



## Participatory Urban Planning

### Context

Urban Research Institute is contracted by the United States of America Embassy in Albania, for the implementation of the "Participatory Urban Planning" project. After the selection of the LGU to be involved in the project, Kavaja, URI has started with the implementation of the project.

### Activities

Urban Research Institute implemented this project through pilot activities aimed at building a demand side for better government and strengthening city participation in the governance process in Albania. Participatory Urban Planning (PUP) in Albania, is designed with the objective to improve local governance and accountability in Albania by:

- (i) building the capacity of local government officials and civic groups to engage in consultations that are focused and goal-oriented towards solving community problems; and,
- (ii) On a pilot basis, introducing short and long term mechanisms to institutionalize citizen voice in government decision making.

### The main objective

The long-term objective is to create opportunities for social inclusion in public decision-making.

The PUP activity tests mechanisms that increase citizen participation in decision making around the local urban planning process design and implementation in Albania. The desired outcome of the participatory urban planning method is to provide citizens with an opportunity to participate in the urban planning decision-making process of local government and



test mechanisms that foster this participation. The whole Project was implemented within 6 months, starting from September 1st, 2006, until February 28th, 2007.

### The project phases

The Project implementation went through four phases as below:

**The first phase** relates to the Stakeholders' Mobilization and Commitment.

- ✓ Group of Services;
- ✓ Group of Environment;
- ✓ Group of legal experts;
- ✓ Group of urban and construction experts;
- ✓ Group of businessmen;
- ✓ Group of social and cultural experts;

- ✓ Group of civil society;
- ✓ Group of road traffic;

**The second** one talks mainly about the collecting information, ideas, interests, suggestions, needs and issues from the groups of interests **The third phase** deals with analyzing the collected information and data and preparing a draft of the city's urban plan.

**The last** one is more related to the finalization of the draft, establishing some monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, lessons learned and the final reporting.

### Project Critters

Based on criteria such as:

- (a) Political willingness of the LG to participate;
- (b) Existence of organized community groups engaged with the LG activities;
- (c) LG willingness to provide citizens with various information and respond to their enquires;
- (d) LG willingness to provide citizens with space for public meetings on the urban planning process;
- (e) LG pro-active in including communities in council meetings, hearings and budgeting processes; and,
- (f) Localities where there is a complementary presence of other donor activity that can create opportunities for synergy and scale up, municipality of Kavaja was selected. Memorandums of

### About URI

Since 1999 the Urban Research Institute (URI) has been delivering big results for development projects and programmers carried out throughout Albania. Our core business focuses on community development, local government strengthening, environmental protection, decentralization, and public services. We conduct studies, lobby the government, train local government units, increase public access to information, and connect development partners. URI has worked with donors such as USAID, Swiss Cooperation, the Netherlands Embassy, UNDP, World Bank, EU, SIDA, Open Society/Soros Foundation, etc.

understandings were signed between the partners and Kavaja municipality to ensure that the objectives and implementation arrangements are agreed upon.

### **Project activities**

The role that URI is playing in this project is technical assistance. URI's experts in cooperation with the Kavaja experts/specialists established a steering committee with the participation of the municipality, City Council, Urban Development Department at the municipality, Civil Society and other potential stakeholders. An important component for the implementation of the project was the information campaign.

The activities organized under this component, were more related to attracting the intention of citizens and increasing their interest in participation in the open meetings giving their contribution into the urban Planning processes.

#### **Different activities were organized during this phase, such as:**

- Public announcement through local 2A TV channel about the necessity to participate in the open meetings which will be organized with representatives of 6 Kavaja neighborhoods.

- Informing citizens through visits house-to-house about the importance to participate in such open meetings.
- Publishing in the newspaper of the Citizen Forum "Community & Governance" of the activities organized till that time.
- Publishing in this newspaper of the articles written by the different citizens about the urban Planning activities, impressions, suggestions and recommendations.

This meeting was followed by the neighborhood meetings (6 neighborhoods) with an average of 50 habitants in each of the meetings. During these meetings URI's experts represented the project, its philosophy, methodology, process and expected outcomes and impact. The main purpose of that meeting was to get citizens' ideas, thoughts, suggestions, recommendations and concerns related to the future development of their city. Some questions were preprepared by the URI's experts.

The municipality has now a modern planning instrument, "The policy of functional zoning" as well as the "Map of functional zoning", which will lead the municipality and the community of Orikum towards a more efficient and sustainable urban development in the

next five years.

## MAIN FACTS

### PARTNERS:

- ✓ United States Embassy/ Small Grant Commission for
- ✓ Democracy

### DURATION:

September 2006 – March 2007

### BENEFICIARIES:

- ✓ Municipality and community of Orikum

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