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Building successes



Kick-off Meeting of the Participative Expert Panel for the Thematic Partner of the SURE Network - Studio Metropolitana

Held on 7th December 2010 in Budapest

**SURE - Fostering diversification of local economies by using
innovative Socio-economic methods of Urban REhabilitation in
deprived urban areas**

URBACT II project

Present:

Attila Rátkai, Lead Partner
Éva Urbán, Lead Partner
Ferenc Albert Szigeti, Lead Partner
Réka Együd, Thematic Partner, Studio Metropolitana
Anna Demeter, Thematic Partner, Studio Metropolitana
Dagmara Mliczynska-Hajda, Independent consultant
Alexandre Repetti, Cooperation@epfl - Vice-Presidency for Institutional Affairs
Alenka Poplin, Hafen City University Hamburg
Sonja Hörster, Institut für Partizipatives Gestalten
Hans Schlappa, Lead Expert and chair of the meeting

1. Aim and structure of the thematic contribution to the SURE Network

Ferenc Szigeti provided a brief overview of the structure of the SURE project, focusing on explaining how the Studio Metropolitana (StudMet) and the Expert Panel were expected to support the development of capacity among SURE partners in the use of participatory planning techniques. The thematic contribution of StudMet to the SURE network was twofold: First, StudMet was expected to provide practical coaching support for four partner cities in the development and application of participatory planning techniques. In addition StudMet was responsible for developing a 'toolkit' of participatory planning techniques that were applied during the implementation phase of the SURE project. The role of the Expert Panel was to

make their individual expertise available to SURE partners during the implementation phase and then to contribute their experience in the production of the 'toolkit'.

2. The role of Studio Metropolitana

StudMet is the only 'non-city' partner of the SURE network and was chosen for its expertise in participatory planning approaches. During the kick-off meeting for the SURE implementation phase in Gheorgheni, where StudMet delivered a Future Cities Game workshop, SURE city partners confirmed that they very much valued this contribution. While StudMet has a significant portfolio of techniques to design and develop community led projects, there was a need to broaden this resource base. This was to be achieved through the Expert Panel (PEP) which is broadly considered to be the 'LSG' for this 'non-city' partner.

StudMet is to administer and co-ordinate the contribution of the PEP towards the SURE study visits, cross-national workshops and the production of the final output which is a 'good practice' guide on the application of participatory approaches towards the socio-economic regeneration of deprived neighbourhoods.

3. The role of the Participatory Expert Panel

During the meeting the group decided on a name and acronym for the Expert Panel. From now on the Expert Panel is called: Participatory Expert Panel, or PEP. The SURE PEP brings together some of the most advanced theory and practice on participatory design and planning in the field of urban regeneration in Europe. The four experts of the PEP offer a significant range of contrasting expertise which has the breadth to encompass the diverse challenges that are being faced by SURE city partners in supporting their LSGs and developing their LAPs. There are, however, only very limited resources available to fund the contribution from the PEP. Hence the structure of the work plan, set out under 5 below, is designed to maximise the benefits for both the SURE city partners during study visits and the creation of a guide book which might have wider application across regeneration partnerships in Europe.

4. Summary of expertise of PEP members

StudMet had invited the PEP members after a lengthy and careful selection process. This process was designed to ensure that each expert had substantial expertise in their field of work and, equally important, that their respective expertise is complementary. Following brief introductions each PEP member was invited to give a short presentation on their work.

Alenka Poplin is Professor for ICT based decision making processes at the Hafen City Universität in Hamburg, Germany. Alenka provided the meeting with an overview of how ICT based tools can be used to obtain feedback from citizens about their current social, physical and economic environment and also about future development projects. Examples included projects which tested 'participation on demand' methods where citizens were able to text their comments as and when they chose to a central data base. Map based participatory projects included websites which allowed citizens to plot their use of particular open spaces on maps, such as high quality areas, areas which are difficult to access or areas which feel unsafe. A third example was concerned with online games, where citizens could explore how a

planned development might affect the socio-economic and physical structure of a neighbourhood.

Alexandre Repetti is a researcher and teacher at the Cooperation@epfl - Vice-Presidency for Institutional Affairs in Lausanne, Switzerland. His area of expertise is in the design of systems which support decision making in the planning process at master planning and regional levels. In developing such models Alex tries to tackle the drawbacks of voting based systems by working on process through which project objectives and alternatives are developed through a dialogue with a large number (hundreds or even thousands) of people affected by proposed developments. The particular area of expertise which is likely to be of benefit to the SURE network is concerned with economic impact assessments and the creation of added value for all stakeholders in a development project. The example given was about a hospital development in Lausanne where local residents developed solutions to contested issues and were then able to secure for themselves a financial share of the economic added value created by a hospital and housing development.

Dagmagra Mliczynska-Hajda works as a free lance participatory planner in Bytom, Poland. She provided a range of examples which showed the hurdles local communities face when trying to engage in planning processes led by public agencies. She reported that using models or planning for real processes were an effective tool for conflict resolution. This included a project where residents identified 'places of shame' and publicised their findings to the local community. Walking tours were also found to be effective in identifying issues and opportunities and also in raising the profile of the participatory planning process in a city. Making politicians listen to the views of local residents remained the key challenge she had to tackle on a daily basis.

Sonja Hörster is director of the Institut für Partizipatives Gestalten based in Germany. Sonja's area of expertise is in the participative design of open spaces. The approach taken is based on residents identifying issues, problems and opportunities related to the open space concerned. Sonja then takes participants through an analytical process in which residents develop their own proposals as to how the open space should be designed. This involves different media, such as drawings or models, consultations with the wider community and finally an agreement on a concept for the open space. Sonja then creates a professional landscape architecture design for the space and following consultation with the residents this design forms the basis for the implementation process which often involves professional landscape contractors. The fundamental principle of this approach is that experts do not suggest solutions and do not frame problems or opportunities at the outset of a project; instead they support residents over typically 2-3 days to come up with their own ideas.

Réka Együd is a participatory planner and represents Studio Metropolitana as the project manager for the PEP. Réka and her colleagues have developed a substantial profile in Budapest as one of the leading planning consultancies that has a focus on participatory planning. StudMet has undertaken a range of projects in which local stakeholders contribute to the design of open spaces. Recent participatory projects include the design of public squares, streets, open spaces and housing estates. In doing their work StudMet use a range of techniques, including planning for real, future cities game and art based techniques.

The group felt that they had a wide range of relevant and complementary expertise. It was considered important to develop a profile for each member of the PEP so that this can be shared with the SURE network. These profiles will also be the first

contribution towards the final output of the PEP (see point 6 below). In order to support the drafting of a profile of each PEP member the individual experts agreed to

- a) Email their presentation slides to Réka who can then either put them on the SURE website or email them to each PEP member individually
- b) To add any additional material about their work and organisation by way of PowerPoint slides, reports or promotional material
- c) Provide details of their website and/or relevant electronic material

5. Thematic contributions to study visits and transnational workshops

The SURE PEP will have to organise itself in way which allows each thematic expert to participate in a study visit or transnational workshop. While StudMet as a full partner of the SURE network has the resources to participate in all the meetings, individual experts have the resources to participate in one study visit and one further meeting of the PEP to finalise the end product of their work. It was decided that the individual expertise of the PEP would reflect the topics of the planned study visits as follows:

- Albacete: Alenka
In Albacete there is a need to reach a large number of local residents in order to obtain their ideas and views about the potential for the socio-economic regeneration of the target area.
- Larnaca: Alex
Larnaca would benefit from an analysis of the economic models and ownership structures which underpinned the hospital and housing development that Alex worked on in Lausanne.
- Komotini: Dagmara
This partner is likely to benefit from a critical reflection on current approaches to participatory planning and examples of where this was made to work in contexts which are not supportive of such approaches.
- Louvain la Neuve: Sonja
OLLN is planning to re-create a number of central open spaces and would benefit from being shown how such projects can be approached without confronting citizens with pre-designed solutions

StudMet has commitments to run a participatory planning session in Pori which leaves two further city partners to confirm their desired to benefit from the expertise of StudMet. One of them is likely to be Alcobaca because this city is hosting a study visit and will therefore require some thematic input on participatory planning techniques.

The contribution of PEP members to the study visits and transnational workshops is likely to vary according to the topic and local needs. It is likely that each visit will involve a short presentation on the PEP member's field of expertise and some work with members of the Local Support Group and/or city officials in which they can explore possible solutions to their local problems in making participatory planning happen. However, in all cases it is expected that PEP members contribute their ideas towards the development of case studies. These case studies will feature on the SURE website during the implementation phase and will also form a core element of the end product of the PEP.

6. Format of the end product

There was extensive discussion about the potential format of the end product. All agreed that it should be in the form of a guide book on how to make participatory planning happen. There were suggestions to create 'recipe cards' which would tell the reader how to 'mix ingredients' in order to create a particular result. While there are benefits in taking this approach the limitations were also discussed. The main issue here was that such 'recipes' are prescriptive and context specific, thus they run the risk of producing a 'cookery book' that only applies to the cities in which particular 'recipes' were created. Hence there was a need to lift the contribution of the PEP to a higher level of abstraction where the principles of the different approaches were explained in ways which makes them applicable to a wide range of contexts. These principles would then be illustrated with concrete case studies from the study visits and transnational workshops.

The agreed broad outline for the format of the end product is as follows:

- An introductory chapter setting out the rationale, principles and range of different participatory planning techniques
- A profile of the area of expertise of each PEP member with links to relevant websites.
- At least one chapter which is based on the particular expertise of each PEP member. Each chapter would include references to websites related to the thematic expert's work and other web-based resources which illustrate how the particular approach to participatory planning is applied in practice by other practitioners in Europe. Then there would be a case study of the relevant study visit to illustrate how this approach would have worked out in a particular SURE partner city.
- There are likely to be additional chapters which explain how the coaching sessions of StudMet worked out in practice.

There were concerns raised by PEP members about the lack of time to make written contributions to the guide book. Their time had been calculated primarily on the basis of attending workshops of the PEP group and making a contribution to the study visits and transnational workshops. Writing for publication is extremely time consuming and PEP experts did not feel that they should be expected to do so. However, everybody was happy to provide information about their specialism and contribute to the creation of case study material which would go into the guide book. In the end the following process was agreed:

- Each PEP member will provide material on their work and area of expertise which can be turned into a profile of their work which connects to the case study they worked on.
- Each PEP member will write up a brief description of their work with local actors during their study visits and workshops and supply this to Réka.
- Following each study visit Réka and Hans will draft the text and send it to the relevant PEP member for comment and editorial input.
- At the next meeting of the full PEP in June 2012 the first complete draft version of the guide book will be discussed and final changes agreed.
- StudMet will then take charge of its production and dissemination.

7. Closure of meeting

The meeting closed once the format of the end product had been agreed. Participants thanked StudMet for organising the kick-off meeting so well and everyone felt that they had made an important contribution to a full and productive day.

Hans Schlappa
Lead Expert
21.12.2010