexts, which are shaped by the following aspects:

- those who are participating (who)
- the activities and mechanisms to engage (how)
- the places where engagement happens (where)
- stages in time (when)
- what the purpose and focus of engagement is (what)

Participants shared their experiences, despite the differences in who, how, where, when and what, there were similarities between the programmes. There was an acknowledgement that although engagement isn't always quick or easy (particularly engaging with “right” people, negotiating areas of interest, establishing trust and managing expectations) it is necessary for achieving the overall programme goals: i.e. that the research will contribute to improving population health and enhancing health equity and environmental sustainability in cities around the world.

Although the approaches to engagement may have varied between and within CUSSH and Pathways, whether it was around identifying relevant problems, sharing data, combining of perspectives, it was agreed that this is key step to enable the research to be relevant, meaningful, more likely be part of policy and decision making processes, and more likely to make a positive difference within the cities.

The workshop identified several issues for consideration these have been broken down into key groups:

CUSSH and Pathways have a broad and versatile portfolio of city engagement activities already happening

Existing engagement models and approaches (e.g. participatory systems dynamic workshops, coproduction workshops) are being undertaken within the programmes. The discussion initiated by the workshop illustrate this breadth. Despite the variety of “projects” and “sub-projects” within and between the programmes, the workshop indicates that the project teams’ interests and aspirations for engagement are similar. The workshop also offered an opportunity to discuss and commit to explore the underlying frameworks for engaging between the two programmes and continuing the cross-project conversation. This is particularly key in exploring what engagement looks like in a COVID-19 affected world as well as in defining values and steps to monitor and evaluate engagement.

Engagement is a way to achieve transformative change in the cities

A driver for the engagement was to aid to research, making it more relevant, meaningful and impactful – bringing about changes within cities. Some participants noted that engagement helped them gain new perspectives and insights on particular topics, ultimately leading to more salient research.

As well as a means to understand the context in which the research is taking place, there was aspiration that engaging decision makers (i.e. policy professionals) will shape the work, increase buy-in, and ensure its uptake.

Building relationships is key to working with stakeholders

Some participants noted the challenge of making and sustaining contacts with or accessing organisations to work with. However, once contacts have been made, time is needed to build trust and relationships with these groups. Furthermore, there can be a challenge in sustaining or continuing these relationships, particularly if stakeholders leave/change position.

Engagement can be mutually beneficial, but comes with challenges

It can be motivating, but difficult, even for those with plenty of engagement experience. A range of challenges were noted including finding a shared agenda, communicating in a common language (both with regards to jargon and to languages), working with different timescales, constraints on resources (e.g. staff), pressures on time (e.g. juggling different tasks) and finding incentives to engage (both researchers and partners).

Engagement is inherently unpredictable

The processes of engagement open up dialogue and raise questions: the pathway of activities and its impacts can be unpredictable. This can be time consuming and risky; people could be working to different aims or motivations and expectations may vary. To address these challenges, there is a need to make sure that all involved actors (researchers, policy professionals, decision-makers, people at risk...) share trust, aims and expectations so that everyone can get something out of the engagement.

Support evaluation, reflection and learning

There is value in critically assessing the processes and impacts of engagement as it is happening. There is opportunity to build in time for reflection and learning throughout the process to assess what is working and what could be improved as the activity is ongoing; this would be a recursive process, allowing changes if necessary.

5 Concluding remarks and next steps

The workshop was a chance for members of CUSSH and Pathways to jointly reflect on what they are working towards, how they are engaging in cities, and how they can share and take advantage of opportunities as well as learn from and overcome shared challenges.

There was an agreement that there is value to come together and share the learning about how to engage and do it well, as well as appetite to continue this conversation between the programmes. The current COVID-19 situation presents challenges and means we will need to adapt our approach to how engagement happens, but offers an opportunity to jointly reflect on what engagement, policy and more broadly the science-policy-society nexus could look like.

The opportunity exists to:

- explore the theoretical frameworks underpinning engagement in Pathways and CUSSH, and potentially write a joint paper looking at transdisciplinary and co-production;
- continue to share updates on activities and share learning between programmes on engagement, potentially starting with informal checking points;
- establish formal ways to encourage cross-programme/peer-to-peer reflection (i.e. further workshops between those involved in city engagement).

Appendix 1: **CUSSH & Pathways Joint Workshop Registered Attendees**

Pathways participants



Camilla Audia

Research Associate at King's College London

Co-leader of the Knowledge Co-production working group



Frans Berkhout

Professor and Executive Dean at King's College London

Co-leader of the Knowledge Co-production working group



Majid Ezzati

Chair in Global Environmental Health at Imperial College London

Pathways project leader



Samuel Agyei-Mensah

Professor and Provost at the University of Ghana, Accra

Co-leader of the Accra working group

Research interests: environmental health, social inequalities, urban geography



George Owusu

Professor at the University of Ghana, Accra

Co-leader of the Accra working group

Research interests: social inequalities, urban geography



Jill Baumgartner

Associate Professor at McGill University, Montreal

Leader of the Health Outcomes working group

Research interests: global environmental health



Brian Robinson

Assistant Professor at McGill University, Montreal

Leader of the Poverty and Inequality working group

Research interests: social inequalities, development geography



Zahidul Quayyum

Professor at BRAC University, Dhaka

Co-leader of the Dhaka working group

Research interests: social inequalities, solid waste management, water logging, housing and neighbourhood



Tanvir Hasan

Assistant Professor at BRAC University, Dhaka

Co-leader of the Dhaka working group

Research interests: solid waste management, water logging, housing and neighbourhood



Ying Long

Professor at Tsinghua University, Beijing

Leader of the Beijing working group

Research interests: big data, housing and neighbourhood



Yuyang Zhang

Post-Doctoral Researcher at Tsinghua University, Beijing

Member of the Beijing working group

Research interests: housing and neighbourhood

City engagement workshop – CUSSH participants

Confirmed



Kristine Belesova

LSHTM

Research Fellow in Environmental Epidemiology



Mike Davies

Professor of Building Physics and the Environment, UCL
CUSSH Programme Director



Kaveh Dianati

Doctoral Researcher, UCL
Research Fellow in System Dynamics, focusing on pollution problems in Kenya



Jo Hale

Senior Research Fellow, UCL
London city engagement and behaviour science



Andy Haines

Professor of Environmental Change and Public Health, LSHTM
CUSSH senior management team



Blessing Mberu

Professor of Urbanization and Wellbeing, African Population Health Research Center
Kenya city engagement and population health



Nahid Mohajeri

Senior Research Fellow, UCL
Building physics modelling



Gemma Moore

Senior Research Fellow, UCL
Research evaluation



Irene Pluchinotta

Research Fellow, UCL
London city engagement and SD modelling



Aarathi Prasad

Research Fellow, UCL
Community engagement, particularly in Kenya



Anne Roue-Le Gall
Professor, EHESP
Rennes city engagement



Paul Wilkinson
Professor of Environmental Epidemiology, LSHTM
CUSSH scientific director



Nici Zimmermann
Associate Professor in System Dynamics, UCL
Work package leader for city engagement

Tentative



Clément Deloly
Research Fellow, EHESP
City engagement and qualitative research



David Osrin
Professor of Global Health, UCL
Work package leader for community engagement



Helen Pineo
Lecturer in Sustainable & Healthy Built Environments, UCL
City engagement in China



Lawrie Robertson
Director, BuroHappold Engineering
CUSSH senior management team



Clive Shrubsole
Environmental Public Health Scientist, Public Health England
London city engagement

Appendix 2: Group discussion, combined answers

QUESTION 1 Drawing from the cities you have engaged with, what are your different reasons for doing engagement and what do you hope to achieve?

- Co-benefits within cities
- Communication of research findings
- Priorities of local decision makers, and constraints and enablers of that - and how to integrate short and long term viewpoints
- How different sectors are approaching similar topics, like housing tenure security
- Change of viewpoints over which sectors are involved / what is being prioritised
- Understand priorities, objectives and values of decision makers
- Identify and support each stage of decision-making process
- Balance between results and mechanisms
- Different sources of data have been accessed
- Engagement with “decision makers” rather than “local communities”, and this can vary within different cities
- Changes in approach related to who you have access to - who you want at the table and who you can get
- Engaging city partners brings insights on the issues that the data might not tell at first hand, which are stories that may be particular to the location/context and partner's experience. Onsite engagement allows for a grounded understanding on a challenge, not only by experiencing the context, but on listening to the concerns and ideas from city partners.
- Initial engagement to understand from them what the priorities were for work in their cities and what they felt CUSSH could do to engage.
- Understand some of the policy environments initially; engagement plays out very differently in different cities. Processes and aims are different according to the different cities.
- Engaging is a necessity because we aim to make some policy recommendations and we expect our partners to implement them.
- Relationships are different depending on the cities but also on different stages of the project.
- Process aiming to develop trust that has been different according to the cities. In Kisumu for example there was a possibility to build on the relationships with people originally involved but also to create new opportunities to engage with different people.
- To learn what matters - what is on the agenda
- To shape the agenda
- To ensure research gets used
- To find out civil society groups to engage
- To accelerate policy decisions and implementation
- To develop shared understanding of what we are trying to achieve

- To understand mechanisms for engagement
- To understand and influence decision-making processes
- Measure influence
- Pathways:
 - Because each city has unique characteristics
 - For developing policy scenarios
 - Diverse group of actors across different areas needed to make the city work. They need to be engaged.
 - Also engaging the cities for cross-city learning.
- CUSSH:
 - Translate evidence: make it available and accessible (also aim of the funder)
 - Baseline assessment
 - → To identify priority areas
 - Identifying opportunities for change, leverage points
 - Achieve change and implementation
 - Collect as diverse set of knowledge as possible from various stakeholders' mental models, e.g. knowledge concerning the structure of the system of how things work, but also numerical and other data
 - To reach a common understanding among all stakeholders for a more holistic picture
 - Buy-in and commitment, ownership and trust → Chance of being useful and implemented

QUESTION 2 What are the pathways that have worked well to engage cities and what are future opportunities to build upon or further strengthen city engagement?

- London - engaged with London Plan, inserting into discussions - positioning oneself within decision making framework
- Kisumu- integrate within plans and supporting waste (and support funding application - leverage of funding) (
- Align the needs of decision makers to skills of researchers, identify with them and what the focus is/ the focus of the collaboration. Identifying the “shared concern”
- Academic language (i.e. variables) noted by stakeholders
- Stakeholder analysis of stakeholders within cities - contact via emails, phone, interviews. Scoping to find out what the issues are, hearing from them, using their knowledge and understanding their experience
- Societal partner workshops - great moderation of workshops and meetings. Key element of success, asking good questions, format/activities etc
- Ensuring range of voices to be included in the workshops, inclusive
- Feeling post workshop ... motivated and energized
- Contacting different stakeholders, coordination of engagement
- Having a more collaborative approach within a programme

- Geographical focus of engagement
- Two approaches: Take a specific environmental risk, i.e. air quality, and look at health impacts. Start with the health outcome and assess the range of factors that influence it
- The onsite workshop in Accra was helpful for the housing and health research, led to several research activities (ex. housing and tenure). It would be good to plan for more opportunities to integrate more face-to-face engagement in the future, and trace how these interactions feed into the project.
- Series of workshops in Kisumu with clear laid plans of going back to partners, doing things in a timely way, delivering what was “promised” - this all helps in building trust with partners.
- Quality of the workshops also depend on who is able to attend: how do you get initial buy-in from stakeholders? What are their incentives to join? How can we build relationships/use previously established ones.
- Going top-down has also been explored but it results in engagement that doesn’t necessarily brings buy-in.
- Stakeholder analysis before engagement starts so we can build and maintain the engagement.
- Participants can also link with wider and broader knowledge, for examples pick people who have the possibility to link with other interactions (eg other conferences or talk with other partners)
- Building long-term relationships
- Embedding people in cities/stakeholder organisations
- Direct, frequent, iterative engagement
- Interested in sharing methods across projects such as analysing Twitter
- Internet companies have a lot of influence (Beijing context) - good relationship potential, so far indirect engagement but could be implemented in near future
- Past discussions with Google and others - can be slow
- Sharing economy - e.g. bike sharing
- How we share and publicise information in the information era will have impacts on communities
- We have an opportunity to change the behaviour of local residents
- There may also be unintended consequences
- Need to be careful how/what information is shared
- Pathways:
 - Bringing all policy areas and implementers together
 - Cross-expertise, exchange ideas
 - Define problem, define analysis
 - Try to achieve common understanding
 - Working in different themes (e.g. housing and neighbourhood, inequalities) of the project and each themes works on a policy scenarios
 - Focusing on the factors in each theme that affect health outcomes

- Focusing on the factors influencing those outcomes
- Use of a matrix: Focus on different types of outcomes and how they can be measured
- Co-production (e.g. Ghana),
- Theoretical frameworks, e.g for co-production
- CUSSH:
 - Building relationships with city partners
 - Having a local partner who serves as a gatekeeper and knows the local policy environment and stakeholders (e.g. APHRC in Kenya, EHESP in Rennes)
 - Adding the right partners later
 - Co-design the problem (waste management in Kisumu)
 - Interest of local stakeholders and policymakers. Where the research project can come in and push things further forward and help local stakeholders with knowledge and expertise. (Case of Kisumu and waste. Case of Rennes and green infrastructure)
 - Managing the project by Cities rather than WPs.
 - Engagement strategy. Theory of Change. Are helpful to have from the outset.
 - Engaging a novel member for project evaluation (Gemma)
 - Making films for city engagement. Touching people's emotions.
 - Two more points from Jana:
 - Language - proved important and very useful to have bi-lingual colleague fostering the relations in Rennes.
 - Election cycle. Important to identify and maintain relations with key non-elected government persons...

QUESTION 3: What are the challenges for deepening city engagement for your own research project?

- Responsive and attune to local policies, rather than going in as PH person and focusing on something specific
- Wider environmental and health perspectives, including a range of topics
- Challenge and informative process
- Accept local priorities and think about how to build synergies with wider perspectives / issues, chance to do this with Kismu project
- How we formulate questions / initial conversations important - tapping into issues, noting aspects of scale
- Keep momentum ... institutional stakeholder overwhelmed with other activities
- Difference between timeframes (short/long agenda, and needs)
- Availability (time zones, busy schedules, etc), time, connectivity (weak internet connection), and current travel limitations are some of the challenges limiting deepening city engagement in the project.

- (Rennes) Difficult to deeply engage the city with the research and a solution to address that was to include the School of Public Health as a formal partner. That increased the chances of having meaningful impact on policies.
- Universities where we're based are this external entity going in, this is a big challenge. As we go forward, in the cities where we are not physically based, lack of face to face will be a challenge especially in getting people to pay attention.
- Red tape, MoUs, time, resources can also be limitations in deepening engagement.
- COVID-19 is a high priority for most city officials at the moment, sometimes even diffusing attention to other issues that are still quite real and present (eg: meningitis in Ghana).
- Hard to propose concrete policies in the short term (Beijing context)
- Continuity of engagement and length of research projects
- Personal trust between researchers and actors is helpful
- Recording and capturing engagement for continuity and handovers
- Bureaucratic and disciplinary aspects of decision-making – fragmentation
- Evaluation of what we are doing
- We are both part of the process and trying to evaluate it
- Unclear what the counterfactual scenario is
- No comparison group
- Measuring influence becomes more difficult as we are more deeply engaged
- How we share and publicise information in the information era will have impacts on communities
- We have an opportunity to change the behaviour of local residents
- There may also be unintended consequences
- Need to be careful how/what information is shared
- CUSSH:
 - Communication challenges, too scientific?
 - Too time-consuming
 - Apprehension of rapid policy analysis
 - Lacking culture of having research organisations reach out to them
 - Policy maker continuity
- Pathways:
 - Bring the government on board
 - Time commitment
 - Clear understanding of stakeholder roles
 - Bringing partner organisations on board

QUESTION 4: Thinking specifically about the impact of COVID 19 on city engagement. What are the challenges that we are facing? And how can we overcome these challenges? (i.e. opportunities for remote/online engagement) Reflections from within and outside the project.

- Move online the modelling workshops - making it shorter in time

- Risk of 'covid-ization' of research and engagement
- Adapt the methodologies
- Activities in stand-by
- Some of the challenges for city engagement are on the technical aspects, for instance if there is a weak internet connection, and on the substantive aspect, typically, the discussions tend to be more limited online. Considering that the COVID-19 crisis may last months, this time can be an opportunity for strengthening skills in remote engagement, for instance, it might be good to try different types of online formats, assess what works best, etc. Another challenge might be online security, for instance avoiding zoom bombing, several restrictions on the use of online platforms are being put in place, which may limit the participation of partners.
- Depends on the city and where project was in the different relationships. In some cities (London, Rennes, Kisumu, Nairobi) this will perhaps be possible as the work had started earlier so the relationships may be strong enough to be continued online. It may be more challenging for Beijing and Ningbo as they are caught in COVID-19 response, engagement started a year later and relationships were at a different stage.
- Engage with wider stakeholder groups will depend on where we were three months ago.
- Connectivity and internet issues
- Trust-building: in a covid-19 world? Can we adjust how we do interactions?
- Balance between short-term needs/goals and long-term goals/aims and how different partners work on different timescales and how it influences what engagement takes place? How the different timescales are different.
- Using MEMOs (as reflective piece of work in qualitative research). Take some steps back and link with different literature so a step between practical actions and the analysis.
- Healthy cities are of interest at the moment
- Include designers and planners in city engagement - change their behaviours
- City developers (private companies) are also open to new, health-focused approaches and healthy community development
- Physical form and layout of housing, neighbourhoods
- Open space, physical activity space
- Expect COVID 19 to change nature of societies
- People discussing future of public transportation
- Changes to services use and housing
- Impact on inequalities
- Big change to societal and government agendas - e.g. economic pressures, employment - this can make engagement harder
- Some positive and some negative consequences for RHUSH research agenda
- Logistical issues - workshops cancelled
- Monitoring the situation - early to respond to impacts