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innovation strategy:
A model of multi-channel
communication to strengthen
governance and citizen engagement.**

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Seoul City's Social Innovation Strategy: a model of multi-channel communication to strengthen governance and citizen engagement

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Abstract

Over the past two years, Seoul Metropolitan Government has significantly changed the way it engages with its citizens – moving away from a one-way public communication model towards a system with greater focus on getting citizens more involved in decision-making process. Seoul Metropolitan Government has developed various communication channels that open up two-way dialogue between the city administration and citizens. This research paper explores how these new communication channels are creating a culture, which encourages city administration to engage with citizens who provide information about their needs and help shape new ideas. The research results show that Seoul Metropolitan Government's multi-channel communication builds shared understanding and trusting relationship among various stakeholders including citizens. It enables them to become partners in co-creating innovative solutions to problems of our society.

1 Introduction

Social innovation is gaining considerable interest in public policy discourse all around the world and South Korea is no exception. Ever since a well-known social innovator, Wonsoon Park, became the Mayor of Seoul in October 2011, there has been a shift towards a participatory and open dialogue between the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) and Seoul citizens. The Mayor Park's philosophy of open dialogue and citizen participation was evident early on from his election campaign where he used social media to communicate and listen to the needs of voters^a. Since he started his new post, his philosophy has been reflected in diverse ranges of policies, programmes and legal framework initiated and directed by SMG.

One of the core mechanisms used to embed the values of openness and participation is the multi-channel communication between SMG and Seoul citizens. The key element of SMG's multi-channel communication is the appreciation for strengthening good governance through citizen engagement. This study examines *how SMG's multi-channel communication is strengthening citizen engagement and good governance*. The aim of this research is answering to the following questions: How does SMG's multi-channel communication help foster citizen engagement? Does the citizen engagement strengthened by SMG's multi-channel communication support and sustain social innovation in Seoul? What are the challenges of SMG's multi-channel communication in strengthening citizen engagement?

This report draws together information and insights from various reports, literature, public data on Seoul City's social innovation and citizen communication agenda. We also conducted deeper studies of few of the multi-channel communication tools, involving in-depth interviews with 11 city officers in key departments². In this report, we provide an overview of SMG's public communication strategy and values (Section 2); introduce major communication tools and programmes used by Seoul City (Section 3); present a case study which shows how multi-channel communication tools work in practice when solving a specific social problem (Section 4); discuss the challenges faced (Section 5); and provide our final thoughts (Section 6).

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2 The full list of interviewees can be found in the reference section.

2 Citizen communication principle and strategy

SMG is a large organization, consisting of 30 departments and around 17,000 employees³. Among the various departments, the Social Innovation Bureau (SIB) and the Public Communication Bureau (PCB), are primarily involved in social innovation activities of Seoul⁴. The fact that these two bureaus^b are directly under the Mayor's Office shows his determination to embed social innovation and citizen engagement as the core principle of city administration^c. While SIB was set up to plan citywide social innovation strategy and support social innovation activities in Seoul^d, PCB's mandate is to develop ways (tools and programmes) in which citizens can better engage with city policy and decision-making process. This study focuses particularly on the innovative communication strategy and tools that are mainly developed by PCB to encourage citizen engagement.

2.1 Principle: Towards a public engagement model

PCB's role has changed significantly under Mayor Park's administration. PCB had previously focused on promoting Seoul City's activities and policies, which were mostly one-way flow of information from SMG to Seoul citizens. Under Mayor Park's leadership, PCB has shifted towards a model of two-way dialogue between SMG and Seoul citizens. It has opened up policymaking processes and information to citizens and started sharing communication media channels with citizens⁵. In order to enable two-way dialogue, PCB places core values of "participation" and "openness" at the heart of its communications channels⁶. Both online and offline^e communication channels are used to engage citizens (See Table 1 & 2). Most online channels have been geared toward opening up policy-making processes and information to the public and receiving citizen feedback on a real-time basis. Several online broadcasting channels show live meetings and events of SMG, and real-time information is transmitted through multiple social network services (SNS)⁷.

| Name | Description | Features |
|--|---|---|
| Hope Seoul (www.seoul.go.kr) | Official SMG web site | It includes several citizen engagement pages such as "Electronic Petition", "Open Government" accessing to SMG's public data and meeting minutes, "Citizen Engagement" accessing to participatory budget program reports and others, and "SMG administration news". |
| WOW Seoul (wow.seoul.go.kr) | Web site showing User Created Content (UCC) site | Site showing various contents mainly created by Seoul citizens. It includes video and photo sharing platform and webtoon (web-cartoon) services. It encourages citizens to participate in activities related with Seoul. |
| Live Seoul (tv.seoul.go.kr) | Online-based live broadcasting platform which shows most administrative activities of SMG | It broadcasts various meetings and events hosted by SMG through on-line real time stream services. It includes Mr. Wonsoo Park's Seoul Story , book discussion, Cheong Chaek forum and many more. Citizens can add their feedback on the site using various SNS accounts. |
| Seoul Talk Talk (inews.seoul.go.kr) | Citizen participatory news site | News deals with citizens lives such as welfare, job openings, cultural events etc. It regularly publishes newsletters and citizens can take part in creating newsletter content as a 'Citizen Reporter'. |
| Social Media Center (social.seoul.go.kr) | One stop site of various social networking tools run by SMG | Official SNS platform integrates 44 SNS accounts run by various departments of SMG. It aims to promote efficient communication between citizens and related departments. |
| Online Dasan Call Center (120dasan.seoul.go.kr) | Online citizen general petition platform | 120 Dasan Call Centre is a 24 hour call center for Seoul Citizens. They can ask any kinds of matters related with living in Seoul City. It is mainly used to file complaints of Seoul citizens. Online Dasan Call Center is the extended online platform providing same service. |
| Online Mayor Office (mayor.seoul.go.kr) | Official website of Seoul city Mayor | It provides information on Mayoral administrative activities and core policies to citizens. The site includes Mayor blog written on his own, online broadcasting page having a dedicated channel showing MMO, Mayoral daily schedule, honorary deputy mayor description and citizen feedback pages accessed by SNS accounts |
| Ten Million Imagination Oasis (oasis.seoul.go.kr) | Online platform for gathering and discussing citizen ideas for new policies | Seoul citizens can post their own suggestions which have potential to be realized as policies. It has a certain process from ideation to policy adoption while promoting collective intelligence and communication among citizens, experts and public officials. |
| Seoul Smart Complaint Report App | Mobile application for processing citizen complaints and suggestion | Citizens can report complaints on public facilities, traffic, and environment and so on by using web and mobile application. Users can upload text complaints with photo and geographic information, and also trace SMG's progress to make solutions. |
| Seoul Safety Keeper App | Mobile App specialized in disaster prevention and notification | Mobile app for reporting disaster occurrence such as heavy rain, storms, and heavy snowfalls with photos and geographic information. |

Table 1. Online Communication Tools of SMG

3 (J. Ryu 2013)
4 (Y. Kim 2013; T. Kim 2013)
5 (D. Kim 2013; H. Kim 2013)
6 (SMG 2013a)
7 See Table 1 and section 3.1 for the details.

Furthermore, these communication channels are becoming a usual procedure in a policy-making process, from problem identification and agenda-setting stages to policy formulation, selection and approval stages (See Figure 1). The early stages of policymaking process feature SMG's multi-channel communication tools including *Cheong-Chek* Forum (CCF), *Suk-Ui*, Mobile Mayoral Office (MMO) and social media platforms. Among them, CCF is a citizen town-hall meeting designed to further discuss and understand detailed characteristics of a selected issue⁸. Citizen suggestions made at this forum are discussed intensively at expert meetings called *Suk-Ui* (deliberation)^f. Social media is used continuously throughout the entire process (including implementation and evaluation stage) so that citizens can receive information about the on-going progress and give real-time feedback and comments.

| Name | Description | Features |
|---|--|---|
| Cheong Chek (Policy by Listening) Forum (CCF) | A town hall meeting designed to develop new policies or programs | Setting agenda based on citizen suggestions, finding out policy partners specialized in agenda including civic groups, professionals, citizens, relevant public officials, and inviting them to discuss citizen suggestions |
| Suk-Ui (Deliberation) | Meeting with experts and civil society leaders to formulate and approve policies | Many suggestions made at CCF are intensely discussed at Suk-Ui. This is the program where SMG with experts and civil society leaders transform ideas into implementable policies or programs. |
| Honorary Deputy Mayor | Following Mayor Park's slogan, 'The citizens are the Mayor', citizens act as an honorary deputy Mayor for a year. | Invites citizens as Honorary Deputy Mayors based on their expertise and communication skills. Their role is delivering diverse groups of citizen voices to SMG. For a year, honorary deputy mayors have monthly meetings with the Mayor, policy initiative meetings and other events. |
| Citizen Speakers' Corner | Speech podium locates at the basement of Seoul Citizen Hall. | Benchmarked Speakers' Corner at Hyde Park in London. The easiest way for citizens to speak up any stories related to living in Seoul. All speeches are recorded and corresponding departments of SMG provides feedback. |
| One Day Honorary Mayor | Program for citizens from a variety of fields to become a honorary Mayor for a day | Honorary Mayor for One Day is chosen among citizens interested in civic affairs and has previously participated in SMG's events or programs. Through open invitation, selected citizens have a chance to attend meetings and events planned at Mayor's official schedule for one day. |
| Mobile Mayoral Office (MMO) | Mayor with SMG directors and managers visit places related with pending issues and listen to direct citizen voices | It aims to identify invisible causes of issues or hidden problems on the spot, and suggest solutions in partnership with SMG and boroughs. The suggested solutions are further discussed at CCF which is a part of MMO. |
| Policy Expo | Annual expo promotes citizen participation in policy making process with conferences, meetings & events. | Provides easy opportunities to citizens participate in a policy making process. To encourage citizen participation, it holds various formats of programs such as workshops, seminars, market events, concerts, etc. |
| Seoul Citizen Hall | Public Space locates at the basement of Seoul City Hall. | Serves as a courtyard where citizen can show their creativity while joining in various programs provided by SMG, NGO and citizen groups. It encourages citizen engagement with various activities of SMG. |

Table 2 Offline Communication Programs of SMG

8 See section 3.2 for the details.

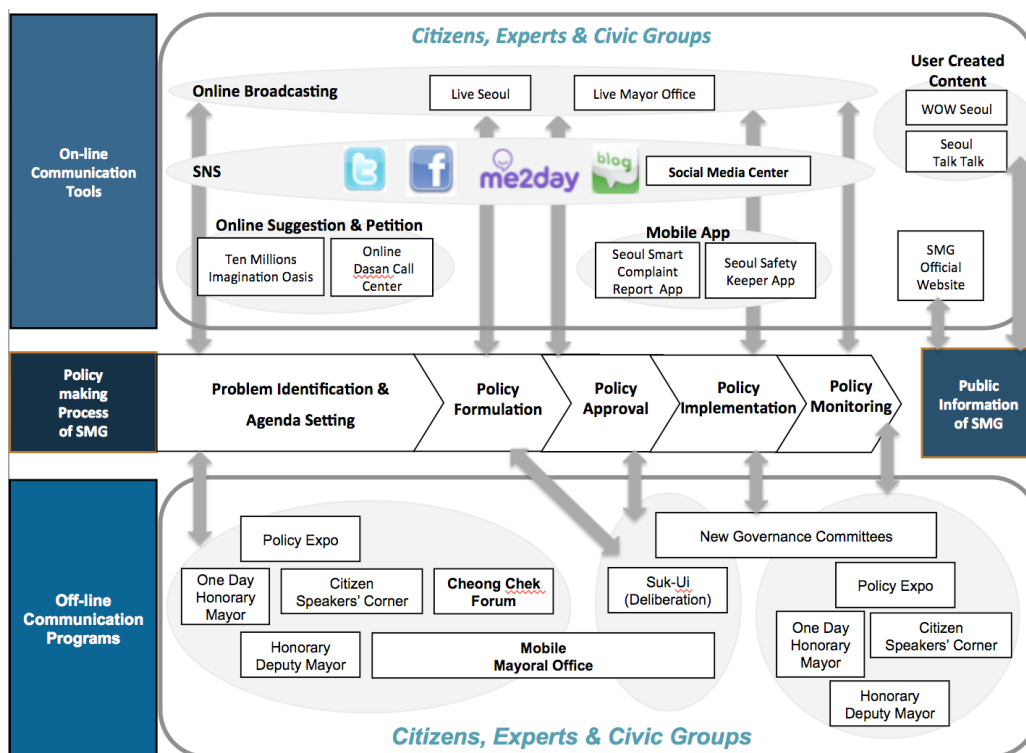


Figure 1. Overview of online and offline communication tools and programmes

With the online and offline communication tools and programmes, SMG encourages citizens to express their opinions by sharing its communication channels. SMG owns various media outlets (including websites, radio stations, billboards, subway/bus advertisement spaces) previously used exclusively to inform and promote SMG's work to citizens. Currently, around 30% of these media outlets are open to citizens. Citizens can use these outlets to promote their own social activities⁸. There are increased opportunities for citizens to contribute their own writing, photographs or videos on websites such as WOW Seoul and Seoul Talk Talk. HyunSeong Kim, the Media Advisor at the Mayor's Office, emphasises that such efforts send strong messages to city officers and citizens that Seoul City aims to move away from one-way communication towards public engagement.⁹

2.2 Strategy: First of all, listen to citizen voices!

It has not been easy for PCB to achieve its major goal of initiating and fostering citizen engagement through communication. One main challenge is the existing culture and attitude within civil officers that are resistant to change. The civil servants have only recently begun to think of citizens as important partners in co-creating solutions. Breaking away from this entrenched culture within SMG is an indispensable condition for innovation. The first step towards this change is *listening to citizens' voices* through diverse communication channels. Mayor Park recognises the importance of giving city officers an opportunity to experience and learn the value of 'listening' and engaging with citizens¹⁰.

9 (H. Kim 2013)
10 (H. Kim 2013)

In order to *listen to citizen voices better*^h, PCB created 'Attentive Listening' team, responsible for various offline 'listening' programmes aimed at reversing the information flow from 'from SMG to Seoul citizens' to 'from Seoul citizens to SMG'¹¹. Furthermore, multiple social media tools are used to help engage and listen to citizen voices¹². The Social Media Centre¹³ provides a centralised one-stop SNS message collection point, which distributes messages from citizens to the most relevant departments in SMG, collects feedback from the relevant departments and sends replies to citizens. The Mayor has been leading proponent of Seoul City's so-called 'Big Ear Policy' listening to citizens through various channels for the past 20 months. This strategy has enabled citizens to become familiar with an environment where they express opinions and ideas and has changed the mind-set of Seoul City officers to be ready to collaborate with citizens. The city administration is going through an important transition period from having a weak citizen engagement culture to appreciating citizen input in creating new city policies and programmes¹⁴.

3 Multi-Channel Communication Tools and Programmes

In this section, we introduce three representative communication tools and programmes that reflect the current administration's core communication values of participation, openness and sharing.

3.1 Social Media Centre (SMC)

What is it and how is it run?¹⁵

SMG started its blog service in 2008 and since then, it has been actively using social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook and MeTodayⁱ to communicate with citizens. SMG also runs several websites that inform activities of SMG and Seoul citizens¹⁶. Under the so-called '*SNS administration*' communication approach, Seoul City provides interactive information to citizens on real-time and opens up space for the public to freely add and share contents.

Among many online services designed for real-time communication with citizens, the Social Media Centre (SMC) takes on the responsibility of centralising and coordinating information sent by the citizens through diverse routes, ensuring a quicker and more efficient communication. With a centralised centre, Seoul City is able to handle unprecedented amount of citizen messages received through 44 different SNS accounts^j. Mayor Park's personal Twitter and Facebook account function as the most important direct communication channels between the Mayor and citizens. Between January and October 2012, a total of 29,976 suggestions (on average 105 suggestions per day) were made to the Mayor through his SNS accounts.

11 (D. Kim 2013)

12 (PCB 2012; PCB 2013)

13 See section 3.1 for the details of Social Media Center

14 (H. Kim 2013)

15 (SMG 2013a; J. Kim 2013)

16 See Figure 1 and Table 1 for the details of these sites.

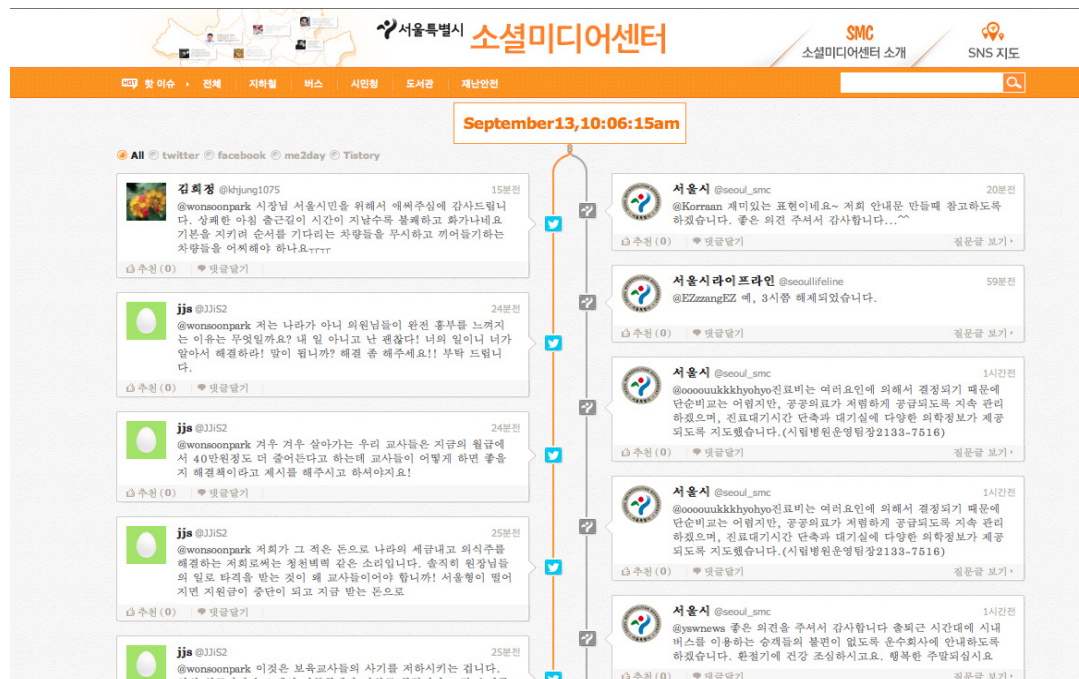


Figure 2. Social Media Centre

The SMC shortens the message processing by automatically gathering all messages received through 44 accounts. SMC operates as a centralised system channelling relevant messages to appropriate teams, receiving feedback from those teams, and sending feedback to the public through various accounts owned by the relevant teams and the Mayor^k.

Outcome¹⁷

The centralised system significantly reduces SNS message processing time and enables SMG to handle more citizen suggestions per day. Between November 2012 and March 2013, a total of 18,807 messages were received and on average 125 messages were processed per day, which is increased by 20 messages. SMC is particularly useful when unforeseen disasters or emergency situations occur. SMG can send out urgent messages through 44 SNS accounts at the same time. For instance, when Seoul public bus system was in trouble due to strikes, Seoul citizens were informed of alternative routes and operating bus routes on a real-time basis. This type of SNS communication works effectively in other emergencies such as heavy rain or snow.

Citizen comments passed to SMC covers a broad range of issues, from small problems that can be fixed quickly to longstanding issues requiring innovative solutions. SNS communication has also been helpful in gathering citizen feedback on pilot services. For instance, when SMG announced new night bus operation through its Facebook account, an instant online debate was started, with 3,000 replies and 50,000 likes. The citizens' comments were reviewed and reflected when refining the new night bus operation.

3.2 Cheong-Chek (Policy by Listening) Forum What is it and how is it run?¹⁸

Cheong-Chek Forum (CCF) is a town hall meeting, which is becoming a core stage within Seoul City's policy development process¹⁹. *Cheong-Chek* is a new word made by combining two Korean words 'listening' and 'policy'. This shows the determination of Seoul City administration to listen to citizen input when creating a new policy. By engaging with citizens through these forums, SMG aims to understand local needs, find better ways to handle these issues, and understand main beneficiaries of a policy.

Cheong-Chek Forums are different from the previous consultation meetings run by SMG. In past, consultation meetings with citizens were carried out at final stages of a policymaking process, where additional comments and suggestions from citizens made no difference in the major direction or content of a new policy. In contrast, CCF takes place at the early stages of policymaking process and provides space for citizens to propose and suggest new ideas, giving them more influence over agenda setting and decision making processes (See Figure 1). This is an innovative approach for Korean public administration, which often regards citizen engagement as a perfunctory procedure²⁰.



Figure 3. Chong-Chek Forum on Urban Farming in Seoul²¹

Since the first forum held in November 2011, CCFs have taken place on average, once a week. The subjects discussed have widely ranged from local economy, education, welfare, homelessness, health and other issues that affect daily lives of citizens. The topics for these forums are determined after reviewing diverse citizen voices collected from multi-communication channels such as social media, Mayor's listening tour¹, e-mails, direct petitions and phone calls. After the review, the Attentive Listening team (ALT) within PCB, which is in charge of running CCFs, selects weekly subjects for CCF and contacts various civic groups and experts working in the field of selected subjects. The team holds several meetings with different groups to discuss what an agenda and a format of CCF would be, who to invite and what roles they will play.

18 (SMG 2013a; K. Ryu 2013)

19 (H. Kim 2013; K. Ryu 2013; J. Ryu 2013)

20 (K. Ryu 2013)

21 Source: Official website of Seoul Mayor <http://mayor.seoul.go.kr>

CCF is open to every citizen in principle but motivating citizens to participate is hard work. ALT puts substantial effort in advertising through various online communication channels and inviting right groups of citizens (based on the selected topic)^m. The entire process is broadcasted live through the 'Live Seoul' site, SMG's Twitter account and Facebook page. CCF usually lasts for 100 minutes and it can be run in various formats such as World Café or TED style presentation with Q&A session. The Mayor sits on a floor with citizens, listens to their ideas and suggestions and shares his thoughts at the end of each CCF. When each forum is finished, ALT compiles the suggestions made from CCF and establishes a committee comprised of city officers in relevant departments, representatives from civic groups and other experts. This committee continues to hold official discussions until the suggestions made by citizens are implemented in practice. Usually it takes from two months to one year for the suggestions to be realised. During this period of time, SMG officers publishes a progress report every two weeks on the CCF website and shares updated information with CCF participants through text messaging service.

Outcome²²

Between November 2011 and November 2012, 41 *Cheong-Chek* Forums were held and a total of 5,456 citizens attended them. 41 forums have produced 717 citizen suggestions and 538 suggestions (75%) have been implemented. The remaining 166 suggestions are under review to be included in SMG's long-term plans. The implemented 717 suggestions can be categorised into three groups: development of supporting programs (84.1%), improvement of existing systems (13.0%), and allocation of new budget (2.9%).

A key outcome of CCF's one-year operation is the creation of new public-citizen governance bodies that aim to develop and support public policies. The biggest task involved with CCF is continuing progress reporting while SMG implements the citizen proposals made at CCF. This task naturally requires SMG to set up many public-civic group collaboration bodies, continuously gathers feedback through the bodies and also asks the bodies to take some responsibilities in implementing citizen ideas. For instance, the Seoul Library Networkⁿ is such an example created after discussing new policies supporting libraries in Seoul.

3.3 Mobile Mayoral Office

What is it and how is it run?²³

SMG runs the Mobile Mayoral Office (MMO) program that is designed to identify the root causes of unresolved issues or hidden problems, and suggest possible solutions. To achieve this goal, key decision-makers, including the Mayor, two deputy Mayors, the head of a borough, MPs, and city and local councillors, visit local sites where there are pending issues and meet citizens. MMO employs multi-channel communication (CCF, Suk-Ui, and other online communication tools) throughout operation of one program.



Figure 4 Various scenes of MMO at Gangbuk-gu (borough) on 5 September 2013

SMG runs two types of MMO: MMO for boroughs in Seoul and MMO for selected issues¹⁵. MMO for a borough runs regularly while MMO for a selected issue operates only when a certain issue has become a serious social debate. The preparation team, which is usually consisted of officers from Local Authority Team (LAT) at SMG and from a borough office, selects ten major issues within the borough⁶. The team also sets a visiting plan and citizen meetings that illustrate selected problems clearly. MMO for a borough typically runs for two days. It starts with LAT's briefing on selected issues to key decision-makers, visiting related places and having meetings with resident representatives. During the first day, key decision-makers and their working teams come across new issues that are not included in ten selected major issues and these new issues can be added to an agenda to be discussed later⁹. In the evening of the same day, key decision-makers with their working teams⁷ have an internal meeting to review the issues based on what they have experienced and heard from citizens earlier on the same day.

Their discussion ends with some conclusions including immediate actions, mid to long-term plans and assigned owners of these actions and plans. On the second day morning, the Mayor presents the suggestions agreed from the internal meeting from the previous night and this is followed by an open town hall meeting with citizens. The whole process is broadcasted through the 'Live Mobile Mayoral Office²⁴' website and reported live on Twitter and Facebook. As the final step of MMO, a new governance committee is set up to monitor and discuss the following action items after completion of MMO. The committee members include the Directors of Local Authority Division in SMG, managers of relevant SMG teams, directors of relevant borough divisions and citizen representatives. The committee continues to monitor whether the action items that came out of the process are actually implemented.

23 (Hwang 2013; K. Kim 2013; MMO (Mobile Mayoral Office) 2012; SMG n.d.; LAT(Local Authority Team) 2013)
 24 www.seoul.go.kr/runningmayor/

Outcome²⁵

Since November 2012, Seoul City has organised 19 MMOs. LAT summarises four key outcomes achieved by MMOs. First, MMO has been providing solutions to collective petitions or problems causing serious conflict among diverse stakeholders. Second, MMO provides next steps and clear directions for projects under longstanding review. Third, MMO solves unexpected problems of on-going projects and provides additional resources and clear decisions for prolonged projects. Fourth, MMO offers an opportunity of close collaboration between SMG and local boroughs, which can lead to new solutions. The more detailed outcome of MMO is discussed in the next section through a case study.

4 Case Study: 'Unsold Apartments in EunPyeong Newtown'²⁶

The unsold apartments at EunPyeong New Town development had been a long-standing problem of Seoul City administration which put significant burden on city finances²⁷. The SH Corporation, the public housing company owned by SMG, had 618 unsold apartments remaining at EunPyeong New Town three years after the completion of apartment buildings²⁸. These unsold apartments were worth around 290 million GBP and it was crucial to sell them to address one of the biggest problems faced by SMG, a large scale of debt²⁸. The residents around this area were also concerned about security as a large number of apartments were left empty for more than four years²⁹. However, in January 2013, SMG announced that all 618 apartments were sold, within 70 days of establishing a task force team to address this problem³⁰. This case study examines how SMG's multi-channel communication contributed to obtaining such result.

First, multi-channel communication helped SMG to identify invisible and unexpected needs and understand hidden nature of these needs. When the Mayor heard about the EunPyeong New Town problem, he wanted to understand nature of this problem better, analyse why these apartments failed to attract Seoul citizens and find a way to sell them. He asked his team to relocate his office to one of the unsold apartments and stayed there with SMG officers for ten days³¹. This was how MMO started. For ten days, the Mayor and his team spent time and stayed at the complex, listening to residents and identifying their need. From this first MMO, SMG with SH Corporation started to discover hidden problems and the severity of known problems. Major complaints of residents were problems of infrastructures such as shortage of nurseries, libraries, public transportation and complaints about the existence of an army fortress near the complex. From continuous discussion with residents through mechanisms such as CCF and social media platforms (which was the important part of the 10-day MMO), the residents made a total of 146 suggestions³². SMG with SH corporation offered new approaches¹ of attracting homebuyers based on the resident suggestions. Especially, very unique feature of MMO, which invites almost all key decision-makers to visit actual places where they could personally experience problems or hear citizens' pains face to face, certainly helped them to comprehend nature of problems better and led them to come up with new agreed solutions¹.

25 (LAT(Local Authority Team), 2013)

26 This case will be called the EunPyeong Newtown case for short at the following text of this paper.

27 (SH Corporation 2013)

28 (SMG 2012)

29 (Song 2013)

30 (SH Corporation 2013)

31 (Song 2013; JongEon Lee 2013; Hwang 2013)

32 (MMO (Mobile Mayoral Office) 2012; SH Corporation 2013)

Second, *multi-channel communication contributed to creating innovative solutions through diverse types of governance*. All the interviewees repeatedly commented that initiation of new type of governance is key outcome of SMG's multi-channel communication³³. The governance between SMG and other civic groups including individual citizens, and between SMG and other public parties such as boroughs, councillors, MPs and other public organisations, were naturally established while SMG's communication tools and programs were used. This is because SMG's communication targeted to strengthen citizen engagement; the end results of various communications have to be creation of policies or programmes exercising citizen proposals. To achieve this, SMG had to collaborate with many other parties who had close relationship with citizens.

In the case of the EunPyeong, these types of governance were the crucial element to obtain the apartment sell-out result. By inviting all key decision-makers within related departments and residents to the course of understanding problems and suggesting new solutions, silos existing between public parties were removed and a new way of thinking started. Since i) pains caused by given problems were experienced and heard together by all the attendees of MMO and ii) setting a target to make decisions within a day, all the major decision-makers with working teams were able to compromise difficult disagreement and find agreed solutions³⁴.

Furthermore, solutions suggested to citizens were to be reviewed within 24 hours by the public through CCF and various SNS including live Internet broadcasting. All different decision-makers at diverse public parties were eager to show citizens that they were there to help citizens^v. This kind of pressure with mixed groups of people also resulted in driving them to propose creative and new solutions³⁵. For instance, in many cases, citizen suggestions to solve problems were turned out to be difficult to be implemented due to various reasons such as legal restriction, beyond responsibilities of SMG or local boroughs. However, this practical difficulty did not stop MMO attendees to propose alternative solutions. Surprisingly they managed to find quite creative solutions that often require sharing responsibilities among different parties or civic groups. During this process of creating innovative solutions, the Mayor plays an active role as an arbitrator and facilitator. His role at MMO and CCF was continuously reminding the nature of problem and citizens' needs to different parties involved and suggesting that new ideas and alternative solutions that can be implemented together³⁶.

Third, *multi-channel communication advocated achieving legitimacy in public service delivery through openness and participation*. The interviewees, mainly SMG officers, emphasised the importance of openness and engagement achieved through multi-channel communication³⁷. During the course of using communication tools and programs, the interviewees repeatedly heard from Seoul citizens specially living in deprived and underserved areas that they felt their voices were properly heard by the authority for the first time. This emotional acknowledgement boosted the legitimacy toward SMG's work. Citizens started building trust towards SMG, and this in turn led them to prepare cooperating with SMG and accept SMG's suggestions, which were sometimes different from what they wanted. In addition, citizens built additional trust toward SMG by watching the Mayor's face-to-face promises at CCF or live broadcasting, and his personal briefing and promises through SNS^w.

One interviewee exactly pointed out the value of this outcome as follows³⁸. "The ultimate goal of public administration is efficient and effective delivery of public services. In this sense, the SMG's multi-channel communication exercising openness and citizen engagement has certainly contributed to achieve such a goal. Whereas communication with citizens might have delayed the whole process of SMG's administration, it offered the most valuable opportunity for SMG to gather very different, sometimes conflicting and contrasting, opinions among citizens and let citizens and SMG to express their thoughts openly and come up with agreeable new solutions. By doing so, citizens could accept SMG's decisions and enjoyed the public services delivered by SMG."

33 (J. Ryu 2013; Hwang 2013; JongEon Lee 2013; K. Ryu 2013)

34 (JongEon Lee 2013; JongSun Lee 2013; Hwang 2013; K. Kim 2013)

35 (Hwang 2013)

36 (Hwang 2013; JongSun Lee 2013)

37 (J. Ryu 2013; K. Ryu 2013; Hwang 2013)

38 (J. Ryu 2013)

5 Challenges

SMG's multi-channel communication faces several challenges although it has contributed to strengthening citizen engagement and governance.

First, new communication tools and programmes including both online and offline channels *do not guarantee the reach to a wide range of people's voices*. Considering the high usage rate of Internet and smart phone in Seoul^x, SMG's online communication tools certainly increase SMG's coverage of citizen voice listening. Nonetheless, active utilization of these tools in expressing their thoughts is often limited to young generations or certain groups of outspoken people. Offline communication programs also usually attract citizens who are active speakers or have close relationship with civic groups invited to CCF or MMO. The question is whether these people have representativeness over people suffered from given issues. At this stage, it is hard to state that participants of these programs indeed represent diverse range of people's voices.

Second, the new communication tools and programs introduced in this study *contribute to solving a limited range of problems*. Each communication channel undoubtedly has strong features to help solving certain issues^y. However, it is too early to claim that these new channels are always good at handling all types of major social issues. While this study has shown that new types of governance emerged through using these programmes have unravelled many difficult issues, there are several aspects to be further scrutinized. For example, further study could be done about how complex problems can be handled and whether other external factors (such as political reasons) might seriously hinder new types of governance.

Third, new communication tools and programmes *require larger resources to operate and it is hard to provide sufficient resources under fiscal austerity*. This challenge is more pressing in the operation of offline programs. This is because most offline programmes lead to continued conversation within governance committees until suggested ideas and solutions are realised. This follow-up procedure^z demands almost one full-time SMG officer³⁹. However, this is a new type of work within SMG and the large scale of SMG's current debt makes it hard to increase staff time. Fourth, *mature citizenship and trust among SMG, civic groups and individual citizens are needed to obtain positive results of citizen engagement*. However, *Korean society is not quite endowed with these essential factors yet*. Although mistrust^{aa} among SMG, civic groups and individual citizens has started to diminish, there have not been many opportunities for professionals at different sectors to co-create solutions together. With new communication channels, there is a shift towards a new collaborative culture based on trust between different sectors. However, many interviewees felt that they needed stronger trust and bonding relationship with civil society and individual citizens. Finally, *strong leadership is required to make multi-channel communication work*.

The core values of SMG's multi-channel communication are openness, participation and sharing. These values require SMG to give up their authoritative power, conduct additional work for citizen engagement, and be monitored by over ten million Seoul citizens at any time. On surface, these requirements impose extra burdens to SMG officers. Under this circumstance, the power of a strong leader who truly understands these values and therefore is able to pass his messages effectively to his or her teams within SMG cannot be underestimated. The strong leadership also needs to positively influence not only SMG officers but also many different stakeholders outside SMG. This study has clearly observed Mayor Park's strong leadership and its impact on the success of the EunPyung case using MMO. Likewise, strong leadership is a must element to apply innovative models and obtain tangible results. However, this can become a challenging point since strong leadership means that new communication models greatly depend on one individual.

6 Conclusion

This work reviews new multi-channel communication of SMG and analyse how it helps strengthen citizen engagement and governance. True meaning of citizen engagement lies at whether citizens collaborate or are empowered in developing and sustaining solutions to social challenges⁴⁰. Citizen engagement cases presented in this paper do not yet exhibit citizen involvement to such degrees. Nevertheless, authors would like to stress the novelty and significance of these cases in Korean context. Until recently, citizen engagement opportunities designed and carried out by Korean public authorities failed to regard citizens as trusting partners and delegate powers to citizens. The past experiences have misled many Koreans to think that citizen engagement process is a waste of time and have created a sense of apathy towards citizen engagement values^{ab}. The biggest challenge in initiating and fostering social innovation in Seoul is encouraging trust among citizens, public officers, civic groups, and experts to work together and co-create new solutions.

SMG's multi-channel communication approach is designed precisely to tackle this strenuous challenge. By gearing all citizen communication tools and programmes toward stimulating citizens to speak out and SMG officers to listen and empathise, diverse groups of people from different parties have had opportunities to talk to each other and understand each other better. Furthermore, transparency strengthened by various online tools and authenticity illustrated through offline programs together have contributed to establishing trust among different parties and experiencing positive values of citizen engagement. Such challenges of building trust and engaging citizens are not only limited to Seoul City. SMG's multi-channel communication approaches offer valuable lessons to other cities that are ambitiously planning to initiate and drive social innovation.

40 (Davies, A., Simon 2012; Davies, A., Simon, J., Patrick, R., Norman 2012; Brodie et al 2009)

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Endnotes

- a. Mayor Park's election campaign team was able to raise 1.5 billion won (US\$ 1.3 million) on the first day of his official campaign. This result was obtained mainly through around 2,000 supporters who were instantly gathered through Twitter and Facebook messages (Kim 2012).
- b. The third department directly managed by the Mayor is the spokesman room. There are other departments such as the Open Information Policy Department and Participatory Budget Division that place citizen engagement and openness at the heart of their programs and policies. However, SIB and PCB are the only units within SMG, directly managed by the Mayor, that are dedicated to social innovation activities based on citizen engagement (Y. Kim 2013; H. Kim 2013; SMG 2013b).
- c. One important common mission of these two bureaus is the dissemination of innovation and citizen engagement via communication throughout SMG and Seoul. This is different from other departments, which develop and run public administration policies and programs tackling specific social issues. These two bureaus support the other SMG departments to design and operate their policies and programs through innovative approaches and citizen engagement (Y. Kim 2013).
- d. SIB also operates a number of citizen engagement programs such as the social invention program, citizen participating sharing economy programs, participatory community building programs, and many more (T. Kim 2013; Cho 2013; SIB 2012). This study limits to examine the communication tools and programs of PCB that initiate and strengthen further citizen engagement.
- e. PCB's communication tools and programmes can be categorized based on communication channel types such as online (including mobile apps) tools, offline programmes, call centres, print media, radio/TV stations and billboards (PCB 2012). Among them, this work reviews only a subset, online and offline channels, which involves active two-way dialogues triggering citizen engagement.
- f. *Suk-Ui* is different from expert policy meetings undertaken previously by SMG. Whereas experts suggestions made from previous meetings were considered as possible references only, *Suk-Ui* continues to propose ideas and plans until all participating experts and SMG agree to implement them (K. Ryu 2013).
- g. This media has been used by Seoul-based social enterprises to advertise their products or programmes. The advertisements were also produced with donation from major advertisement agencies that support the principle behind this opportunity. Around 60 enterprises have benefited from this scheme as of July 2013 (PCB 2013).
- h. 8 To begin with, SMG changed the direction of information flow. The information passed by SMG communication channels was mainly emphasised to flow 'from SMG to Seoul citizens'. This means that SMG communication aimed to how well SMG explained what they did to Seoul citizens and helped citizens enjoy services offered by SMG (D. Kim 2013). However, this direction of information flow has been changed to 'from Seoul citizens to SMG'.
- i. MeToday (me2day.net) is a popular Korean social media platform, similar to Twitter, run by the Korean company called Naver.
- j. There are 33 Twitter accounts, 6 Facebook accounts, 4 MeToday accounts and 2 blogs run by SMG. The Mayor himself uses his own Twitter account, @wonsoonpark, with 736,519 followers and Facebook account, www.facebook.com/wonsoonpark, with 170,894 followers.
- k. Figure 2 shows the screenshot of Social Media Centre website. The left side of the screen shows citizen messages received by SMC and the right side shows SMG replies sent via SMC. Anyone can easily browse citizen messages and SMG feedback messages at real-time.
- l. The Mayor organized listening tours during his election campaign to listen to what Seoul citizens wanted him to do when he became a Mayor. From this tour, he gathered many issues and problems directly from Seoul citizens (K. Ryu 2013).

- m. For instance, ALT works hard to identify online communities particularly relevant to CCF discussion topics and concentrates on advertising CCF through those communities (K. Ryu 2013).
- n. The Seoul Library Network has members including SMG, Seoul Education Authority, Seoul Library Association and many other reading groups in Seoul.
- o. Seoul has 25 boroughs and they are responsible for addressing many daily troubles faced to Seoul citizens. However, budgets of local boroughs are quite small and many of them hope to get some financial support from SMG to solve daily issues of Seoul citizens together. In order to provide a programme directly beneficial to citizens, SMG runs MMO with each local borough based on mutual requests. The second type of MMO is run for solving a specific issue, which attracts major social attention in Seoul. For instance, this year (2013), SMG ran MMOs to invigorate traditional markets, which are rapidly losing their customer base to big supermarket chains. This MMO lasted for four days by visiting four traditional markets and having various citizen meetings including CCF. MMO for boroughs is typically run for two days at each borough and 15 MMOs for the 15 boroughs have been held between November 2011 and September 2013. The MMO for a specific issue usually lasts longer than the MMO for boroughs.
- p. In this process, SMG contacts and gathers diverse opinions from different civic groups. In order to complement suggestions made by boroughs, SMG actively searches for different opinions from diverse range of groups (K. Kim 2013; Hwang 2013).
- q. When key decision-makers and working teams personally experience and/or hear stories directly from those affected by the problem, they tend to put a priority on solving these problems. By directly engaging with citizens, invisible and hidden aspects of problems are revealed.
- r. Interviewees commented that they have never experienced this kind of meeting, which all major decision makers with their working teams attend together. The number of attendees can tell the uniqueness of this meeting. Decision-making attendees are around 20 people including Mayor, two deputy Mayors, head of boroughs and directors of SMG and boroughs. Their working team members attending this meeting reached around 60. All together around 100 decision makers and working team members make instant decisions and draw out action plans.
- s. The city's debts stood at 20 trillion won (around US\$ 19 billion) when Mr. Park was elected as the Mayor. The debt decreased to 18.861 trillion won (around US\$ 17.6 billion) at by the end of May 2013 (SMG 2013b).
- t.
- u. Often key decision-makers within a big organization find it difficult to understand true nature of problems. This is because problems are reported to them only through oral briefing and documents prepared by their staff. This kind of report is typically concise and hard to reflect real pains deeply troubling everyday life of the public. MMO guided all key decision-makers with working teams to comprehend characteristics of problems, which were often ignored through condensed oral or written reports (Hwang 2013; JongEon Lee 2013).
- v. In many cases, these kinds of behaviours are truly oriented for political purpose. However, the nature of MMO also exactly aims to use this kind of politicians' desires. By letting them to meet up with the public face to face, key decision-makers have become highly motivated to solve those problems together. A kind of competition occurs between the Mayor, the head of borough, MPs and the city and local councillors, who are all elected by the public (Hwang 2013).
- w. At the EunPyung case, only 24 hours after residents had communication with key decision-makers at various places, the Mayor himself openly presented possible solutions to residents and gathered further feedback from the residents. This kind of format largely boosted citizens' trust toward public authority and at the same time it also gave/ huge pressures on the working teams of SMG and boroughs to implement those promises (Hwang 2013; K. Kim 2013; JongEon Lee 2013; JongSun Lee 2013).
- x. South Korean high-speed wireless Internet penetration rate reaches 100.6% in 2012 according to OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) report (Moran 2012).

- y. For instance, on-line communication tools are great to report unfound problems quickly, open up a policymaking process and public information, and gather quick feedback from diverse groups of people (See section 3.1 for details). This in turn helped to devise or refine new solutions. Off-line programs like CCF and MMO were good at solving longstanding issues and resolving issues conflicting many different groups of citizens (see Section 3.2 and 3.3 for details).
- z. These procedures include arranging committee meetings, providing feedbacks to committee members and citizens at regular base, and coordinating them to agree on one finalised policy or program (K. Ryu 2013; Hwang 2013; K. Kim 2013).
- aa. Korean civil society has recent 30 years of democracy movement history and this has resulted in substantial mistrust between public sector and civil society until recently. Even many individual citizens tend to view civic groups only as loud advocacy groups that are not capable to deliver tangible solutions.
- ab. With a strong tradition of democracy movements over the last 30 years, Korean society has vibrant citizen advocacy activities and a strong belief in citizen power. However, it is relatively weak or muted in expressing their opinions in making policies or solutions to social challenges, particularly through collaboration with public authority. Not many Koreans believe that the public authority would give power to citizens when creating policies. This is because they have never experienced such opportunities.