

the
Singapore

WAY

USE CASE

My City, My Chapter

My City, My Chapter: An Urban Democracy Campaign Based on The Singapore Way

1. Context Snapshot – A Captivating Story

- **City Name:** Lalitpur
- **Country:** Nepal
- **Population:** 360,000 (urban core)
- **Year of Launch:** 2024

In Lalitpur, nestled in the Kathmandu Valley, democracy often felt distant—something negotiated in party offices, not neighbourhood squares. Despite vibrant heritage, rising literacy, and bustling youth energy, civic engagement remained formal and top-down. Local plans were written without locals. Budgets were posted, not explained.

Neighbourhood voices echoed in Facebook comments but never in council minutes. Enter Meena Shrestha, a community-based social worker raised among artisans and activists. She had seen Singapore's approach—its “Singapore Together” co-creation platforms, its culture of practical engagement. She wondered: What if Lalitpur's democracy wasn't just defended—but designed by citizens themselves?

That's how My City, My Chapter was born—a campaign to re-script urban democracy, one neighbourhood chapter at a time.

2. LOCAL LEADER'S Vision Statement

“Democracy is not a festival we vote in—it's a story we write daily. It's time everyone gets a pen.”

— Meena Shrestha, Social Worker & Campaign Founder

3. 10 Lessons from The Singapore Way Adapted to the City

| Singapore Strategy | Local Adaptation |
|---|---|
| Public Engagement: “Singapore Together” | Launched neighborhood democracy clubs called “Chapters” |
| Civic Trust | Budget literacy workshops held monthly with street-level breakdowns |
| Policy Co-Creation | Participatory planning tables placed in public squares with open maps |
| Long-Term Planning | Citizens draft 5-year neighborhood compacts with city hall |
| Education for Citizenship | Youth Civic Labs run in 15 high schools with city simulation games |
| Inclusive Governance | Women’s groups and differently-abled citizens prioritize planning access |
| Transparency Through Design | All ward updates published in comics, not PDFs |
| Multiracial Harmony | Chapters include migrants, artisans, and indigenous Newars in dialogue circles |
| Ground-Up Innovation | Local “fix-it days” empower citizens to propose and prototype street improvements |
| Digital Augmentation | A Telegram bot collects civic ideas and reports issues in real time |

4. The Local Plan

- **Name of Initiative: My City, My Chapter**
- **Objectives:**
 - Reimagine urban democracy as a daily practice of inclusion and co-creation
 - Democratize access to planning, budgeting, and civic action tools
 - Build youth as civic translators between elders, technocrats, and elected officials
- **Key Design & Policy Tools:**
 - “Neighborhood Chapter” starter kit: maps, chalk paint, participation cards
 - Municipal Compact Framework enabling community plans to influence city budgets
 - Civic Design Mentors: trained residents facilitating policy literacy sessions

5. Implementation Framework

| Phase | Activities | Duration | Stakeholders |
|---------|---|----------|---|
| Phase 1 | Launch 10 pilot Chapters with participatory design sprint | 3 months | City Hall, ward chairs, youth leaders |
| Phase 2 | Train 100 Civic Design Mentors | 4 months | NGOs, civic educators |
| Phase 3 | Integrate citizen feedback into ward action plans | 6 months | Planning units, schools, community forums |
| Phase 4 | Host “City as Classroom” Festival | Ongoing | Artists, activists, local journalists |

6. Outcomes & Impact (18–24 Months)

- Quantitative:
 - 86 urban planning suggestions directly included in ward budgets
 - 1,800+ citizens participated in 50+ street-level planning days
 - 22 high schools running monthly “Civic Labs” reaching 6,500 students
- Qualitative:
 - A grandmother and her grandson co-authored a community waste plan
 - Civic Club teens convinced the city to rezone a toxic drainage site into a skate park
 - A former street vendor now trains others to navigate municipal permits—through a comic she illustrated herself

7. Challenges Faced & How They Were Overcome

| Challenge | Solution or Mitigation |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Skepticism from officials | Invited ward chairs as guest critics in Civic Labs |
| Low participation by informal workers | Held “Evening Democracy Circles” post-market hours |
| Literacy and accessibility gaps | Used comics, visual tools, and oral storytelling for all materials |
| Short political cycles | Created rotating Chapter Councils to maintain momentum across elections |

8. LOCAL LEADER'S Reflections

“Singapore reminded us that trust isn’t automatic—it’s built with participation. In Lalitpur, we aren’t waiting for permission to shape our city. We’ve started writing our chapter.”

— Meena Shrestha