



open
city
Lagos

Open City Lagos

Cities are often celebrated for their ability to accommodate diverse people, settings, processes and aspirations within their borders. This vibrancy and opportunities for better earnings and living standards account for their attractiveness to the growing majority of people who opt to live and work in cities. Taking Lagos as case-in-point, the Open City project aims to spark conversation on how space, urban planning and the collective strategies of urban actors shape the experience of living in Lagos. The project sets to explore the conditions that create and sustain ‘open city’ dynamics, engaging with thinkers and doers in Lagos across multiple platforms. Its intension is to identify how its citizens and their government can gain from the competitive advantage of diversity, mobility and access to complement on-going efforts to address the deep-seated and complex challenges facing Lagos. Towards this end, Open City Lagos (OCL) will initiate exchanges with other cities around the world where open city initiatives are evident, both through planned activities led by municipal authorities and the strategies taken up by local residents and groups.

Through a series of interactive exchanges, essays and activities, OCL seeks to identify what makes Lagos ‘open’ as a city, where ‘openness’ can be found, and what can be done to foster growth that is diverse, equitable, creative, sustainable and inclusive. ‘Openness’ here is a broad but

specific term, denoting inclusion in terms of the quality of social, economic and spatial conditions in the city. It therefore encompasses a number of intersecting conditions essential to well-being and sustainable development. On one hand, it alludes to the spatial phenomenon directly linked to urban livability, such as inter-city mobility, security, public space, access to housing and other primary services such as water and waste management. ‘Openness’ also refers to the ability for all to achieve a sustainable livelihood, including migrants, transient workers and other vulnerable groups.

The Open City Lagos initiative is a look into the qualities that affect the lived experience of urban space, considering these on multiple scales (micro to macro), and minding the multifaceted qualities typical to cities as well as the particular challenges facing growing cities of the South. The project’s key aims are to identify key opportunities for urban design directed towards spatial and socio-economic inclusiveness in the city of Lagos and to develop a vision for appropriate urban development strategies and policies.

This is a project developed by:
Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS, Nigeria), Nsibidi Institute (Lagos)
and Fabulous Urban (Zurich)

Call for Contributions

The first phase of the Open City project kicks off with a call for all who live, work and visit the city to share their perspectives on the inclusive nature of Lagos. The submissions should be based on personal observation, experiences and initiatives that truly capture the impact of urban conditions in Lagos. Beyond collating a well-rounded portrait of openness in the city, the larger objective of the Call is to enable public engagement and knowledge transfers that will inform further discussions and new thinking on urban conditions in Lagos State. Priorities and recurring trends evident from the Lagos community and wider public will be subjected to critical reflection and further developed for the Open City Lagos main event in October this year.

Project Ideas

There are four main ways to contribute to the Open City Lagos project:

- **Next stop, Lagos:** Share your story of how you came to live in Lagos. How did you find a place to live? How did you navigate the city? What were your expectations of life in Lagos and how were these met? What were some of the most challenging experiences you faced when seeking earn a living, attend to your studies or provide a home and services for your family? How approachable and accommodating is Lagos as a city?
- **Lagos the Open City:** What makes Lagos an “open city”? Where can “openness” be found? Upload a picture that epitomizes this quality of openness in Lagos. Include a caption that explains why you chose that particular image and what it means to you. In your opinion, what how can your example be used further to foster creative, sustainable and inclusive growth?
- **Boundaries & Mobility:** Track your movement across the city – we’d like to see just how mobile Lagosians are and the diversity of spaces comprised in the city. One way to do this is to take a picture every hour, making sure to capture the surrounding area. Tell us what your day-to-day challenges are and how the city’s infrastructure aids or hampers your ability to achieve these aims. How important is mobility and accessibility to the city? What are some alternative practices

adopted in efforts to get around Lagos?

- **The City for All:** What does public space look like in Lagos – the marketplace, the buspark, beneath the highways or purpose-built arenas, like Tafewa Balewa Square? Where in the city do you feel most comfortable? What types of activities can these places accommodate? Take a picture of yourself or friends in a section of the city that you feel best encapsulates the openness of the city – whether social, economic or even in terms of your entry and use of the place. Tell us why you chose it and how it contributes to your understanding of public space.

Submission Guidelines

All works responding to the Call should be directly uploaded to the Open City Lagos Facebook page, available here: www.facebook.com/opencitylagos

Submissions should include the following details:

- 1) The name, contact details and professional background of the person(s) responsible for the project
- 2) The project idea the work responds to (Next Stop Lagos, Lagos the Open City, Boundaries & Mobility or City for All)
- 3) The places and parts of Lagos featured in the work

The most insightful and creative submissions will be shortlisted by a review board comprised of jurors from diverse professional and research backgrounds. Producers of shortlisted works will be granted additional time to develop and refine their responses. During this time, Heinrich Böll Stiftung (HBS) and Nsibidi Institute will provide support in the form of advice on conceptual development and editorial supervision. Shortlisted works will form part of the side exhibition at the international Open City Lagos main event in October 2015 and feature on the organisers’ facebook and websites which have wide international outreach.

Whilst the project ideas detailed above serve as guides for the subject matter of call responses, contributions can take numerous exciting forms.

The following formats and parameters are deemed acceptable:

- Short videos (3-5 minutes)
- Music, audio compilations and sound performances (3-5 minutes)
- Photographs (with captions of up to 300 words)
- Short write-ups (up to 300 words)
- Drawings, models and sculptures (size and weight limits apply kindly check with project administrators)

Deadline for Submissions

20 January: Open call for submissions
(see project ideas and guidelines)

28 February: Deadline for submission

27 March: Announcement of shortlisted submissions

24 April: Completion of select contributors' revisions

About Heinrich Böll Stiftung

The Heinrich Böll Foundation is part of the Green political movement that has developed worldwide as a response to the traditional politics of socialism, liberalism, and conservatism.

www.ng.boell.org and www.boell.de

About Nsibidi Institute

Nsibidi Institute is an independent research organization uniquely positioned to build local research capacity, promote learning and effect critical engagement on societal issues in Nigeria.

www.nsibidiinstitute.org

About Fabulous Urban

Fabulous Urban is a Zurich-based design and planning practice for developing and emerging regions.

www.fabulousurban.com

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