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Citycism

Using creativity to improve Klang Valley public spaces

Murals on pillars, traffic calming project help improve quality of life

CREATIVE placemaking can enhance public spaces. It involves using arts, culture and creativity to foster a sense of community and enhance overall quality of life.

The goal is to make spaces more vibrant and reflective of local culture while also addressing social, economic or environmental needs.

Two creative placemaking projects – murals in Subang Jaya and traffic calming measures in Kuala Lumpur – offer tangible solutions to urban challenges and demonstrate the power of community-driven initiatives.

In Subang Jaya, its assemblyman Michelle Ng collaborated with Prasarana Malaysia on Sang Seni 15, a project to paint murals on SS15 LRT Station pillars.

“The project was initiated to improve the experience of pedestrians and motorists,” Ng had said of the project.

“It also aims to highlight the talents of local artists and combat vandalism of LRT pillars.

“The name ‘Sang Seni 15’ is a play on the area’s name and also celebrates the artists that drew the murals.”

The murals on the 12 pillars feature themes such as mobility, community, nature and lifestyle elements found around SS15.

The project has been so well received that Prasarana plans to continue working with Ng on other structures within SS15 and possibly expand it elsewhere.

The Sang Seni 15 project has injected a sense of vibrancy and



Murals painted on pillars near the SS15 LRT Station in Subang Jaya. — Filepic

identity into a space often associated with transit.

Its focus on showcasing local artists provides a much-needed public platform to exhibit their talent, besides giving SS15 residents a sense of community pride.

In Kuala Lumpur, a traffic calming project has been introduced to improve safety for pupils of SK Danau Kota 2 in Setapak and residents living nearby.

It also aims to reduce vehicle speeds and make streets safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

The project includes installing traffic barriers, painting walking paths, redesigning a one-way road beside the primary school and designating drop-off zones to create a safe waiting area for pupils.

It is a collaboration between Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL), Global Designing Cities Initiative (GDCI) and its local liaison Bike

Commute Malaysia (BCMY), under the Bloomberg Philanthropies Initiative for Global Road Safety.

The narrowed lane and traffic calming measures reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians and lower average vehicle speeds.

By reclaiming the streetscape and prioritising pedestrian movement, the project is able to create a more child-friendly environment.

This collaborative approach is an example of how thoughtful design and community engagement can transform a potentially dangerous space into a valuable asset for the entire community.

Following its success, Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Seri Maimunah Mohd Sharif said DBKL would be expanding the project to three more areas in the city this year, benefiting eight schools in Brickfields, Jalan Cochrane and Bandar Tun Razak.

What if murals on roads could make our streets safer for pedestrians?

According to a 2023 article in the University of Maryland website, it was reported that street mural installations were gaining traction in cities around the world as a method of slowing vehicle speeds and creating safer environments for pedestrians.

“A 2022 study by the Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Asphalt Art Initiative, which has funded 42 street murals across the country since 2019, found more than a 50% decrease in accidents after the installation of crosswalk (zebra crossing) art and a 27% increase in motorists yielding to pedestrians,” said the article.

Wouldn’t it be great if our local authorities tried this out in Klang Valley?

Not only would it brighten up areas, but as a bonus, you could improve safety for all road users.