Making People and Communities Partners of the Authorities through the Assistance for Urban Rehabilitation and Housing

Tirana July 24, 2001
Introduction

This report describes the final results of the “Making People and Communities Partners of the Authorities through the assistance for Urban Rehabilitation and Housing”. About 350 meters of neighborhood roads were upgraded including upgrading of green recreational spaces, benefiting a total of 162 residents in a badly deteriorating inner city Tirana neighborhood. Community based actions formed the basis for this upgrading, in which communities and authorities became partners in development. The project served as a pilot action to show authorities and community a new approach on neighborhood upgrading.

The project was implemented by Co-Plan, with financial support of (i) NOVIB (58,4% contribution); (ii) the Project Implementation Unit in the Ministry of Public Works (HABITAT II) under UNDP funding (36,4% contribution); (iii) Co-PLAN (2% contribution); and (iv) the residents (2,2% contribution).

This report covers the period January 2000 to end of April 2001, which is the total project implementation period.

Co-Plan staff involved were:
Flamur Kuçi: Team Leader during the preparatory phase.
Project preparation; Social economic survey; Survey report, and community meetings.

Luan Deda: Team Leader during the implementation phase.
Design and investment management; Organize and establish community representation and community contributions; Coordination with all actors as municipality and Ministry.

Suela Muça: Team member.
Involved in interviews, technical design, community work and reporting.

Other Co-PLAN expertise:
Klaud Manahasa: Architect for the public space and infrastructure improvement.

ASSA Association of Social Services of Albania: Implementing partner for the social component of the project in regard to community work.

Main contacts:
Doris Andoni: Head of the Housing department in the Ministry of Public Works
Daniel Gjoni: Head of the Urban Planning department in the Tirana Municipality
Shefikat Agaraj: Head of the Tirana Municipal Greenery Enterprise
Community leaders of the Tirana 1st of May neighborhood
Co-Plan, Centre for Habitat Development

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   1. A full copy of the report for the preparatory phase including the social and economic survey for the area
   2. A copy of the official letter of the Tirana Mayor for approving the project intervention in the area.
   3. List of heads of households involved in the project and their respective contributions.
   4. The first draft proposal for the follow up of the project.
   5. Copy of the agreement between Co-Plan and the Greenery Enterprise for the works in the area.
   6. A copy of the agreements of Co-Plan with community representatives for the implementation of the project.
I. Background

The last decade’s changes had a serious negative impact on housing, infrastructure and public space use and maintenance of Tirana’s neighborhoods. The quality of housing in the city deteriorated fast, particularly for the exterior faces. The old apartment blocks that have been privatized early 90’s are sub-standard to today’s norms, and individuals took informal initiatives to extend their apartments with extra rooms, garages or balconies.

Besides, much public space is informally occupied by garages, small shops, bakeries, new 12-storey apartment blocks etc. Parking space is nowadays getting a serious problem since more households have a car.

These new constructions have highly damaged the existing neighborhood infrastructure, resulting in less water, power cuts, overload of sewer systems, insufficient waste collection and complete neighborhood road destruction.

Occupation of public space means also creating ‘private’ gardens to ensure future extensions or create their own privacy. Besides, it is also a measure to prevent others from occupying this public space.

The selected site is a typical neighborhood of Tirana that lost much of its appreciated values as urban space and services after the 90’s. During the dictatorship the area was considered a good example of a harmonizing environment, with considerable recreational space and greenery.

1 Development process in Albania is still on the stage where people invest on housing only in the interior while outside the door there is no body’s responsibility.
However, at this moment around 90% of the land is occupied by constructions or ‘private’ gardens, and only 5 to 10% remains for public use. So, the elderly people and particularly children have no place for recreation in the area left, unless they use road space (when the road is not completely damaged), or some of the few remaining open places.

The resident composition of the neighborhood has dramatically changed during the last ten years. About 60% of the households are new comers, mainly living in the new high-rise constructions. In general, the former residents remind the wonderful neighborhood atmosphere from before 90’, and are now blaming the new comers (constructions) for all their problems. 

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2 Results come from the social-economic survey carried out in the preparation phase of the project. Attached to this report is a copy of this survey.

"Maji" Neighborhood

Skenderbej Square