

"Social Inclusion and Energy Management for Informal Urban Settlements (SES)"

National Conference in Gondar: A Snapshot of the Outcome

In September 2017 the first national consultative conference on "Our Cities, Our Future: Towards Inclusive Neighbourhood" was conducted in Gondar by the consortium project "Social Inclusion and Energy Management for Urban Informal Settlements (SES)". The event engaged a range of stakeholders as such as academics, local authorities, representatives from the national government and NGOs and architects (see Figure 1).



Figure - 1

This first national conference acted as an important platform for ensuring early engagement of stakeholders in the work of the project. A second event will be held at the end of the process to bring together all the project elements, present findings to both stakeholders and the wider public, as well as provide input to future policy development.

In the long run, it is anticipated that this project will contribute to the greater valuing of the heterogeneity within Ethiopia, providing for the development and exchanging of good practices in a respectful and context-sensitive way, which subsequently informs national policy making.

This newsletter is a product of the SES Project

It was produced by Mag. Romana Bates, DUK (Danube University Krems), Austria and edited by Abnet Gezahegn, EiABC, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia

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The aim of the first national conference was to improve awareness, knowledge and understanding with regard to 'informality'. The term encompasses different groups in society working or operating outside legal and regulatory framework. For the first time, the conference sort to bring together different sections of society who have to deal with and/or who are affected by this issue.

One of the events objectives was for participants to benefit from a horizontal exchange of experiences from different cities/regions and from the national collaboration of HEIs in the field of sustainable social housing and inclusive community development in which SES will serve as a best practice model.

A further purpose of the conference was to contribute to the development of relevant and practical oriented teaching content for higher education institutions (HEIs) and enhance the technical competences of government institutions in the process of developing sustainable communities in Ethiopia. This was achieved through a process of stakeholder engagement and

mutual learning, an approach which is at the core of the project as a whole.

To ensure that the conference fulfilled its specific objectives and contributed to the further development of the overall project, a participant's survey was undertaken. The results have been used by project partners to enhance plans and targets of the consortium.

In the following a snapshot should give an insight into the outcomes of the conference.

What were the stakeholders able to take with them from the conference?

42 participants filled in the questionnaire and thereby contributed to some valuable feedback.

The table below shows that the majority of the participants found the contributions at the conference were useful. Especially the contribution in respect to "Engaging citizens in slum mapping and upgrading" and the

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“Experiences from the Indian project” were evaluated positively. Furthermore, participants were even able to discover new aspects, but also to change their opinion regarding one or the other aspect in connection with these topics.

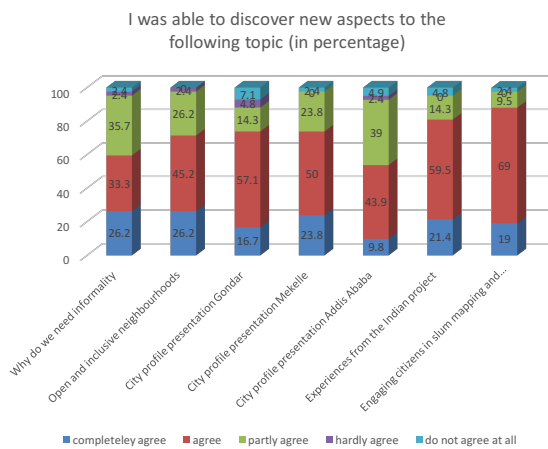


Figure - 2

How could stakeholders contribute to the development of an inclusive neighbourhood?

Within this survey participants were asked how stakeholders can contribute to the development of an inclusive neighborhood. The results (Figure 3) show that policy revision by the national government and the design of inclusive planning by Urban

Planners and Architects and the inclusion of the poor and the community by local authority seem to be perceived as most effective.

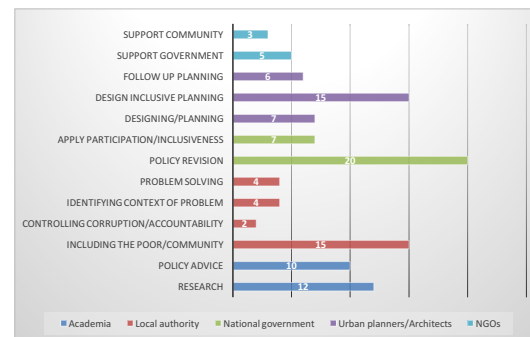


Figure - 3

Take - away from the conference

Finally, participants were asked what they had learned at the conference and what was most valuable. In general, most of the participants thought that they had learned about the extent of the problem, the need for participation and the impact of informality, but also through the shared experience. As most valuable the highest number of participants mentioned discussions of informality, presentation from different cities, context

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of informality, idea of inclusiveness and the Indian experience.

“Social Inclusion and Energy Management for Urban Informal Settlements (SES) “.

Outlook for the next conference

The aim of the first National Conference was to make sure that stakeholders were engaged right from the beginning. The final national conference, which will take place towards the end of the project, will function as means of presenting findings and achievements to the stakeholders as well as to the broader public and thus stress the importance of issues related to informal settlements and poor urban communities on the political agenda.

At the end of the first conference participants were asked which topics should be included in the second National Conference.

The topics mentioned most often were:

1. Discussion on Solutions
2. Participatory Planning
3. Practicability of Inclusiveness.

With these results in mind the consortium is looking forward to a successful final National Conference of the of the project

