

Inspiring leadership for a sustainable world

Search

FELLOWS LOGIN

EVENTS ABOUT WHAT WE OFFER IMPACT GET INVOLVED

News / Blog / Sam Gillick / LEAD at Rio+20: Putting People First



LEAD Blog

Bloggers Team Blogs Categories Tags

LEAD at Rio+20: Putting People First

By Sam Gillick on Jun 19 in LEAD International O Comments

What does a sustainable community look like? How do you build one?

These were the kind of questions that we set out to answer at 'Putting People First -Building Sustainable Cities with Communities,' an event run by LEAD in Rio de Janeiro on 16 June 2012. Part of the Rio+20 conference and the SD Learning programme, this event brought together 70 people with a passion for sustainable cities for a three-hour learning course.

'Putting People First' was facilitated by Edward Kellow, LEAD International's Head of Learning and Leadership, and showcased the work of three LEAD Fellows: Leo Martins Dias (Brazil), Anton de Wit (South Africa) and John Lewis (Canada). These Fellows have been working on building sustainable cities through communities in very different parts of the world, and have a lot of experience to share!

Over the course of the event, participants were also encouraged to tell each other about their own communities. The room buzzed with conversation as people talked passionately about where they came from and compared experiences. This brought a vibrant 'LEAD feel' to a rather grey and dingy room, and this atmosphere was enhanced by the engaging presentations from the LEAD Fellows.



Leo gave a touching personal account of seeing the problems of the favelas first hand as a child and the challenge of doing something about it as an adult. He now works in Europe, trying to leverage funds there to start community projects in the slums of Rio. Leo also talked about the importance of partnering businesses with communities, and described the necessity of finding a common ground to develop a win-win situation.



Anton talked about communities in Port Elizabeth, Republic of South Africa. Many of the people living on the flood plane in Port Elizabeth would not play a part in improving their communities: they refused to move from their squalid living conditions into temporary accommodation so that they area could be improved.

The engagement of these communities was important to Anton but as a white man trying to engage with a predominantly black area, he needed to have local champions. This different engagement strategy accompanied using unusual methods to survey the communities, such as storytelling.

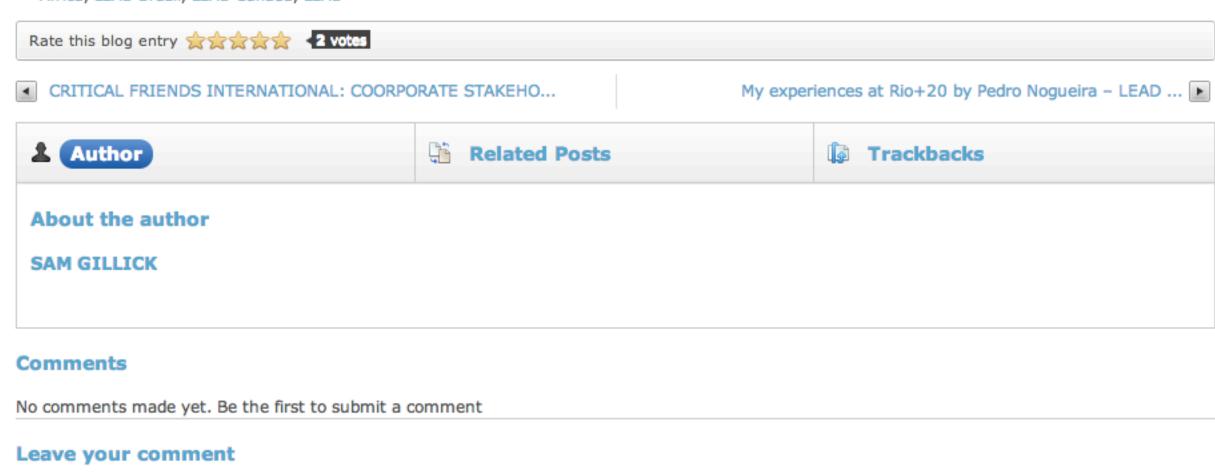
John followed by talking about his project, Bow-to-Bluff. It acts as a bridge between a communities and government around a transportation corridor issue in Calgary, Canada. In order to engage with the local communities, he tried to create an open house event at a storefront in a central location. He then moved on to placing notice boards at strategic locations and found that this was more effective.

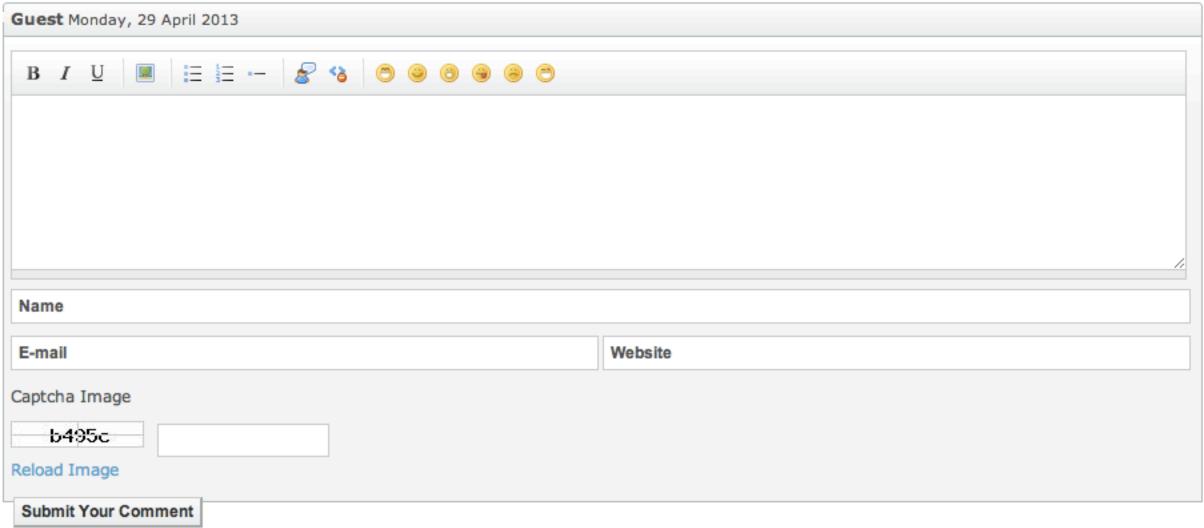
By talking to people in a way that was convenient to them, rather than asking people to come to him, John was able to build a stronger and more inclusive relationship with communities. In addition to sourcing information with the notice boards, John also ran a series of workshops with the communities to engage them on a more personal level. All of the lessons learned from the Bow-to-Bluff project were published in an engagement guide to share the best practice more widely.

At the end of these successful three hours, the Fellows were bombarded by questions and the participants were even willing to stay in a rather stuffy room for a further 30 minutes to find out more about LEAD. Edward ran an impromptu evaluation of the event and asked everyone to "make some noise" if they had enjoyed the course. The noise coming from the room certainly drew attention from those outside - the hallmark of a successful LEAD event!

🖪 Like < 3 🗎 🗏 Send Tweet 5 Q +1

Africa, LEAD Brazil, LEAD Canada, LEAD





Sitemap