ISOCARP
Knowledge for better Cities

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Introductory Report Track 3: Community and stakeholder engagement

# Introductory Report Track 3:
## Community and Stakeholder Engagement

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Successful plans almost always involve successful community engagement. Modern planners are familiar with successful strategies and realize that securing the support of important stakeholders can be the critical step in making a plan a reality.  Planners are developing new techniques and strategies to address competing interests and reduce conflict.

Of specific relevance to city and regional planning is whether we are fully engaging the important stakeholders in our communities? The Call for Papers for the 49th Congress posed this stimulating question and several others:

- What have we learned about community engagement?  Are there new techniques, including digital ones, and strategies that allow us to better engage our stakeholders?  Do these techniques and strategies differ by scale, culture, and regions?
- Is there ever enough community engagement?  When do we know whether our strategies have taken hold? How do we measure success or failure?
- Are "delegated power" and "citizen control" viable or reasonable objectives for making plans for complex, fast-changing mega cities and regions?
- Are new or re-shaped models of planning practice required for community engagement?

Track 3 presents papers according to these topics or themes: Case Studies; Strategies and Tools; and Emerging Trends and Research. The last session has two panels focusing on two different aspects of community engagement.

### 3.1: Creative Participatory Planning Processes as Drivers of Sustainable and Resilient Development

This session presents four papers focusing on interactions among citizens, stakeholders, local authorities in participatory planning processes.  Challenges faced by town planners and other experts to team up with urban actors in complex negotiations promoting local development.
A local development is built upon different topics and approaches depending on contingent urban issues. We see as in post-socialist countries the main theme is to open a dialogue in order to slow down the rapid and frequently disordered urbanization, which is happening in the realities of the "liberal model" of spatial development. In other milieus the participatory process is enlarging its methods, through creative effort, looking for understanding  how to make it easy for people to take part in the discussion especially

when they are usually time poor: how to get information quickly and use digital, life innovative chances to better interact in the planning practices. Finally, the relation between community participation and new ideas generation is investigated: development proposed and achieved through participatory planning approaches is really delivering more sustainable and resilient solutions for our cities?

### 3.2: Community Development Planning: Stakeholders Collaboration and Civic Engagement Vital Forces for Innovation in Practices

Session 3.B offers four papers that put some interesting questions on efficiency and effectiveness of participatory forms of decision making:

What really are costs and benefit of more community involvement in town planning?

It is often taken for granted that participatory forms of democracy are better than representative forms and that the public has an obligation to participate, but what about real results of participation. Moreover, general access to information and use of social media is expanding the bounds of communities, bringing involved people and planning activities into immediate interaction and possible conflicts. Nonetheless, the improvement of the effectiveness of plans, the resolving of conflict by enhancing consensus between stakeholders and the building of social capital are seen as advantages linked to participation, but even several limitations arise from presented practices. Lastly, reaching good results is dependent on establishing complex governance (both horizontal and vertical) processes including community development, productive activities, economic sectors, and different scales of government, making consensus among them, or at least mutual understanding a necessity for sustainable development.

### 3.3: Politics and Policies Generated by Community Planning Experiences: A Set of Relevant Case Studies

Session 3.C presents several practices based on participatory planning approach. The practices comparison is considering examples from China, India and Tanzania. Participation is usually considered a good approach even if it is uncertain how to achieve a meaningful participation for planning purposes. The relation between agendas, strategic plans developed through participatory workshops not always are in line with normative, statutory planning tools. Moreover, participation is considered as a catalyzer in the relation between local development and territorial-social capital, likewise, papers analyze the grade of transferability of local participatory experiences. Lastly, means of effective community engagement are taken into consideration especially in relation with the management of planning conflicts generated in achieving consensus on proposed planning measures.

### 3.4 and 3.5: Community Design Tools for Urban Development and Requalification: A Set of Relevant Case Studies

The final two sessions focus on community design tools. Presented results are based on case studies (Brasil, South Africa, USA) and research papers. Case studies examine the methods of community and stakeholder engagement and put in evidence the explicit challenges that they constitute in response to

current urban development and regeneration challenges. Issues connected with partnership involving community, public sector organizations, such as role of public authorities are taken into consideration. Furthermore, the concept of social-collaborative creation for the local identity and community commitment, and nature and types of community engagement techniques, in a turning point phase of planning processes, are thoroughly explored.