

Creating and utilizing a knowledge base for urban planning and management in Cairo

N-AERUS

XI

URBAN KNOWLEDGE
in
CITIES OF THE SOUTH

Khaled M. Abdelhalim
GTZ Participatory Development Programme in Urban Areas (PDP) khaled.mahmoud@gtz.de

Richard Sliuzas
ITC, University of Twente sliuzas@itc.nl

Forbes Davidson
IHS, Erasmus University, f.davidson@ihs.nl

This paper examines the role of knowledge production and application in contemporary urban management practice for large and rapidly developing cities and reflects in particular on the approaches, experiences and lessons from the Participatory Development Programme in Urban Areas (PDP) in Cairo. Participatory planning approaches are often advocated as a means to enhance urban governance and improve the effectiveness of urban planning but a key issue for their success is institutionalization of the approach, its related mechanisms and procedures. We examine the strategy developed and adopted by PDP over the last 12 years that revolves around establishing a multi-level, multi-actor working environment in which urban development programmes and projects are closely linked to capacity development activities. In a manner that the lessons and knowledge obtained from daily practice can be quickly fed into new cycles of training and learning. Examples of PDP training materials and recent training courses given by the authors will be given to illustrate these connections. A somewhat unique feature of the PDP approach is the emphasis given to information sharing. Promoting a culture of information sharing between stakeholders and creating the capacity to produce and maintain urban information at local level using Geographic Information Technology are two of the key mechanisms of the PDP strategy. The type of institutionalized combination of doing and learning that is at the heart of the PDP does seem to offer scope for the scaling up and replication of good practice in urban planning management.