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Empowering people in Egyptian informal areas by planning: towards an intelligent model of participatory planning

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Over the past thirty years, Egyptians living under poverty line -as in informal areas- have been largely marginalised, and were far from any participation in the decision-making process. Hence, The 25th of January revolution was brought to light by Egyptians from different ages, gender, social levels and education backgrounds. They shared one dream; to enhance their living conditions, live with dignity and acquire freedom. Empowering people and an effective participatory development will support this process of democratic transformation and socioeconomic development for their communities, rethinking their new role in the whole community and understanding of democracy among them. Therefore, Social cohesion and practice democracy is the main focus of this paper aiming to integrate citizens into the planning and decision making process. This is achieved through on -site interviews and is concluded by a model of the participatory planning and empowerment process in the informal society.

Keywords: Egyptian revolution, Participatory planning, Social cohesion, Empowering people, Intelligent model

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Introduction

Informal areas are a global phenomenon that have amplified on a long term and increased dramatically especially in the global south cities. In Egypt, informal areas emerged in the 1960s and inflated enormously in their distribution inside and around the urban mass. Greater Cairo, as one of the metropolitan cities, with almost 17 million inhabitants (Sims, 2009), contains a vast number of informal areas of more than 40% of the GCR urban mass.

The increase of the rural migration to the centralised Cairo, and the saturation and limitation of the formal housing contributed greatly to this phenomenon. The annual increase of the informal areas makes addressing this issue a must. Residents of informal areas, in Egypt, suffer from the lack in the basic urban services (among other; clean water supply, electricity and sewage). Lately, the government has started to take into account such basic demands especially after the collapse of the Dwaika Rock in 2007, in Mansheet Naser.

This paper comprises 3 sections: Section 1 reviews the literature on Informal areas in Egypt and especially in Cairo. It goes through the various interventions from the government, national and international NGOs, and the regulations of planning in Egypt. Section 2 reviews policies and concepts of public participation, empowering people. It includes an interview discussion conducted as an exploring tool towards empowering people in Egypt. Section 3 describes the PP intelligent model towards empowering people and establishes an effective participatory planning process. Finally, it ends with concluding remarks.

Informal areas or slums

The term ‘slum’ not only suggests indecent and miserable living conditions but also implies other important aspects such as informality (The World Bank and UN5CHS (Habitat), 2000). Slum refers to a residential area inhabited by extremely poor people, who have no land tenure and are characterized by low quality or informal housing.

Buildings, found there, can vary from the simplest shack to permanent and sometimes unexpectedly well-maintained structures (Carrie, 2009; UN-Habitat, 2003). Another explanation is that this term is an umbrella concept under which fall numerous categories of settlement, e.g. decaying inner-city tenements, squatter settlements, informal settlements and shantytowns. (The World Bank and UNCHS (Habitat), 2000) (See also Khalifa, 2010).

Egyptian slums – Background on informal areas in Egypt

After World War II and later on the 1952 Revolution, Cairo’s expansion accelerated and acquired new features under a socialist government (Sims, 2003) With the years of wars in 1948, 1967 and 1974 that followed, informal urban development has become the defining feature of Cairo’s growth and its urban change. Another main driving force was the shift from an agriculture-based economy to an industrial- and service-based economy (Shehayeb, 2011). This background gives the real incidence of ‘*Ashwaeyat*’³ (Khalifa, 2011).

³ The Egyptian Definition of the (Informal Area): The term “*Ashwaeyat*” is the only one used officially to indicate deteriorated or under-served urban areas. It actually means “random”, implying that these areas are unplanned and illegally constructed. Thus they are not necessarily slums, although being informal/ illegal, they tend to be the least well served in terms of infrastructure and public services, and they suffer from poor accessibility and high levels of overcrowding. (Sims, 2003) The coverage of settlement types is complex within the context and variety of equivalent words in other languages and geographical regions, such as Favelas, Kampung and Bidonvilles. (The

Year	Existing Agglomeration		Pre-urban Cairo Mostly Informal	Desert Cairo	Total GCR	GCR Annual Increase %	Per cent Informal In Cairo Proper	Per cent Informal In GCR
	Formal Areas	Informal Areas						
1947	2,400,242	0	586,038	0	2,986,280		0.0 %	10.2 %
1960	3,905,670	100,00	955,166	0	4,960,836	3.98	2.5 %	15.6 %
1976	4,610,326	1,969,000	1,374,317	0	7,953,643	2.99	29.9 %	38.1 %
1986	4,650,000	4,248,866	2,063,376	32,615	10,994,857	3.29	47.1 %	54.5 %
1996	4,807,632	5,436,477	2,857,468	149,992	13,251,569	1.88	53.1 %	59.7 %
2006	5,005,824	6,742,416	3,942,262	601,767	16,292,269	2.09	57.4 %	62.8 %
2009	5,038,763	7,155,106	4,345,567	800,952	17,340,388	2.10	58.7 %	63.6 %

Table 1: historic growth of component parts. Source: Sims, 2011

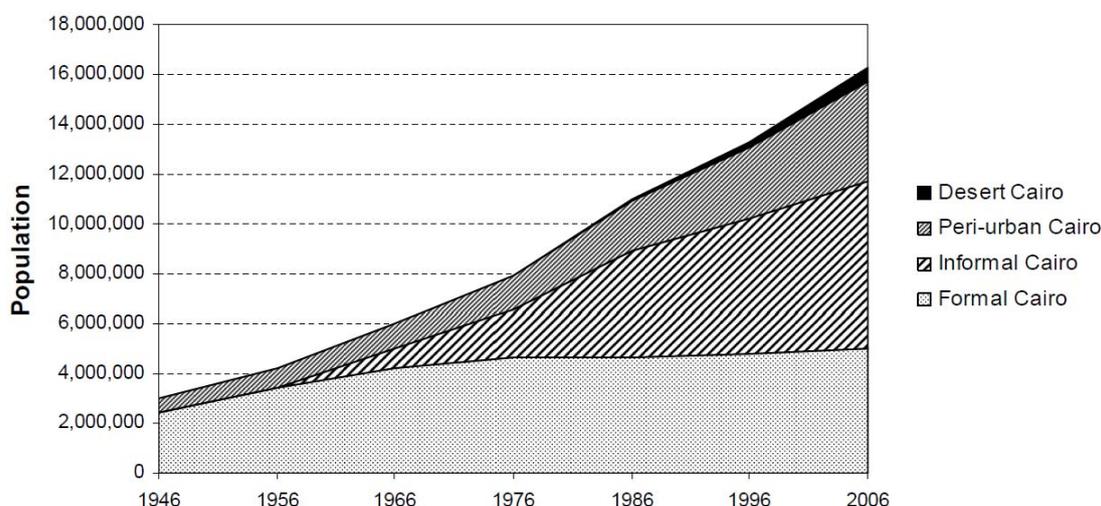


Figure 1. Growth of component parts (Sims, 2011)

Housing demand was still growing because of the high demographic growth and change. The populist housing⁴ policy, implemented by Nasser particularly in Cairo, was also inadequate for creating shelter for low-income families and the cohort of migrants rushing there. (Séjourné, 2006) Thus the middle and lower classes found the informal sector an adequate alternative to fulfil their needs.

World Bank and UNCHS (Habitat), 2000) (See also Khalifa, 2010) Egypt's informal settlements (called "*Ashwa'iyat*" or "random" zones in Arabic) are ubiquitous in both urban and rural areas. They are illegal, or extra-legal, in that they breach one or more laws regulating planning, subdivision, construction, registration of property, or preservation of agriculture lands. (The Cities Alliance, 2008) The term "*Ashwa'iyat*" has also become a synonym for slums in unofficial or popular language, and it carries a pejorative connotation. Government officials and the national press frequently see these areas as "black stains" and ascribe to them a whole set of social ills – crime, drugs, and 'backwards' behaviour. (Sims, 2003). A more operational definition is used by municipal authorities to define *Ashwa'iyat*, as "Residential areas characterized by being developed in contradiction to planning and building laws and regulations in the absence of state's supervision. They, in essence, might lack services and/or infrastructure" (General Administration for Planning and Plan Monitoring, 2008: 1).

⁴ The populist (low-income) housing is public housing called *masakin sha'biyya* and cooperatives.

After 1975, Sadat engaged the country in a new direction, namely the Open Door Economic Policy (*Infitah*)⁵, the government was the only responsible for the construction of low-income housing, and private sector would have the primary responsibility for providing their housing units. (El-Batran & Arandel, 1998). Since the 1980s, almost no more new informal areas have appeared, however, the growth of the existing ones has not slowed down in spite of the fall in population growth rates and the strict legislations⁶ from the government. (Khalifa, 2011) Thus, informal settlements were the only available solution for the poor (Hassan, 2012) and it led to the change in the social conditions because of residential migrations. (Bayat & Denis, 2000).

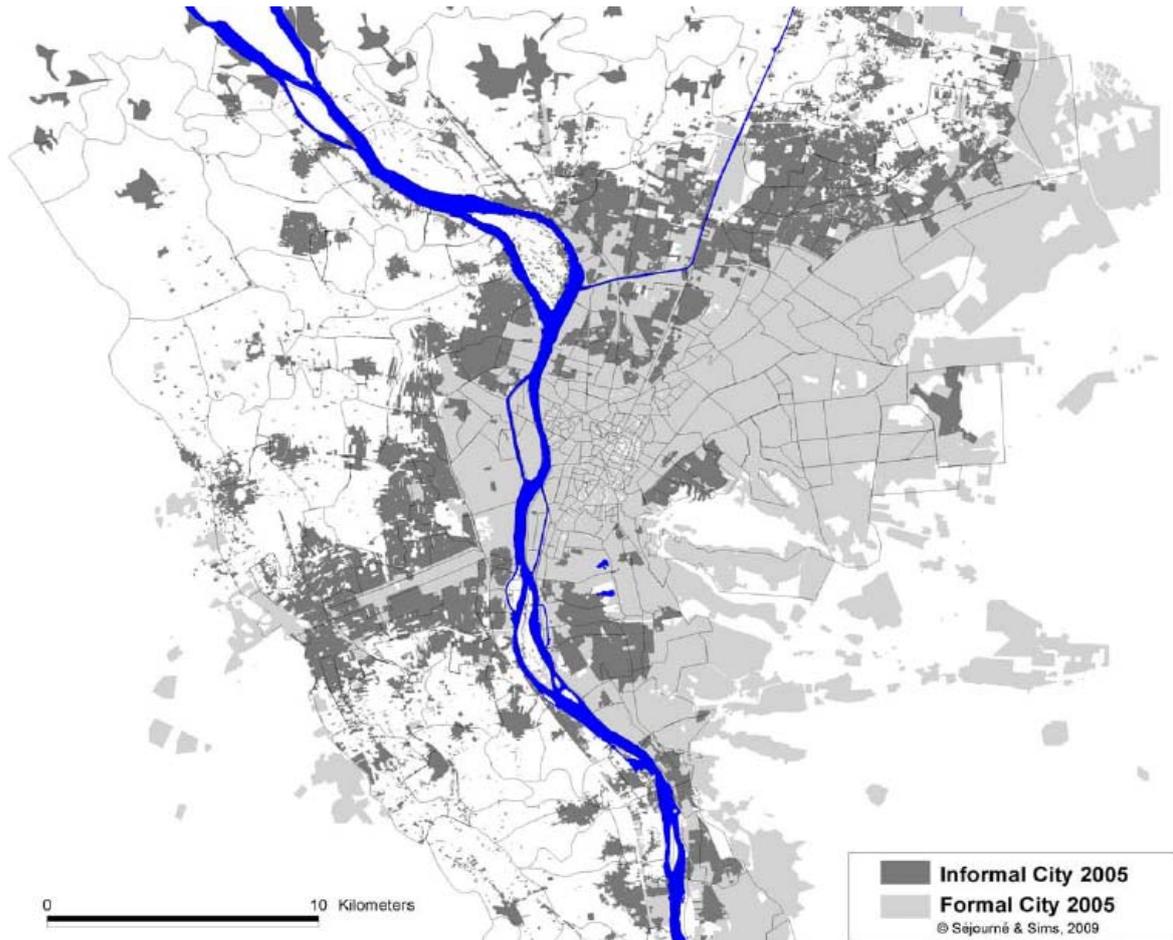


Figure 2. Growth of component parts (Sims, 2011)

⁵ The Open Door Economic Policy (*Infitah*): this newly developed policy is marked by a greater political and economic opening to the west and a move away from a state controlled economy towards a market economy. With regard to housing, In addition, the state disengaged from the production of rental housing and maintained the policy of rent control with only minor modifications.

⁶ The government took Strict measures against illegal urbanisation were in form of Military Decrees 1 and 7, which forbids encroachment on agricultural land. (Khalifa, 2011).

Regime systems in Egypt since the 1952 revaluation

The previous historical insight on Egypt’s political background reveals that, Egypt was ruled since the military revolution after King Farouk in 1952, by an autocratic regime. Four presidents ruled Egypt over the last six decades, Mohamed Nageeb from 1952, Nasser from 1954 until his death, Anwar Sadat from 1971 until his assassination, and Hosni Mubarak from 1981 until his resignation in the face of the 2011 Egyptian revolution. The political system in these sixty years can be described as a dictator system under military base.

After January revolution, the political changes that happened and continue taking place, intend to build a effective democratic system, release the centralisation of decision making ‘*decentralisation*’⁷ and build trust and reliability of the others. These changes should influence the future of the planning policies as well as integrate people, who were marginalised over six decades.

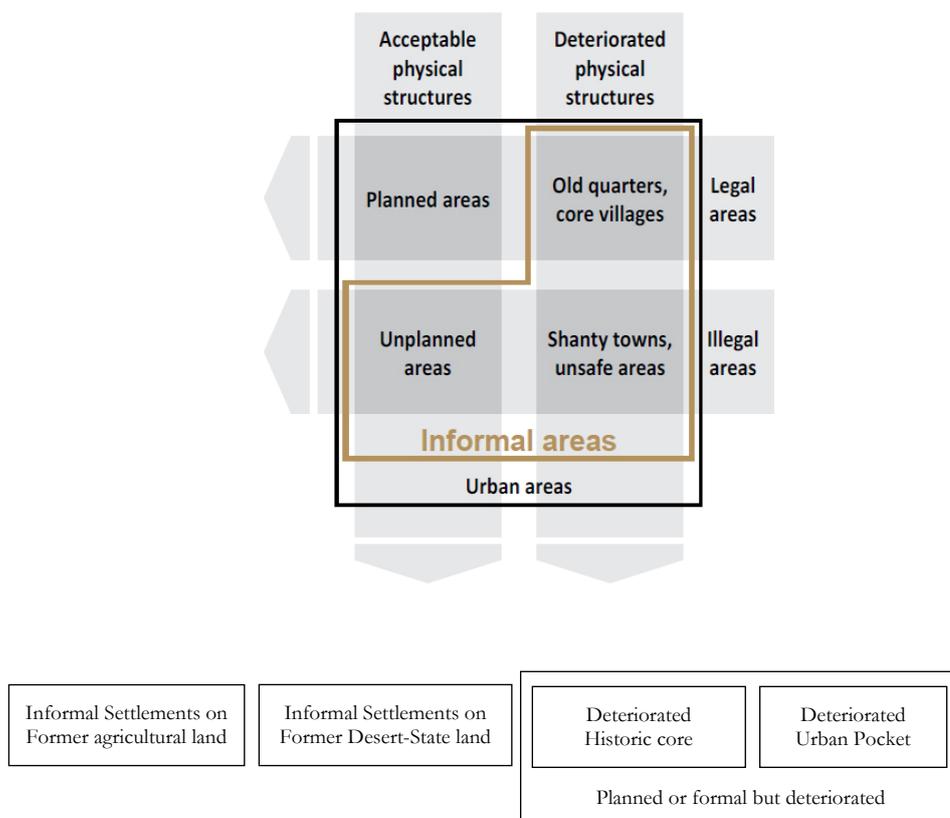


Figure 3. Classification of urban areas according to legal status and physical condition (GTZ, 2010)

⁷ Decentralisation is prerequisite to participatory development but in turn requires new administrative functions that have to be institutionalised in the structures and operations of local governments. Decentralisation of decision-making power and resources from central to local authorities allow policies to be more targeted towards local needs and thus development measures to be more locally efficient and cost-effective. (GTZ, 2010)

Authorities of informal areas in Egypt

I. Governmental bodies responsible for informal areas in Egypt. It is essential to define the different authorisation responsible for these areas. The Ministry of Housing represented in the general organization for physical planning is the State authority responsible for informal areas. After Dewika accident, in 2008, Informal Settlement Development Fund (ISDF⁸) was established and has become responsible for informal areas, including development and upgrading plans. However, GOPP is still the administrative body for the development plans for the unplanned areas, as deteriorated urban areas in the historic Cairo. Significantly, ISDF did a classification of the informal areas in Egypt into two types; unplanned and unsafe⁹ areas. Most of the interventions and funds are dedicated to the unsafe area, due to financial and priorities issues. (Fig. 4).

Unplanned areas	Unsafe areas
Unplanned areas are 60% of urban areas.	Unsafe areas are 5% of urban areas.
Density 500 person/ feddan.	Density 200 person/ feddan.
Building heights 4-10 floors.	Building heights 1-2 floors.
Provides optimum level of safe housing.	Doesn't provide safe housing.
Needs long term development.	Needs immediate intervention.

Figure 4. Difference between Unplanned areas – Unsafe area according to the ISDF definition (ISDF, 2012)

II. Planning regulation in Egypt: Egyptian law. Building Unified Law # 119/2008 ⁽⁶⁾ includes all definitions related to planning and urban development. The term '*Ashwa'yyat*' has been removed from the law and replaced by unplanned and unsafe areas referring to ISDF. Nevertheless, special planning issues for these areas do not exist. However, in this law, the Government incorporate the issues of community participation (Madbouly, 2006).

Essential planning regulations and codes for informal areas in terms of participatory planning and depending on this classification of ISDF need to be defined.

III. Informal development planning programmes under the last regime. Different governmental authorities had tackled, in the past (1970-2008) various interventions towards informal areas, just before establishing of ISDF. This part is also to review other interventions in this period with cooperation with international association. By the late 1970s, the governmental bodies, the World Bank and other international donors supported various pilot projects in "sites and services" and settlement upgrading (El-Batran & Arandel, 1998).

⁸ ISDF – Informal Settlement Development Fund, a new governmental authority: In October 2008, a presidential Decree # 305/2008 established the ISDF with the main objective of coordinating efforts and finance for the development of what were formerly called "Ashwaeyat". The ISDF is directly headed by the Egyptian Cabinet. It is managed by a management board which is formulated by the Minister of Local Development (president) and has a membership of 6 Ministries, 53 experts and 3 representatives from civil society organizations, the private sector and NGOs. (Presidential Decree, 2008)

⁹ Unsafe areas, defined by ISDF, are characterized by being subject to life threat, or having inappropriate housing, or exposed to health threat or tenure risks, while unplanned areas are principally characterized by its noncompliance to planning and building laws and regulations.

Until the 1990s, urban development policies treated informal areas as a specialised phenomenon, either focusing on particular pockets, or on simply redressing the shortfall in urban services in larger informal agglomerations e.g. Ezbet El-Haganaa. The government initiated a National Program of Urban Upgrading (NPUU) in 1992 (The Cities Alliance, 2008) as a response, when informality started taking a great presence. In 1993, The National Upgrading Program (NUP) for Informal Settlements directs upgrading projects relating to the diagnoses of urban problems.

Subsequent governmental interventions till 1994, on one hand, aimed to upgrade informal areas by providing needed services and amenities. The provision of infrastructure, as a result, had encouraged the more growth of these areas (Hassan, 2012). On the other hand, a national strategy was formulated by ministry of housing to define ways of intervention in preventing the formation of new informal areas (Madbouly & Lashin, 2003). From 2004 till 2008 Informal Settlements Belting Programs was launched to restrict the growth of informal areas (Egyptian Cabinet, 2011). Most of these Programmes based mainly on Top Down strategies, only since 1998, GIZ had initiated a Bottom Up strategies by applying Public participation development programmes (Fig. 5).

With the catastrophe of Deweka and respectively with the establishment of ISDF, informal unsafe areas are going to be ordered according to the degree of risk. Based on the ISDF the initial estimations of unplanned areas constitute 60% of total urban area, while unsafe areas constitute 5% (El-Faramay, 2011).

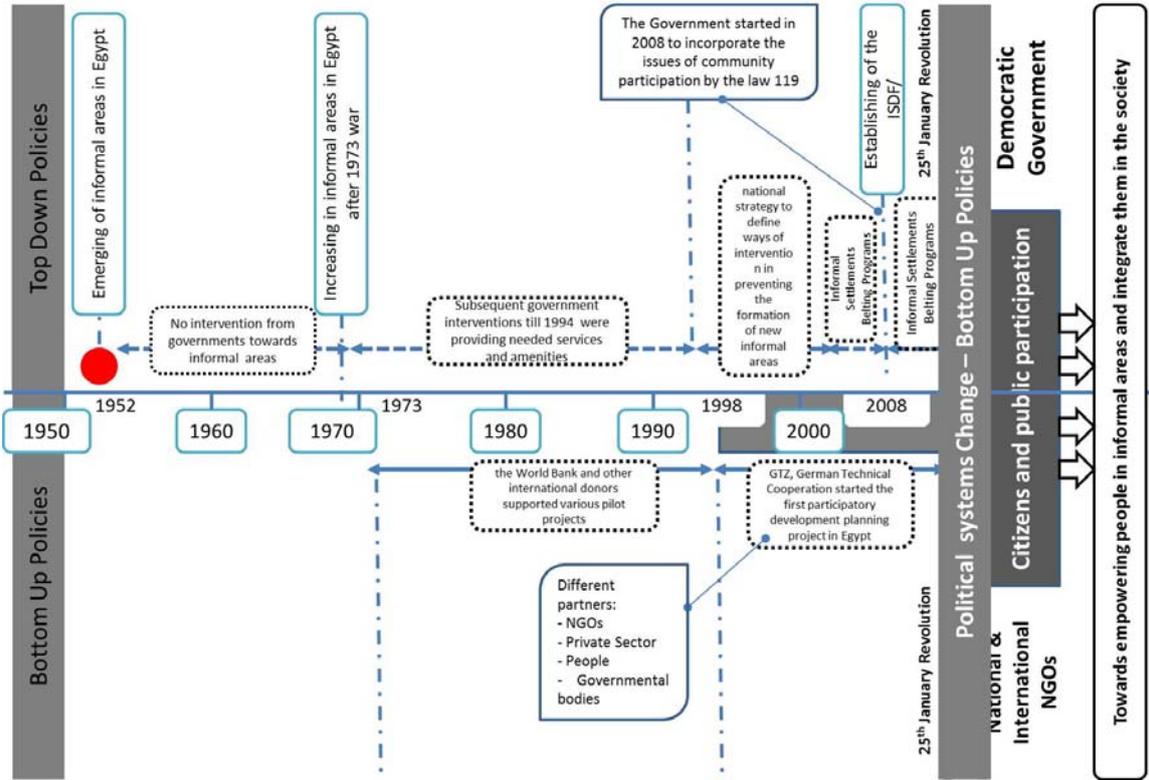


Figure 5. Time line of the informal areas development plans and interventions since the revolution of 1952 and the emerging of informal areas in Egypt and till the revolution of January 25th

Participatory planning by empowering people

Public participation in theories and practice

Public participation is a shift to democracy and to share in the decision-making to meet the citizens’ needs and dreams in their neighbourhood. It helps empowering people as well as empowering the planning process.

An explosion of the interest in participatory development programmes (PDP) has occurred over the past decade. Participatory approaches emerged in 1980s out of dissatisfaction with the then dominant expert-based, externally imposed and top down conventional planning in the urban global south (Maru, Alexandridis, and Perez, 2009). Jamieson (1987) was one of the early recognisers of participation in planning as a new paradigm (Shalaby, 2011). Jamieson approached the shift from conventional planning into planning with participation. Another shift was of Top-Down¹⁰ Planning process into Bottom-up¹¹ ones (Fig. 6); from being ‘Planning with public participation’ into ‘Participatory planning PP’. In 1994 Robert Chambers, a leading proponent of PD listed a range of areas where participatory rural appraisal (PRA)¹² methodologies were already being experimented (Chambers, 1994a). Christopher J.N. Gibbs (1985) confirmed that RRA is not a standardised method but attempts to be systematic in order to be replicable.

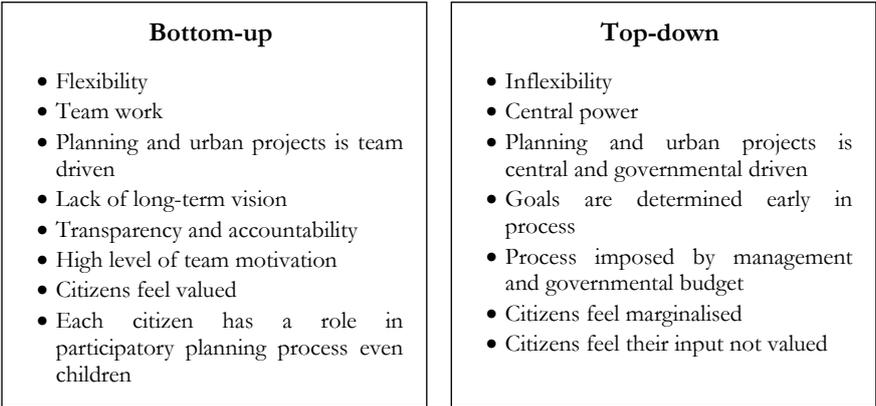


Figure 6. Difference between Bottom up – Top down planning political systems

¹⁰ Top-down planning policy is referred to as strategy. It is focused on keeping the decision making process at the governmental and central level. Goals and quotas are established at the highest level, and those at the top are not often willing to take advice or any guidance from lower level bodies.

¹¹ Bottom – Up planning policy is referred to as tactics. With bottom-up planning, the process will get deeper focus because of the high number of participation in the decision making. Each group in the whole system can be involved with their own area of experience. Teams are working side by side and have input during each stage of process. Planned are developed may be at the lowest level and then passed on to each next higher level to get feedback.

¹² In the 1980s, the shortcomings of externally imposed, donor-driven development strategies became evident. In an attempt to deal with the unsatisfactory results of top-down approaches, Robert Chambers, in his work on Participatory Rural Appraisal and Participatory Rural Development, suggested a shift towards a more participatory approach in development projects. (GIZ, 2009) The Rapid Rural Appraisal has been practised in large number of agricultural organisations and rural areas to diagnose topics or locational problems (Grandstaff and Graridstaff, 1985), to plan technologies appropriate to farmers (Byerlee et al., 1982), to reorganise agricultural administration (Klepper,1980), to plan projects (Ellman, 1980), and through the use of the sociotechnical profile to equip bureaucracies for participatory work (de los Reyes, 1984 in Khon Kaen University, 1987).

The most significant shift over the 1990s has been that participatory discourse rapidly became part of the official aims and objectives of governments and international development agencies (WR, 2001). Despite the varied mechanisms of participation, Williams (2004) mentioned that most of the successful examples¹³ reveal a political evolution by adapting systems and produce a fuller and more active sense of citizenship. This paper shares with different *theoretical writings* the notion that all citizens can and should get a role in defining their needs, methods and even set priorities for planning their neighbourhood. (e.g., Freire 1970, Chambers 1983; Conway 1985, Hamdi and Geothert, 1997, Mohan & Stokke 2000, Williams 2004, Halim 2005) However this paper aims to define a model for participatory planning in Egypt as a tool to empower people by planning and creating plans managed by them and that can proceed controlled and sustained by the citizens in the future.

Participatory Planning in Egypt

Public participation in Egypt has historically been attached to the issue of national liberation, an issue of highest priority until the evacuation of British forces in the 1950s. (Abdel Halim, 2005) However, since that time, real participation did not take place because of socio-economic factors including cultural and historical traditions as well as the political and regime systems. The breeze of democracy after the revolution opens new channels and paves the road for a new futurism and real participatory planning. GTZ, German Technical Cooperation (GIZ nowadays), was one of the first initiatives in participatory development planning project in Egypt. GTZ assets number of partner ministries as well as the Governorates of Cairo, Giza, Qalyoubia and Helwan in developing and implementing participatory upgrading mechanisms. They selected two informal areas in region Cairo as pilot projects, namely; Manshiet Nasser and Bulaq Al-Dakrour. The initiation started since 1998 on these cases, and has been conducted on three phases. (Fig. 7).

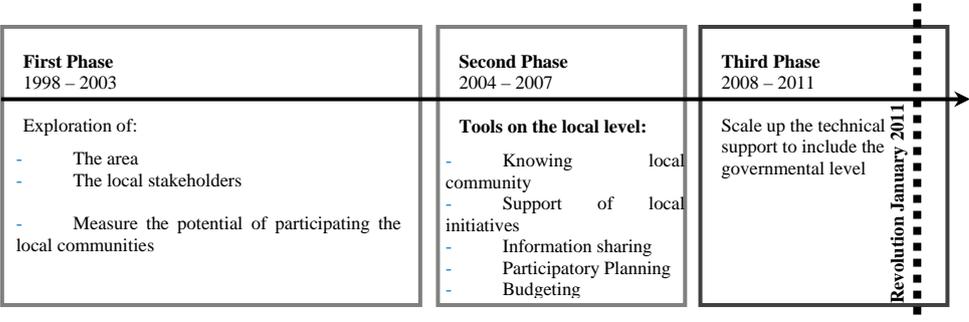


Figure 7. GTZ Manshiet Nasser PDP Project Phases.

¹³ Williams (2004) mentioned some positive successful examples of participatory development (PD) within different context: (within India, the People’s Campaign for Decentralised Planning in Kerala (Heller, 2001), mobilisations around Maharashtra’s Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) (Joshi & Moore, 2000), and the MKSS (Mazdor Kisaan Shakti Sangathan) right-to-information campaign in Rajasthan (Jenkins & Goetz, 1999)). Kerala’s experiment was explicitly state-promoted, and combined a significant transfer of government resources with mass mobilisation through the Kerala Popular Science Movement. The Maharashtra’s EGS was initially a welfare-for-work scheme that invited a degree of micro-level participation, but over time led to the wider politicisation of rural unemployment as an issue. The MKSS by contrast uses popular participation through events such as jan sunwais (public hearings) to explicitly challenge the state’s official development records and uncover institutionalised corruption.

Abdel Halim mentioned in GTZ's Report (2009) that PDP promotes an inclusive model of participation on the local level, urging participation of all local stakeholders, including district administration, the popular council, NGOs, local businesses, and natural youth and women leaders. GIZ, however, he believes that the globally-accepted triangle model (Fig. 8) of participation between Government, Private sector and the civil society Organisation (NGO) representing community cannot contribute to community empowerment or the objectives of the participation. Although this global model was accepted by the Egyptian government, and the political leadership, Abdel Halim explained this dissenting opinion, that NGOs in most of the cases all over Egypt do not truly represent the civil society and that they do not have a clear or comprehensive agenda of development. In the last phase (2008 to 2011) technical support to include the governorate level has been scaled up¹⁴.

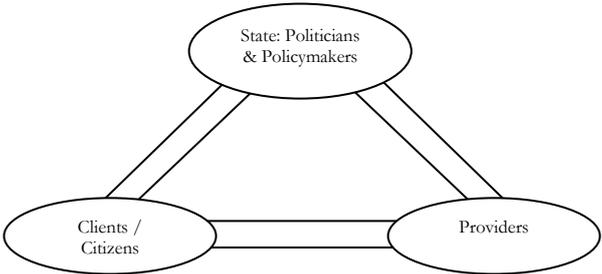


Figure 8. Participatory Actors Triangle; Private Sectors and providers (NGO communities), Governmental and political bodies, and citizens and local municipality

The GIZ experience of the PDP, in these pilot projects, cannot be classified as a sustainable process when governmental support is continuously used as a tool to facilitate and mobilise the process or even to issue decrees supporting localised participatory mechanisms. It is here once again a centralised decision and a one-way power of decision-making. This is not a critique of the model itself, yet a critique of importing a foreign model and trying to adapt them to the Egyptian government (the central powered entity), which causes an unbalanced participation process. Once the facilitator of the PDP disappears the system of the PP will not function. It is thus not a sustainable participatory planning process.

Exploring tools towards empowering people

Based on the findings of the previous review, the PDP process did not continue after the GIZ left these areas. As a feedback, citizens from Mansheat Naser have been asked about: The benefit they gain from the program of the public participation of the GIZ project and the sustainability of the program. They reported that they do not feel empowered after 13 years of this programme and they still cannot trust the government. Hence, an interview with some citizens (Singles and Families) from other informal area in Cairo, namely Ezbet El-Hagana, has been conducted.

¹⁴ Abdel Halim (in GIZ, 2009) argued that: ‘.. these participatory tools may sound for the development or upgrading of an area, in reality there is a limit to what can be achieved on the local level alone. PDP’s experience in the pilot projects demonstrates that the governorate level is pivotal in empowering and supporting local participatory development processes....?’.

I. Interview with citizens exploring the ability of participation after revolution. Participatory methods have been used increasingly instead of interviews or questionnaires to identify target groups or to monitor and evaluate its mechanisms. Yet, in order to build a common understanding of the needs, attitudes and acceptance of residents of informal areas towards participation in planning with the government, an interview was conducted in Ezbet El Hagana. This interview aims to explore the ability of participation as well as the level of empowerment gained through the planning process.

The selected sample was a mix from different ages and both genders. The interview is to measure mainly five points; *first*, how much are they satisfied with the facilities provided by the government?, *second*, if they are willing to build trust with the new government? and to what extent can they work with them or their parties as representative?, *third*, what are their perception towards their role in and towards their community?; *Fourth*, do they believe that they are an effective part in it or there is no willing to play any role in the planning process; *and fifth*, how much the changes that took place after the revolution will reflect on their way of life and into the participatory planning process?

II. Results and facts of this interview. Most of the interviewed persons do not feel belonging to the whole community; they suffer from services and lack of facilities and insufficient infrastructure. People do not trust the government as this is a preconception formed through the past decades before the revolution. The government's common solution of informal areas is to get rid of them and remove them out to the satellite cities. Citizens are convinced that government are against their existence. From point of view of some inhabitants, NGOs are not the only representatives of citizens. Many of the citizens have the willing and ability to share and would play a role for the future. The political parties did not play a role in the past; yet, citizens feel that the newly elected parties might play an essential role in their life and that they can now represent them. People are still feeling marginalised before and after the revolution. However, the interviewed citizens emphasise and believe that they are the right ones who can assess their requirements and local problems. Based on this interview, a unique intervention and an intelligent model of public participation are needed. This model must face all previous obstacles and must reflect the perception and expectation of people towards an effective participation planning.

Empowering people

Power is a conceptualised term with different relations and conflicts. Empowerment of marginalised groups requires a structural transformation of economic and political relations towards a radically democratised society. (Mohan & Stokke, 2000) Williams (2004) elaborates on participation's potential to develop '*a new political imaginary*' of empowerment. Once empowered in *the pre-phase*, stakeholders will be active player in the *participatory planning process* and get integrated within the social and political systems, ensuring for them the enjoyment of full citizenship rights and enabling them to take part actively in national decision-making and in the allocation of governmental resources. (see also; Piffero, in GIZ, 2009).

I. Redefine social, economic and political structures as key issues. In order to empowering people, a comprehensive data-base has to be produced. This database is of *social, economic patterns and behaviours, and political systems* to figure out the key method to deal with this community. This entire infrastructure database is essential to assess the requirements and to identify the sustained level of activity in the social, economic and political education. Also it is an important indicator whether young people stay in the area when they



got married or they live elsewhere. The long history of informal areas and their background of being formulated basically by immigrants give these areas significant socioeconomic characters and structures:

- *Social infrastructure and potentials:* The size and type of the present and projected population is an important data input to assess housing adequacy and calculate the future housing demand. (RPS, 2008) Population count gives an indication of the lack of public facilities and services. Among other indicators are, *age- sex distribution, population pyramids* (young and old) and the *demographic distribution, types of families, types of households* and in general the *population growth rates, population distribution, densities and occupancy Rates. Population projections* is further crucial information in any planning exercise concerning who will be included in the PDP?, and whether it will be sustained or not? The population distributions and origins give an important dimension to the groups' clusters and the division into homogenous groups. It is emphasised that the *social structures and profiles* in most cases show an *intern cohesive society*. This *strong structure* is considered of *high potential* in informal areas as a 'social capital' with respect to their social characters and mechanisms that help addressing a sustained process and the best results of participatory planning.
- *Economic infrastructure and potentials:* unfortunately, it is obvious from other experiences as Abdel Halim (2005) reported that the most economically depressed categories of society are the least willing to participate politically in order to change their circumstances. However, Informal areas have an economic value¹⁵ as a potential which is underestimated and underused because of their illegal status. This is not only in terms of their hidden market investment, but also in terms of their use value for residents by living in such areas. (GTZ, 2010) Informal areas are not inhabited only by the poor; residents include government employees, workshop owners, artisans, as well as professionals such as doctors and lawyers. Household income as well as the location of employment paly a great role in the self-belonging to the area and the services needed there. Informal areas are almost *self-dependent communities* and have very *strong economic structures*, although they are built informally or illegally. Representative people elected locally lead the management process for the whole area. High rations of *skilled people* as well as *the high number of population* as *human resource* are *great potential*.
- *Political infrastructure and systems:* Egypt's political systems is coloured by a number of elements, the weakness of political parties and the novelty of civil society, education, and the media. (Abdel Helim, 2005) *Under democratic systems*, many of the *legislation related to public participation and political parties* need to be passed in order to deepen democratic practices. Liaise with all parties is the key element to reach out to citizens. *Strong, homogenous and stable structures* of the communities are the key issue to target and empowering people for planning. Social aspects are crucial element that must be taken in to account. Politicians and their representative parties have to work on using attractive methods and clearer programmes. *The participatory process can stay mobilised and sustained* only if all these social, economic, and political axes and infrastructures interacted together especially on the social level, by: (i) establishing networks

¹⁵ Informal areas have an economic value: It was estimated in the late 1990s that the 'dead assets' in urban areas in Egypt – land and housing informally registered and/or illegally developed – sum up to 195 billion US Dollars in addition to 2.4 billion informal businesses (De Soto, 1997 in GTZ, 2010).

from the social capital, (ii) developing the educational process, (iii) raising the profile of human rights; on the economic level, by: (i) using values of the hidden market and investments, (ii) enhancing economic performance, (iii) developing/ use the media in marketing the process; on the political level, by: (i) decentralisation of decision making, (ii) improving political party performance, (iii) updating and passing new legislation.

II. Crucial key element for empowering people and the planning process. In order to operate the process to be sustained, mobilised to tackle challenges and to enable communities as well as politicians feeling of the change, a list of crucial key elements must be fulfilled, as following:

1. Ensuring transparency, credibility and accountability¹⁶
2. Two-way learning process
 - a. Understanding Democracy together
 - b. Raise citizens, NGOs, Political parties awareness
 - c. Exchange of information
 - d. Productive team work
 - e. Envisioning the future
3. Meet the needs of citizens and put them in priorities
4. Increasing youth, woman as well as *children* involvement and the levels of education and awareness.

Furthermore, setting the clear goals with timelines, where each goal is going to build on what has already been done. Likewise, transparency between all parties and stakeholders allows communication and dialogue, hence promotes participation of local stakeholders in a sustained development process. This refers to processes and decisions that are made accessible to the public and easy to understand and monitor.

Intelligent model for PP

The previous literature review of participatory planning in Egypt and the outcomes of the interview with some citizens of a selected informal area emphasis the following:

1. Public participation should not be a one way relationship between government and citizens, yet it should be an interrelationship.
2. Before involving people in the planning process, empowering them is a must.
3. Current techniques and tools used in the PP need to be restructured especially under new political systems.

In order to achieve that the research advocate a new intelligent PP model that engage and empower people and link them with the government. Empowering people with this regard is as vital part of democratic governance and considered as a foundation base.

¹⁶ Accountability is an important element of good governance according to which the government on all levels is held responsible for its actions by its citizens. Therefore, the local government needs to be transparent and communicate effectively with local population to ensure they understand its decisions and actions. The same applies to other local stakeholders such as NGOs and managers of public services that have to stand up to local public inquiry. Acting upon the results of practicing accountability by rectifying procedural or financial shortcomings requires decentralisation of liabilities to the local level. Accountability is a key to participation as it emphasises trust among local partners based on information sharing and tangible evidence. (GTZ, 2009)

The matter of being *intelligent* is that this model is produced for the Egyptian informal societies, however, will be adapted in other contexts depending on each case. Importing PP models from the western society will not work. Political systems and backgrounds are totally different. The model is to be a platform and prototype concept for the Egyptian slum cases.

The planning process in terms of this intelligent model should be proceed on three axes: first axis; *Building bridges of trust and transparency* and second axis; *the two-way learning process*, and third axis; *emphasise the social cohesion and the local skills* with effective local municipalities. These three intersected axes will be practiced using *awareness programmes, workshop and handicraft small sessions and activities* by *locating them in a meeting point / space & place of assembly, where* the activities can be conducted and people can introduce themselves. This place will bring them all physically and mentally together; e.g. for quarter-board, democratic participation, polling place, cultural events, and families free time. This will ensure the mobilisation and sustainability of the PP.

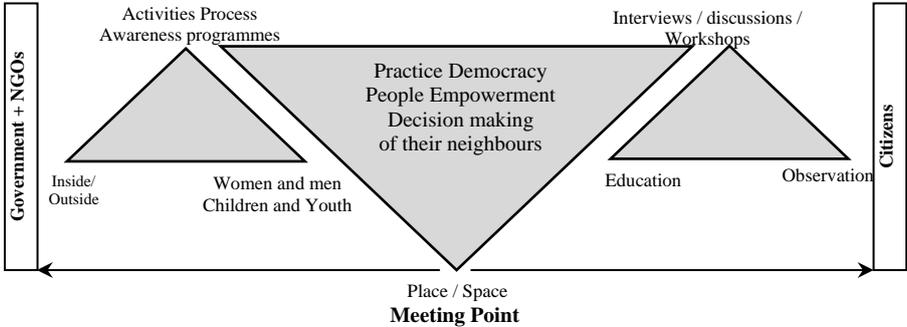


Figure 9. Diagram showing the Multi-disciplinary actors and activities in relation to each other get all together in one space and place - Meeting point

Intelligent Model Phases

The model will go through three phases; each one has main goal to be achieved and conducted by varied activities (Fig. 10).

I. The Pre-Phase – Imperative. Approaching empowering people, awareness programmes about democracy and participation methods, educating people, structuring and holding data base. This phase is to plant the seeds (to establish the first effective step) of change into empowered people in the planning process. As one of the primary elements and activities is initiating the space and place, where people will get together and share democracy. This Phase supposed to be the key and the *fundament* of all coming ones. If it success or work, respectively it will cause the success of the whole PP phases.

Before making people participate in the planning process effectively, linking them with their systems is even more necessary. This link will start with the political factor by discussing with them their roles and duties towards their communities and government.

In such fragmented communities full of problems, a radical phase for the PP practice is essential. Society’s structures and backgrounds are important issue to be taken into consideration when public participation

comes to be practiced. Knowing the percentage of youth, women, children and even the family's types, as data base in each case of informal area, is crucial for the process of the public participation. This phase, in this model, aims in addition at creating a database of information and preparing people for participating by empowering them. Activities conducted in this phase are variable and their outputs have to be varied and non-traditional.

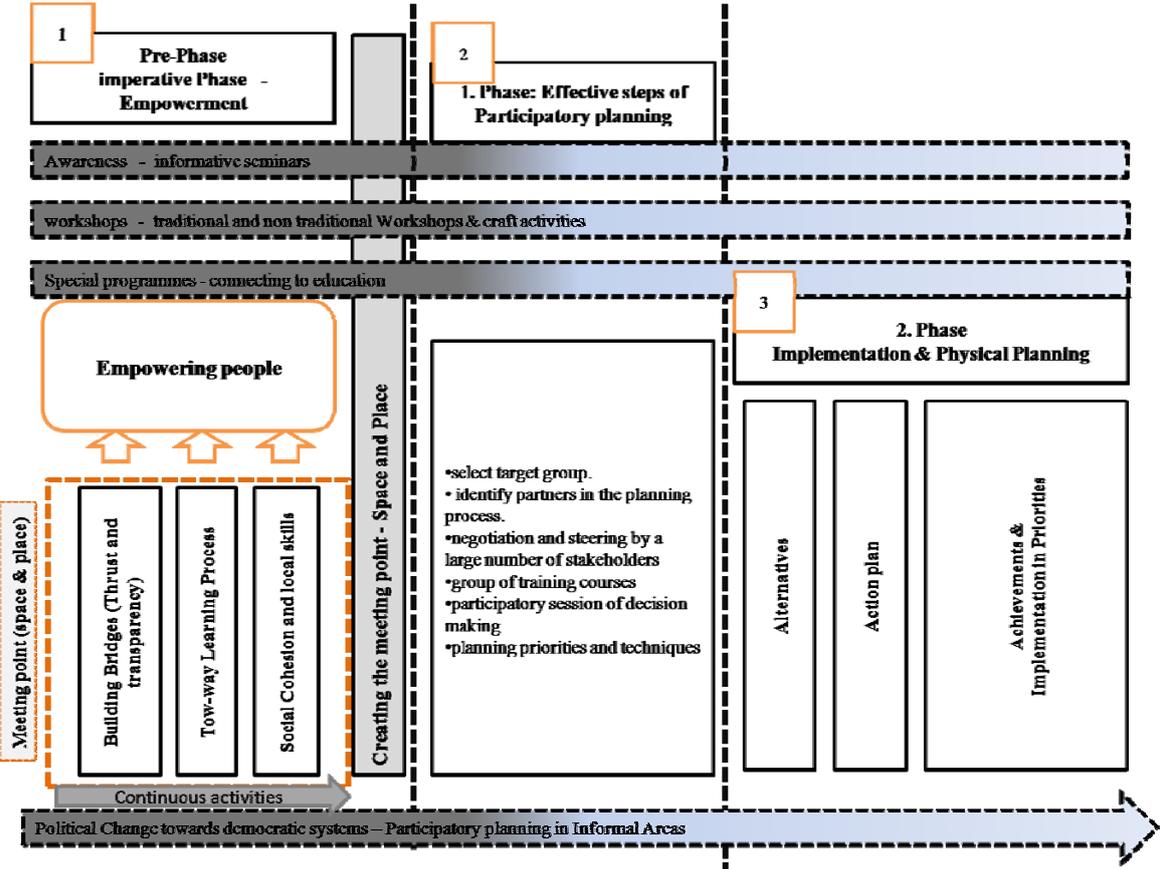


Figure 10. The intelligent model on the three Phases towards empowering people and effective participatory planning process in informal areas

II. The First phase: effective steps of Participation in the planning process. In the previous phase, the model built the required and essential data-base to get into the effective public participation in physical planning. Types of activities and procedures will be tackled on other levels. In this phase, activities focus more on planning and building their communities and letting them participate in the planning process. Public activities in this phase are to give the chance for negotiation and steering by a large number of stakeholders who act and interact on different levels. The main concern, in this phase, is training courses and participatory session of decision making and planning priorities and techniques. This phase will be run based on the original and theoretical participatory planning methodologies and will need to define the stakeholders' networks and tasks.

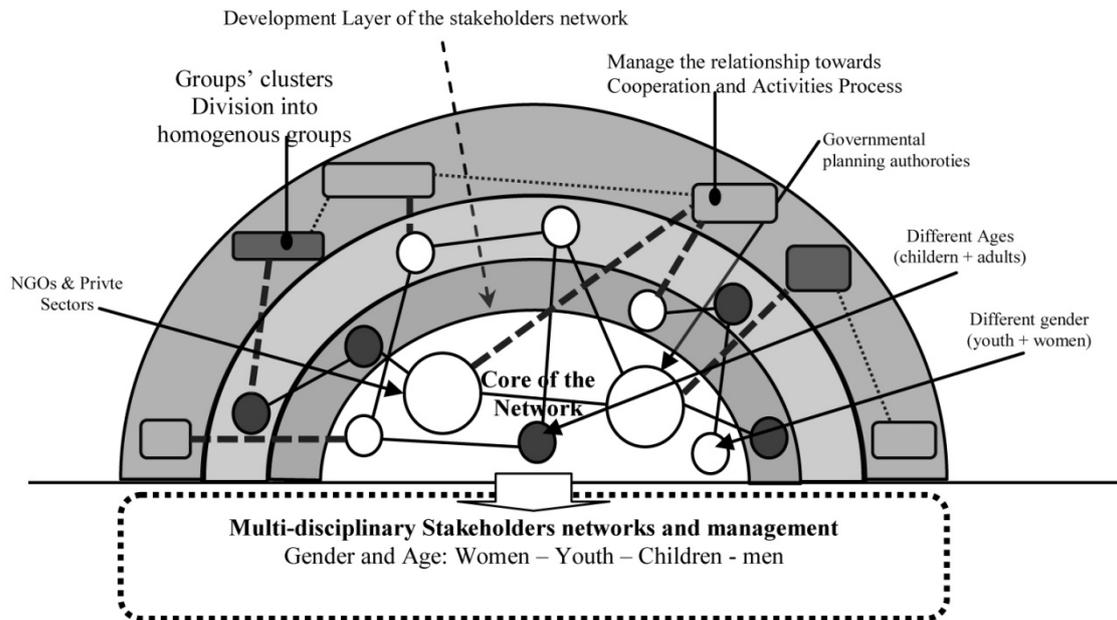


Figure 11. Stakeholders Network and management (GTZ, 2010. Edited by the authors)

III. Define Stakeholders networks. Solid and multi-stakeholder teams play an important role. From the civil society, all local stakeholders representatives; Women, children, youth, men have to play a role in all activities of the PP. A network of stakeholders can be structured after mapping out the social structure and the existing resource of the informal area.

Stakeholders' network must include diverse institutions as local administration, all NGOs in the area, private sectors and community representatives as well as large number of unselected citizens. The stakeholder network has to form a dynamic system of mutual relationships and dependencies. Positions, roles and tasks are clearly diversely defined and minimum estimated depending on the group and promoting partnership and objective cooperation. Inputs from all stakeholders are key factor in achieving a highly significant improvement in the quality of life.

IV. The third phase; implementation and physical planning. Implementation is the last process in this intelligent model of public participation. In it all of what have learned will be implemented. From the interview it was clear that people don't trust the government anymore because they found it working alone, and even with PP it was not a full transparent process. So implementing what you have learned will remove this fears and help in linking them with the community and government as a whole.

Types of activities will different in the last phase by focusing on the training skills and capacity building of workers and people, learn new building techniques and build their place in participation with the planning authorities and experts.

Types of activities – long term and extended programmes

Activates starts in the pre-phase intensively and will continue along the followed phases: Any proposed activities in form of workshops, seminars and information have to be in simple language and with enough materials to enrich the two-way learning process (UNEP, UN-Habitat and ICLEI, 2009).

Tools and mechanisms of how the citizens can contribute with their knowledge, experience and their dreams have to be provided and facilitated. However the activities in the first step will depend more on small and medium sessions, role playing, and interactive workshops. The aim of these activities is to build the bridge between them and the all-around systems.

- *Special Programmes and activities connected to the education systems:* Youth and children, as one of the beneficiaries in these communities, who represent a highest ratio of the population in such informal areas, have to be equitably involved. Each can contribute creatively in the right way and right place within the different activities. Their interventions and roles should not be underestimated. They can contribute within offered activities within the context of their lessons in schools or religious groups.
- *Awareness and informative seminars:* Two-way learning process and learning democracy among the citizens. Awareness programmes and even architecture and planning education for the development towards a sustainable community have to be offered by including all age's categories and all gender groups of citizen. Special informative programmes for youth and women target democracy, team work skills, social cohesion, Information about laws, legislation in planning and housing, and even lessons of how to live and play a role in a sustainable community. Other themes about children upbringing, health, hygienic habits etc have to be also considered.
- *Workshops* (traditional and non-traditional Craft activities). Methods of media and publications have to be used along the process as a motivation tool for the already participants and a tool to encourage more of the society members to participate and get in and to capture the private sectors and donors' attention to support the programme.

Concluding Remarks

It is evident that effective PP is only possible when residents fully participate in the planning process or the decision making. A participatory model for the development planning process has to include a wide range of stakeholders and communities. However, each case has its own needs, problems and conditions. Socio-economy and urban structures and infrastructure of informal areas are constants, yet the political systems and the planning institution structures are the variable and changeable factors toward people empowerment and democratic systems.

This *PP intelligent model* is an attempt of *empowering people*, a *two-way learning process* of democracy, and *building transparency and accountability environment between all parties* as a fundament of initiating the *successful, effective, and sustained* participatory planning mechanisms. The traditional applied PP in informal areas in Egypt had been proved to not lead to sustainable outcome. If people get empowered and the systems become democratic, participatory planning process can be functional.

Residents of informal areas in Egypt are Egyptian' Citizen too, they are part of the whole community and of the power of the state. Losing and marginalising them will cause serious and major social and economic problems. The society is well cohesive from the inside, social cohesion of the whole society is essential to get the balance of planning process. The only solution for that is changing their future by focusing more in building the human first before building the place.



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