

THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT OF URBANISM IN KOSOVO

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ABSTRACT: Providing housing, after providing food and clothing living, is one of the basic needs of human life.

The world today can not solve housing problems by building individual homes. This solution to the problem should be sought in the articulation of residential units in multi-storey buildings.

Although design of multi-storey buildings is not ideal for architects, we must admit that it is a par excellence task. It is a great task to build a dwelling where man is born, lives, dies and where it is at least half of his life. Finding a residential unit for any corner today is the ideal of many architects and architectural schools and this is the very human goal of our time.

The analysis of housing that was built in Kosovo, especially those after 1999, shows that there are many problems in their design and construction.

Thus, the proportions within the structural parts of the apartment are not even approximate to the proportions recommended in the professional literature.

The analysis also show that the dwellings are suitable only for the current needs of the residents. Studies show that the most correct and accurate way of conceptualizing the living space is derived from the needs of residents, the variety of which can not be imagined. Housing needs are dynamic categories and the apartments we build today are unable to convey this dynamics. Solutions need to be found that will enable at least the partial adaptation of the apartment to the unpredictable needs of the residents. Flexibility is considered to be the main criterion for meeting the diverse needs of residents.

Keywords:housing, multi-storey, structural parts, current needs, flexibility

The purpose of this document is to support a more efficient integration of environmental issues and concerns in spatial planning and development processes at the local level administration. In addition, this action has additional objectives, including raising awareness of the importance of 'environmental' inclusion in urban issues, and support for adaptation and mitigation of ever-changing environmental conditions. The basic reason why environmental integration is so important is based on the reasoning that economic and social development and the environment are fundamentally interdependent. In general, the way we manage the economy and the political and social

institutions has critical environmental impacts. While environmental quality and sustainability, on the other hand, are vital to the performance of the economy and social welfare. As such, the task of environmental integration is at the forefront of planning and policy formulation development. " Moreover, the state of the environment is discussed that there are some problems that need to be addressed. This issue is further grouped into the following four categories: waste management, river flows, green areas and air quality. It has been noted that the degradation of the ever-increasing environment has been recognized throughout Kosovo and tends to increase with the expansion of the social welfare of the inhabitants. The emphasis is on continuing the efforts to mitigate the

environmental risk; although a strong encouragement has been made for all involved parties to unite efforts and work with the local community in finding the most efficient solutions. Local authorities and other stakeholders that make decisions on a daily basis should give a strong consideration to the environmental issues they treat. In this regard, environmental considerations should not be the sole responsibility of guidance; instead, all relevant individuals and sectors should cooperate and try harder - where the results will become apparent. In other words, environmental issues need to be understood and responded to them 'decision-makers and not just' environmental 'sectors. But in order to improve understanding, environmental actors, on the other hand, need to understand the development considerations.

1. Environmental integration

There are many definitions of environmental integration, although in general the main message is that environmental promotion is thought that policy makers should find ways to incorporate environmental interests into developments at different levels¹. Following are quotes from leading institutions dealing with environmental policy:

Environmental integration is:

¹ Goltsman, S, Iacofano, D, (2007), *The Inclusive City: Innovative Solutions for Buildings, Neighborhoods, and Urban Spaces*, MIG Communications), pg. 8

"Inform informed involvement of relevant environmental concerns in the decisions and institutions that govern policies, rules, plans, investments and national, sector and local actions". [International Institute for Environment and Development, 2009]

"Repeating Process of Environmental Poverty Integration Policy Making, Budgeting and Implementation Process at National, Sectoral and Sub-National Levels." [United Nations Poverty-Environmental Initiative (UNPEI) 2009]

Other definitions say:

To achieve sustainable development, environmental protection will be an integral part of the development process and can not be considered isolated from it. [Principle 4, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1992]

The eradication of poverty, changing volatile patterns of production and consumption, and the protection and management of the natural resources base of economic and social development is the full inclusion of the objectives and the essential requirements for sustainable development. [Paragraph 2, WSSD Implementation Plan, 2002]

The main reason for the integration of the environment is based on the argument that the environment is one of the three pillars² of sustainable development and is particularly

² The three dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, economic and social) are recognized as the 'pillars' of sustainable development. These pegs are different but closely related. This implies that the environmental pillar has links to be developed!

important for the low-income population who are most vulnerable to degradation of natural resources, pollution ecological and disaster management.

Moreover, a large part of Kosovo's wealth and a poorer part of the population is made up of environmental assets. They establish the foundations for sustainable development. Fertile lands, clean water, biomass and biodiversity produce a range of goods and services that generate revenue, preserve public health and boost economic strength. On the other hand, mismanagement of environmental assets, poor control of environmental hazards such as pollution and inadequate response to environmental challenges such as climate change threaten development³.

In this regard, the development and protection of the environment are mutually dependent. Nature's integrity and diversity, sustainable use of natural resources are the foundations of human existence, social development and economic activities, not only today but also for future generations. Connections between the environment, natural resources, development and human security are well understood but often not practiced. Connections are clearly understood by the low income society - as the most economically deprived and socially unstable areas tend to be more ecologically degraded.

³ B. Dalal-Clayton, S. Bass (2009). Experience of integrating environment into development institutions and decisions. International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), pg. 72

At the end of this chapter it is worth mentioning that the overall goal of sustainable development can only be achieved if economic activities and institutional and social developments respect and serve to protect the integrity and diversity of nature and ensure that the use of natural resources is equal and ecologically sustainable⁴.

2. **Current situation**

The state of the environment in Kosovo is being debated more and more with different levels of government and among various actors. Though, one thing is certain and as such, there is a marginal demand to advance the integration of the environment into policy developments and decision-making! While environmental challenges continue to grow at a steady pace, forecasts are that in the near future - environmental problems will become intolerable and pose a major obstacle to development.

In addition, this paper outlines key environmental issues arising from the review of relevant

⁴ Madanipour, Ali, (2003) Public and Private Spaces of the City, Routledge (version Kindle)

documents (MDP, UDP, LEAP), and comments made during the debates by stakeholders:

It should be noted that based on the unfortunate affair and the termination of industrial activities in the post-war period, the environment was kept 'undamaged'. It is believed that in any other situation - the degradation of the environment would have been enormous! However, the degradation of the environment has reached alarming figures with the illegal and uncontrolled extraction of gravel and waste and mixed contaminated amounts (mainly household wastes) in the river basins of Drini i Bardhë, Toplluhë, Deshticë and Lumëbardh⁵.

Treatment of sewage is a major concern, as it has been noted that a significant amount of wastewater drains into these rivers and in some parts directly into open space without distillation. There are still some areas without a proper system of public sewerage. One bright side is that the local water company is planning partial system upgrades and setting up the relevant infrastructure elements.

3. Findings

⁵ UNEP, Millenium Ecosystem Assessment, <http://www.unep.org/maweb/en/index.aspx> last seen on 20.03.2018

Various stakeholder groups met and discussed the following dates: 15 March 2013, 3 May 2013, 13 June 2013 25 July 2013 and 31 October 2013. Below are presented topics that have presented the challenges, problems and priorities of presented during these meetings. Environmental parameters have been discussed to have many problems to address. It is understandable that there is a waste management plan, but implementation fails to meet expectations!⁶

3.1. Waste management in the environment where we live

In particular, local authorities' failure to include villages around the Zhup area has been noted to be included in waste management practices. Waste poses a very serious threat to the environment and all other sectors. There are concerns that the Landovica landfill may be the main cause and potential for spreading infections! It also lacks a site that treats organic waste (such as meat and animal bones) that cause extreme destruction. Currently, they are thrown down at the 'Red Stone' site and mixed with other inert waste (such as construction wastes)⁷.

In this regard, even though the designated official site for construction waste is set to be the 'Red Stone' landfill, it is common for garbage to be

⁶ UNDP Environmental Mainstreaming Strategy (2004). UNDP Environmental Operations and Policy Advisor, pg. 12

⁷ Environmental Integration Handbook, 2007

disposed of in any idle location, almost every green area, coffee grounds, and along the beds of rivers. In addition, there are concerns that by abusing the 'Red Stone' landfill, the surrounding environment is being largely polluted.

striking case in this respect is Pristina, whose population was two or three times⁸.

4. Rapid urbanization

After the 1970s, Kosovo started a more dynamic economic development, mainly in the larger urban centers, followed by significant migrations of the rural population to find a better life, employment, education, etc. The new residents settled mostly on the outskirts of the cities, but there were cases where the VBJ was created in the premises near the factories or in the large factory property where they enabled the employees to erect the small residential buildings. This migration was manifested with the growth of the urban population and the expansion of cities, followed further by the reduction of the land fund, the lack of infrastructure, social services and environmental problems. Although this expansion could be considered as development, it also became a burden to the already low municipal budgets from the fact that they need to provide basic infrastructure and provide services. The most

4.1. Lack of land management timely

In the past, according to the Law on Construction Land (Official Gazette of SAPK "No. 14/80 with amendments No. 42/86) municipalities had the exclusive right to allocate urban construction land to legal entities (and natural persons) for the construction of buildings for their needs and citizens for the construction of a residential building. At this time, access to urban construction land was largely exclusive to the category of employees in the united labor organizations to the structure of the unemployed population had difficult access to the site. Despite the existence of urban plans, ineffective urban management in the municipalities did not manage to 'responds to new construction requirements.

With the economic and social transformation and the transition to a free market economy, the construction land was largely secured by the uncontrolled informal market by the authorities, which encouraged VJP developments. Although today the same Law on Construction Land applies, the change of the system makes its ineffective implementation. In the absence of a formal land market, access to construction land is done by the

⁸ UN, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=263> last seen on 24.03.2018

private sector, at a high cost, which prevents the provision of land for the lower income layer.

4.2. Lack of effective spatial planning management and control of developments

Although in Kosovo, all the municipalities in the past have had urban (spatial) plans, their implementation has been stalled due to ineffective management and lack of control of developments at all times, especially during the years 1990-2010. uncontrolled ones have become a phenomenon causing urban chaos and simultaneously dictating future planning. This can also be added to the issue of the lack of definite powers of inspectorates at both levels of governance, the lack of coordination of inspection and reporting activities⁹.

4.3. Lack of adequate housing policy

Housing as a crucial issue for social stability, health and the development of human well-being and as the greatest user of space affects the course of the overall development of society. Housing is at the same time an important component of socio-economic development, namely living standards.

During the 1998/99 conflict, the Kosovo resident fund was completely or partially damaged for about 120,000 thousand homes (about 27% of the total

amount of the housing fund). By the end of 2002, about 60,000 homes were rebuilt by international donors, and a considerable number of them were reconstructed with self-financing.

After the 1999 conflict, the residential sector in Kosovo was mainly characterized by private sector development (individual homes and residential buildings) and partly by the public sector (housing and housing reconstruction) funded by the government, municipalities and donors based on "Program and Guide for Social Housing" drafted in 2003 by DBN. During this year, MESP in cooperation with municipalities and donors developed and implemented nine social housing facilities with 183 residential units in the municipalities of Skenderaj, Deçan, Mitrovicë, Klinë, Malishevë, Obiliq and Lipjan, Gjilan and Gjakova. Municipalities and donors such as Klina, Istog, Skenderaj, Vushtrri, Peja, Mitrovica (Roma) and other unfinished initiatives have been built in some municipalities without the assistance of MESP¹⁰.

⁹ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Report for MDP. UN-Habitat 2012, pg. 17

¹⁰ Local Environmental Action Plan (2011). Municipality

Conclusions

A complicated historical background and a long period of time without proper spatial strategic planning activities have caused (expansion of settlements, new industries, etc.) to seem rather casual. A proper balance between areas The main use of land is essential for sustainable housing development. There is a need to channel economic zones so that they will not threaten valuable agricultural and natural areas. Cities act as attractive urban centers, adequate measures to mitigate the potential negative impacts of rapid urbanization and land degradation in rural areas. An adequate network of settlements and structures should • be established with the necessary public service. In divergence, in some countries (for example, in the Czech Republic), there is a strong demand to strengthen environmental integration in planning and

decision-making, while in Kosovo the "traditional" meaning is "to care for the environment is a task for environmental authorities, which is then reflected in the practice of most of the institutions. " Although it is in the strong focus of power at the local and central level for the development of various strategic planning documents, but producing only a good plan is not a guarantee of success! As noted in the Environmental Integration Manual (2007): "Even the Best Plan Ever", which perfectly integrates all relevant environmental issues, does not mean that real changes will automatically be pursued on the field or sector if not is supported by political representatives and leaders.⁴² In addition, the Danish Friendship Center concluded that "Environmental Integration should not only be the concern of environmental ministries or departments, it has to do with all sectors, both private and public, and each has a role play ".

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