The role of local community in rehabilitation of districts

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A- SUSTAINABLE REHABILITATION OF DISTRICTS, BEST PRACTICES

Abstract

“All people, whether literate or not, whether rich or poor, whether children, women or men, have a remarkable understanding of their surroundings and are capable of analyzing and assessing their situation, often better than trained professionals. Respect local perceptions, choices and abilities and involve local people in setting goals and strategies” (Nick Wates, 2000).

Plan has more chance to be implemented when it contributes at improving life conditions of inhabitants. Accordingly, and all over the world, there is increasing general demand for more local involvement in the planning and environment management. But how should it be done? How can local people, wherever they live, could be involved in planning mission?

Community planning makes easier for people to participate in the creation and management of their built environment and enables developers and planners to use the experience and knowledge of local people to create better places.

Recently there is increasing national interest, which have begun to find out the economic and social benefits that can result. The process needs that public, private and voluntary sectors move together in the same direction, and that requests:

- Involving all key stakeholders.
- Community participation (not just consultation) to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to get involved and the results are widely disseminated.
- Multidisciplinary teamwork.
- Expert facilitation.

Community planning events work because the process combines a unique mix of ingredients which respond to the complexity of today’s development issues:

- Open community involvement
- Creative working methods
- Dynamism
- Local expertise
- Fresh thinking
- Visual approach
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- Realism

This process may be initiated by any individual or organization and it is often supported by a local or international organization. Each case needs to carefully choose its own community planning strategy to suit local conditions and needs. Several forms of participation (passive participation - participation in information giving - participation for material incentives - functional participation - interactive participation - self-mobilization - representatives participation) could be adapted in some cases. During this process, NGOs staff also works with local governments, bridging the hall between community groups and elected officials; sometimes It needs practical training for all those involved in the program, including members of community groups and associations, and cart drivers.

Creation of shared visions - catalyst for action - revitalization of local networks - promotion of urban design capability - raising public awareness - moral boost could be the benefits of community participation, but the main effect is to show the feasibility of inhabitants taking direct charge of their own urban planning.

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1- Introduction

Community planning events have not suddenly been invented ,rather, the technique has – and is still evolving – from practical experience in many parts of the world. It can best be seen as part of an emerging technology of community planning which makes it easier for people to participate in the creation and management of their built environment and enable developers and planners to use the experience and knowledge of local people to create better places.

The underlying philosophy of community planning is interdisciplinary, collaborative and community-based, enabling all those affected (known as stakeholders) to participate in the planning process. The premise is that better environments can be created if local communities are involved from an early stage, working closely and directly with a wide range of specialists. In arriving at the process described in this paper, practitioners have drawn on experience from many disciplines including company management, human psychology and urban design.

The initiative for organizing events has come mostly from professional institutions and practitioners keen to explore more creative methods. Developers, community organizations and local authorities have become willing supporters as they seized the opportunity to work positively with the other parties involved. Recently there has been increasing interest from national governments which have begun to see the economic and social benefits that can result.

2- Community participation

Plan has more chance to be implemented when it contributes at improving life conditions of inhabitants. Accordingly, and all over the world, there is increasing general demand for more local involvement in the planning and environment management. But how should it be done? How can local people, wherever they live, could be involved in planning mission?
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Community planning makes easier for people to participate in the creation and management of their built environment and enables developers and planners to use the experience and knowledge of local people to create better places.

- **2-1 - Key features of community planning events**

Recently there is increasing national interest which have begun to find out the economic and social benefits that can result. The process needs that public, private and voluntary sectors move together in the same direction, and that requests:

  - Involving all key stakeholders

A “stakeholder” can be defined as: Any individual, group, or institution who has a vested interest in the natural resources of the project area and/or who potentially will be affected by project activities and have something to gain or lose if conditions change or stay the same.

Stakeholders are all those who need to be considered in achieving project goals and whose participation and support are crucial to its success. Stakeholder analysis identifies all primary and secondary stakeholders who have a vested interest in the issues with which the project or policy is concerned. The goal of stakeholder analysis is to develop a strategic view of the human and institutional landscape, and the relationships between the different stakeholders and the issues they care about most.

**Why Stakeholder Analysis Is Important?**

Ultimately, all projects depend on selecting stakeholders with whom they can jointly work towards goals that will reduce or reverse the threats to the programme/project.

A stakeholder analysis can help a project or programme identify:

- The interests of all stakeholders who may affect or be affected by the programme/project;
- Potential conflicts or risks that could jeopardize the initiative;
- Opportunities and relationships that can be built on during implementation;
- Groups that should be encouraged to participate in different stages of the project;
- Appropriate strategies and approaches for stakeholder engagement; and
- Ways to reduce negative impacts on vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

The full participation of stakeholders in both project design and implementation of is a key to – but not a guarantee of – success. Stakeholder participation:

- Gives people some say over how projects or policies may affect their lives;
- Is essential for sustainability;
- Generates a sense of ownership if initiated early in the development process;
- Provides opportunities for learning for both the project team and stakeholders themselves; and
- Builds capacity and enhances responsibility.

**When to Use Stakeholder Analysis**

Stakeholder analysis can be undertaken throughout all stages of the project cycle, but it definitely should be undertaken at the outset of a project or programme. In particular, during the Define phase, stakeholder analysis is a crucial component of situation analysis. During the Design phase a detailed stakeholder analysis will help shape the development of strategic actions and inform risk analysis. In the Implement phase, stakeholder analysis will help identify who, how and when stakeholders should be involved in project/programme activities. Later, during the Analyze/Adapt and Share phases, the stakeholder analysis serves as a reminder, providing a benchmark against which projects can monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their engagement with stakeholders, both supportive and opposing.

**How to Develop and Use Stakeholder Analysis**

There are a number of ways of undertaking a stakeholder analysis. Workshops, focus groups and interviews are three common approaches. During the course of the project cycle you may use all three, whatever approach is used, there are three essential steps in stakeholder analysis:

1. Identifying the key stakeholders and their interests (positive or negative) in the project.
We describe key questions to ask at each of these steps and provide an example of a tool.

1. **Identifying the key stakeholders and their interests (positive or negative) in the project**

   Any given threat or opportunity factor has one or more stakeholder groups associated with it. To analyse stakeholder groups, you can thus either start with your situation analysis and think about the key stakeholders associated with each, or start with an analysis of the stakeholders and then link them to specific threat and opportunity factors.

2. **Assessing the influence and importance of each stakeholder as well as the potential impact of the project upon each stakeholder**

   Key questions for this second step in a stakeholder analysis include:
   - Who is directly responsible for decisions on issues important to the project?
   - Who is influential in the project area (both thematic and geographic areas)?
   - Who will promote/support the project, provided that they are involved?
   - Who will obstruct/hinder the project if they are not involved?

   Then, we organize stakeholders according to their likely influence over decisions to be made, and the likely impact of project decisions upon them.

3. **Identifying how best to engage stakeholders**

   Finally, the third step involves determining how to involve the different stakeholders. Different types of stakeholders will be engaged in different ways in the various stages of the project, from gathering and giving information, to consultation, dialogue, working together, and partnership.

   The importance of the process in planning and conducting successful collaborations cannot be overemphasized. Good-faith efforts are often derailed because the parties are not skilled in the collaboration process, and because insufficient attention is given to designing and managing it. Using an inclusive, transparent approach during project development and implementation will help build ownership and commitment. If it is not possible or realistic to have all key stakeholders involved from the outset, then a process for gradual involvement may be needed.
   - Community participation (not just consultation)

   Every one affected is encouraged to be involved in developing and exploring ideas and options

Whatever community planning approach we choose, there are general principles which apply to most situations:


- Multidisciplinary teamwork
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Multidisciplinary teamwork or collaboration is a new approach designed to guide thinking and practice within a project. Researchers have developed many definitions about multidisciplinary collaboration having characteristics like objectivity, methodicalness, regularity, common goals, population’s perspective and individually shared responsibility. In decision making every expert has a responsibility to give his/her skills and acknowledge for the goals of the working community. In multiprofessional relationships each member can find his professional roles and evaluate their skills and knowledge base and assess their needs for continued education.

Multidisciplinary teamwork is based on being able to find suitable team members, doing work in workshops and visualizing requirements, ideas and decisions with lo-tech tools. This formula has enabled successful teamwork in a number of IS projects in recent years.

Multidisciplinary teamwork is one of the success criteria. It is considered to be essential for agile processes in order to meet project objectives and to ensure stakeholder buy-in to both process and results. It must be stressed that though this article concentrates on the teamwork, other factors such as clear goals, planning, iterative delivery, etc. also play a vital role in the success of agile projects, so multidisciplinary teamwork depends on:

• Putting together, establishing and sustaining a team;
• Doing all important team-based work in facilitated workshops;
• Visualizing and documenting the team’s efforts throughout the process.

Teamwork can only be productive if the team members appreciate the goals and strive towards reaching them. So it is important that they actually represent the different aspects of the problem or solution space and are aware of their own role in the team.

• Sponsors are key stakeholders because they represent the visions and can make necessary high level decisions;
• Domain specialists contribute towards the content and process;
• Users can enhance the usability;
• Designers/developers have the needed competence in creating the solution;
• The facilitator is the team’s catalyst.

The team must treat people’s ideas and concerns as equally important, irrespective of each team member’s position or power, or they won’t feel motivated to contribute. The team must also have the flexibility to change its course - we easily abandon one idea for another. This enables experimental thinking, but can lead to lower levels of buy-in and commitment.

We can get the ideas of all part by Capturing ideas with Wallware way, it comprises of cards in different shapes and colors that are fastened to the wall with blue-tack. In workshops, we use Wallware by noting each idea in large letters on a card using wide-tip pens. These cards are hung up on a wall under appropriate headings (goals, users, benefits, requirements, etc.). At regular intervals, the ideas are sorted and grouped, structuring them as much as possible.

Advantages of multidisciplinary teamwork in geriatric services include:

1) Saving resources, avoiding duplication of workload
2) Avoiding frustration of elderly and build-up of trust
3) Centralized expertise and encourage coordination
4) Bridging the gap
5) Effective time management

Bringing together people from different environments with diverse goals requires planned facilitation to enable proper teamwork, but the team can work to produce results in an agile manner under the right
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working conditions. The main components of their success are having the right team members, working in a transparent way in workshops and using lo-tech tools to visualize all ideas and decisions.

- **Expert facilitation**
  Effective facilitation enables development, learning and performance of the group or team. It provides shared learning, creates shared ownership and results in shared goals. The excellent facilitator takes responsibility for the process, not the content, he asks open questions rather than providing answers, and probes responses, establishes a non-threatening environment that encourages engagement, makes sure everyone has an equal opportunity to participate, spots and highlights differences of opinion, makes sure individuals are stretched to develop their own opinions and ideas.

- **2-2 - Why community planning events work**
  Community planning events work because the process combines a unique mix of ingredients which respond to the complexity of today’s development issues:

  - **Open community involvement**
    There is scope for all members of the community, including minorities, to participate in a wide variety of ways. This can lead to a new sense of cohesion and consensus on goals, the formation of new partnerships and the development of a sense of equity and trust.

  - **Creative working methods**
    Professionals of all disciplines work in a heads-on manner with each other and with non-professionals in a neutral environment, this breakdown conventional professional boundaries and fosters understanding between people which can be magnetic, releasing spirit, humor, imagination, positive thinking and collective creativity.
    Creative Community Planning expands direct experiences as participatory planners and researchers, offering new, creative, and meaningful ways to listen and practice together with communities in a rapidly changing world. Gone are the days of the “expert” planner who heroically wields his power to make decisions affecting entire communities for generations. Increasingly, academics, professionals and community members are member at creative working methods.
    Reflecting many aspects of the wide continuum of participatory practice, as the frontiers of community engagement and empowerment practice, Creative Community Planning provides clear access to emerging innovations in artistic, narrative, embodied and technological methods.
    Professionals are increasingly asked to be more creative, to learn themselves while encouraging learning in others and to facilitate and make learning happen.
    Learning practitioners are coming out of the classroom to be ‘in-place trainers’, coaches and ‘learning consultants’ in ‘learning spaces’.
    Amongst the key gifts trainers can impart to learners are the abilities to:
    - think creatively
    - challenge and inquire proactively and constructively, and
    - Problems solve.

  - **Dynamism**
    The carefully structured timetable creates a focus of public attention and provides deadlines for results. a critical mass of activity is generated creating momentum for change.

  - **Local expertise**
    Participation by local residents, businesses and professionals ensures that the whole processes embedded in the local context and runs smoothly. inside knowledge of the urban or rural context is essential for a successful planning process.
Local agencies must be equipped with the appropriate training and tools in order to develop programs to serve their needs. Similarly, teachers, regardless of their education field, require on-going training and support in order to access the best practices and teaching strategies, support services and technology, that enables planners to provide extensive resources to local institutions and partner with them in creating appropriate programs for their communities.

- **Fresh thinking**
  The intensive and collaborative process provides an opportunity for new ideas and new ways of working which can overcome past divisions and indecision. So previously unimagined proposals can emerge.

- **Visual approach**
  The use of urban design techniques of drawing and model-making provides an easily accessible way for people to think about, and communicate, visions for their community’s future.

- **Realism**
  The process addresses the physical, natural, social and economic environments as they are – rather than as abstract concepts- and ensures that the community’s real concerns are placed on the agenda

### 2.3 - Forms of participation

Participatory process may be initiated by any individual or organization and it is often supported by a local or international organization. Each case needs to carefully choose its own community planning strategy to suit local conditions and needs. Several forms of participation (passive participation - participation in information giving - participation for material incentives - functional participation - interactive participation- self-mobilization - representatives participation) could be adapted in some cases. During this process, NGOs staff also works with local governments, bridging the hall between community groups and elected officials; sometimes ,it needs practical training for all those involved in the program, including members of community groups and associations, and cart drivers.

The public participation plan should include a toolbox of methods that is tailored for different groups, the methods used for different groups should depend on their needs and wants as well as on how they typically receive information and engage in public discussions.

The quality of tow-way communication between the stakeholder group and other actors in the decision ─making process, such as agency personnel and technical experts. Good communication, often through face-to-face interaction, breaks down the barriers between government and lay people that hamper participation.

There are many of methods for community participation, among them the most effective methods for helping people to get involved in physical planning and design like:
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Each of those methods can consists of several activities for example

- Action planning event:

  Action planning events allow people to produce plans of action at carefully structured sessions at which all those affected work creatively together, they can be used at any stage of development process and provide an alternative to reliance on bureaucratic planning.

- Activity week:

  Activity weeks are a way of focusing energy and attention on the local environment and initiatives if they become an annual event and even more so if part of a national programme, activity week could include an award ceremony – competition – exhibition – guided tour – lecture or film show – letter-pick – open day – open building or garden – opening ceremony – party – project opening or launch – public meeting – reception or coffee morning – self-build project – street party workshop, forum, symposium, debate on relevant subjects.

- Architecture centre:

  Architecture centers are places set up to help people understand, and engage in, the design of local buildings and the built environment, they can become focal points for local environmental initiatives and a shop window and meeting place for all those involved in shaping the future of their surroundings. The center could includes an aerial photo – building data maps – conservation map – construction models – development proposals and ideas – electronic or digital map – geological model – historical maps – house-type photos – technical services.

  The scale and intensity of community involvement varies across the cities and their constituent neighbourhoods. In reviewing the case studies presented over the course of the project we identified a tendency for different kinds of participation to emerge at different scale levels, and at different levels of intensity.

  Representative involvement tends to occur at macro level—the presence of a relatively small number of local residents on advisory boards, monitoring boards, project boards. Their role is largely to respond to initiatives emanating from the regeneration agency, to advocate the position of the local residents and to advice on the adaptation and implementation of strategies. Sometimes these representatives are not elected but are generally “social entrepreneurs” that represent specific interest groups or associations within the neighbourhood or are long standing activists in the community.

  Participatory involvement tends to occur at the meso level- in most cities there are examples of “one off” participatory democracy exercises, that is, specific projects that are directed at actively empowering the local residents by encouraging participation from a wider pool of people, and by entrusting participants with a right to disseminate funding, or plan the precise contours of

- 2.4 - Benefits of community planning events

  The sustainable development is most effectively achieved if the knowledge and commitment of stakeholders is engaged at every stage of the process. A structured participatory process enables the community, the private sector and the local authority to work together in a creative way, which ultimately adds value at all levels- physical, social, economic and environmental – leading to better and more sustainable places. Community planning can play a vital role in taking this agenda forward and accelerating its delivery. The events described in this manual can produce results, and quickly. They can be used for any scale of project and the formula can be adapted in an infinite number of ways to suit different circumstances.
The benefits of community participation in urban planning are listed as: ownership of project, social isolation reduced, enable access to local government and NGOs, observe implementing problems on a small scale, capacity building in advance to upgrading measures, multiplication effect, mutual learning process, networking and cooperation strengthened, also it includes:

- Creation of shared visions
- Catalyst for action
- Revitalization of local networks

The Local Revitalization Programme is a complex document aiming in prevention of some urban areas degradation and social groups permanent marginalization.

In the Local Revitalization Programme of Urban Areas, the functional and spatial structure should be evaluated. Social preconditions, issues concerning social infrastructure and the legal status of land should be also analyzed.

- Promotion of urban design capability
- Raising public awareness
- Moral boost

For all those involved as result of experiencing team working

But the main effect of community participation is to show the feasibility of inhabitants taking direct charge of their own urban planning.

**3- Conclusion**

According Agenda 21, the rights for citizens to speak and make proposals should be legally guaranteed in all Cities, to Shaping urban social life

“Public participation should be an indispensable element in human settlements, especially in planning strategies and in their formulation, implementation and management; it should influence all levels of government in the decision-making process to further the political and economic growth of human settlements” (Delegate communiqué, United Nations Habitat 1 conference, Vancouver, 1976).
Papers

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