

Roundtable 2: The Future of the Inhabitants

SIAULIAI, 18 SEP 2009, 11:00-12:30h

Moderators: Mr Thomas Knorr-Siedow and Ms Christiane Droste/ UrbanPlus (DE)

Summary

This round-table discussed visions of the target areas' population within 20 years.

Criteria to be discussed were:

- Age structure
- Ethnic structure
- Income
- Ways of communication
- Involvement
- Role of inhabitants

The **key questions** which should structure the discussions were:

- How to set (which) priorities?
- Which strategies to be developed?
- Who might be/become responsible for the organisation of a long-term process?
- Who should/Might take on (which) responsibilities?
- How to gain and maintain the different local actors' involvement?

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION RESULTS

The discussion was very vivid and a lot of aspects emerged which hadn't been discussed before. Some participants got communication support in Russian, so everybody's contribution could be included. Particularly the context of the economic crisis lead to the statement, that more than ever before the fact that "future changes every day" will play an important role in integrated projects on urban development and energy efficient rehabilitation. Some participants stated that one should be aware that the "result of the economical crisis in the target-areas might be a population to be characterised as: elderly people, poor people, old, ill, poor, amongst the elderly a majority of women ... (?)".

Concerning the **process-level**, the participants requested awareness for some general aspects influencing integrated processes in the target areas:

- every decision influences the future
- Horizontal mobility -> social/ lifestyle attractiveness of neighbourhood/ city
- "Wpt" – Willingness to pay for quality of real estate in the long run
- Leadership – empowering actions of local leaders who consolidate community.

A **missing link** (gaps) within the communication process / development of strategies were identified and confirmed by different partners between:

- Social situation
- Ownership
- Involvement

As for the **strategies to be developed**, some target-areas pointed at the fact that in 20 years the debate will be about renovation vs. demolition (building quality, demographic change, population decrease). Within 20 years, a



part of the neighbourhoods will have to deal with a considerable number of empty apartments or/and apartments occupied by old and/or poor people. The **social situation** is expected to change, too: young people will emigrate; inhabitants from rural areas will move away to urban apartment buildings, immigration may change cohesive structures (e.g. in Belarus immigration from China into cohesive areas is being feared). In this context, the question emerged, how far ethnic relations improvement can be addressed by urban design?

The groups identified some **major objectives for the strategic development**:

- Prevention of poverty areas
- Building perspectives for / dealing with aging inhabitants, having no finance/ no perspective
- Building a private rental stock
- Given that the major concern of an owner is the improvement of the own dwelling and that often, financial resources neither allow this nor a contribution to shared spaces' renovation: development of financing models like eg a municipal fund
- Dealing with mobility patterns: young people -> centre/ middle aged -> stay/ elderly -> like to move together

Thinking about possible **actors taking on the organisational responsibilities**, it was mentioned that the main challenges are:

- general problems to gain participation in planning change
- the involvement of old owners / poor owners

A major **responsibility for the long-term process** was seen on the national level, initiating / giving incentives for local response and activity.

The **gaining of local actors' involvement** is still difficult in some target-areas, last but not least due to a policy gap: the single owners, which form an important actor group, are afraid that they do not achieve policy change. The participants confirmed that the threshold of involvement must be as low as possible. In terms of participation methodology, the question of attitude was an important contribution: e.g. how to *welcome* people / their engagement or the importance of a personal approach (inviting). Generally, inhabitants missing belief in governmental politics/activities was mentioned as an important obstacle to overcome in integrated processes.

New or not yet sufficiently considered issues which were suggested to be pursued in the target-areas' activities were:

- Job-creation: "people will stay in this region if they have a job there or somewhere near"
- community building methodology / community leadership training
- the motivation/inclusion/role of voluntary work
- decision-making about the environment
- the transmission of ownership / rights
- methodology of owners' involvement/participation
- the gender perspective on demographic development, communication patterns, equal participation in decision-making processes / participation processes, psychological aspects within an ageing population and the respective effects on community building processes

