

# The Raffles Review

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## Local Participation in Service Delivery



### SOURCE

[Local Government Service Efficiency: Public Participation Matters](#) is based on the survey of residents in two Malaysian communities that assessed the level of community involvement in sustainable urban development processes. Published in the *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, volume 5, issue 10.

### KEY POINT

Local communities play a vital role in measuring the efficiency of service delivery. They should be a primary source of performance feedback for all local authorities.

### BIG IDEAS

- When local governments listen to citizens' views about needs, priorities and performance, valuable support for the local implementation of national development programmes is generated.
- While the Malaysian public has a right to be informed and to participate in any decision making that will affect their lives, some citizens are not aware of their right to actively contribute to the improvement of public service delivery provided by local authorities.
- Government, especially at the local level, sometimes disregard views that are contrary to the development agenda. Such situations may contribute to disorder within the local authority's administrative system, which may cause reduced efficiency of service delivery.
- Public participation in local development programmes ensures end-users' feedback is heard, and contributes to improved service delivery. It is not only an effective way to achieve sustainable development, it also empowers and positively impacts society.
- Lack of monitoring, poor communication with citizens, shortages of knowledgeable and skilled public sector workers and inefficiencies in urban management can contribute to the failure of development projects and low service delivery performance by local authorities.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

- Public participation in monitoring, communication, performance management, and planning systems, will increase the success rate of urban development programmes.
- Improving legal awareness among citizens of their right to actively contribute ideas and feedback will generate greater levels of public participation.
- Public servants should be aware of, and avoid, any temptation to be selective about feedback and information received from the local community. Failure to do so can erode trust and create conflict between local authorities and local communities.
- Public participation in the design and especially monitoring, evaluation and consequent adaptation of basic public services, is a key component in the actualisation of Sustainable Development Goal 16, and thereby the successful implementation of the other SDGs.

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aims to ruffle your thinking!

*This weekly offering summarises insights on public service matters to challenge assumptions and question the status quo.*