

TECHNIQUES TO STIMULATE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In order to promote the local identity in a sustainable context
Case Study of "A residential complex in Sheikh Zayed City, Egypt"

Nagy ElGritly*

Consultant Engineer, Urban Development Expert

*Correspondence: nagamara59@hotmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Considerable attention has been paid in recent years to the rapid progress of applications and advanced techniques in various fields. This in turn, requires planners interested in the field of sustainable Urban development to maximize the benefits of these technologies so that they can be used to enhance the identity of local communities. and stimulate the Community Engagement. In this context, this paper reviews an experience of the author who participated in encouraging community engagement (for residents of a residential complex in Sheikh Zayed City, Egypt) as a means of building community consensus. Such consensus will revolve around identification of goals, problems, priorities, mechanisms and addressing them in order to achieve a sustainable liveable environment. The importance of this paper resides in how to adopt a community engagement approach and enables the local community to express its requirements, needs and desires with democratic tools. Therefore, this paper aims to highlight the importance of consultation and community engagement in strengthening the identity of local community. this paper will be concluded with set of recommendations and lessons learned to be adopted in future for similar experiences in terms of the socio- economic and cultural heritage of such societies.

KEYWORDS: Community Engagement, Sustainable Development, Techniques & Applications, Local Identity

تقنيات لتحفيز الإدماج المجتمعي

بما يعزز الهوية المحلية في سياق مستدام

"تجربة مجمع جرين فالي السكنى بمدينة الشيخ زايد - ج.م.ع."

ناجي الجريتلي*

مهندس استشاري، خبير في التنمية الحضرية

*البريد الإلكتروني للباحث الرئيسي : nagamara59@hotmail.com

المخلص

إن التقدم السريع للتطبيقات والتقنيات وتكنولوجيا المعلومات بمختلف المجالات يتطلب من المخططين المهتمين بمجال التنمية العمرانية المستدامة أن يقوموا بتعظيم الاستفادة من مزايا هذه التقنيات وتوظيفها في تعزيز هوية المجتمعات المحلية من خلال تبنى تقنيات وآليات لتحفيز الإدماج المجتمعي. وفي هذا السياق، سيستعرض البحث تجربة شارك في بلورتها معد هذه الورقة بهدف تحفيز الإدماج المجتمعي (لقاطني مجمع سكني بمدينة الشيخ زايد بمصر) كوسيلة لبناء توافق حول تحديد المشاكل وآليات حسمها وأولويات معالجتها وصولاً إلى بيئة مستدامة صالحة للعيش. تتمثل الإشكالية الرئيسية بالبحث في محاولة رصد المعوقات التي تحول دون تجسيد الإدماج المجتمعي في الواقع المعاش في إطار يوظف الفرص والإمكانات المتاحة لإستيعاب المشاكل ووضع حلول توافقية لها في سياق مستدام. وهكذا تكمن أهمية البحث في كيفية تفعيل فكر المشاركة والإدماج المجتمعي بما يسهم في بناء توافق مجتمعي يُمكنهم من إستيعاب متطلباتهم بأدوات ديموقراطية. وعليه، يهدف هذا البحث إلى إبراز أهمية إتجاه التشاور والإدماج المجتمعي في تعزيز هوية المجتمع المحلي، ووضع آليات مُستقبلية لدعم التنمية المجتمعية في إطار يراعي الموروث الإجتماعي والثقافي السائد بالمجتمع، فضلاً عن بلورة مجموعة من التوصيات والدروس المستفادة من التجربة المذكورة ليتسنى تبنيتها بتجارب أخرى مُستقبلاً. وتُخلص هذه الورقة إلى تبنى آليات وتقنيات لتعزز الإدماج المجتمعي وتحفيز المجتمع المحلي للمشاركة في صياغة الرؤية المستقبلية وتحديد المشاكل والأهداف والأولويات في إطار توافقي.

INTRODUCTION

Considerable attention has been paid in recent years to the rapid progress of applications, advanced techniques, and information technology in various fields. This in turn, requires planners interested in the field of sustainable urban development to maximize the benefits of these technologies so that they can be used to enhance the identity of local communities. That is to say, adopting techniques and mechanisms will stimulate the community engagement. In this context, this research will review an experience of the author who participated in developing with the aim of encouraging community engagement (for residents of a residential complex in Sheikh Zayed City, Egypt) as a means of building community consensus. Such consensus will revolve around identification of problems, mechanisms, priorities and addressing them in order to achieve a sustainable liveable environment.

The **main problem of the research** is to monitor the obstacles that prevent the embodiment of community engagement in the reality. This can be achieved by formulating a framework that employs the available opportunities and potentials to resolve the problems and develop consensual solutions in a sustainable context. Thus, the importance of this research resides in how to adopt the approach of community engagement and participation in a way that contributes to building a consensus that enables the local community to accommodate its requirements with democratic tools.

Therefore, this research aims to highlight the importance of consultation and community engagement in strengthening the identity of local community, and to develop future mechanisms to support the community development process. Such mechanisms will be set out within a framework that takes into account the prevailing socio- cultural heritage in society, as well as crystallizing a set of recommendations and lessons learned from the aforementioned experience. Those recommendations and lessons can be applied and adopted with other case studies in the future.

In light of preparing this paper, the researcher adopted the "inductive approach" while studying the literature review and papers related to the research topic – such as the New Urban Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals 2030, in addition to World Bank reports and periodicals -that foster community participation in development projects and programs financed by the Bank. The researcher also conducted a field study in which he monitored several techniques that contributed to enhancing the "community engagement" approach for the abovementioned case. The extracting lessons learned can be adopted in future cases to consolidate the application of this approach, especially when defining problems and goals in a consensual framework with active engagement of the local community in the decision-making process.

The introduction to this paper includes its relationship to both the main theme of the conference and the focus of the session. This is followed by explaining the notions contained in this paper, the most important of which are: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT and SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. As for the table of content of this paper, it is divided into five main parts that can be summarized as follows:

The first part addresses **the main research problem**, which represents the rationale for the study, while the second highlights the most important recommendations and mechanisms mentioned in the literature and theoretical works related to the importance of community engagement as an approach to enhance the involvement of the local community in the planning process. The third: unveils the most important applications and techniques used in the direction of consultation and community engagement during the preparation of planning projects. While the fourth reviews the experience of the "Green Valley Residential Complex in Sheikh Zayed City" as an applied field study to consolidate the concept of community engagement when identifying problems and address them in a consensual and sustainable context. And finally the fifth part provides recommendations and lessons learned that can be applied to future cases related to the research topic.

This paper concludes with the necessity of adopting mechanisms and techniques to enhance community integration and motivate the local community to participate in defining problems, goals, and priorities in a consensual framework. Based on this understanding, the paper will be

concluded with recommendations and lessons learned to be used for the future to similar experiences in terms of the socio- economic and the cultural heritage of such societies.

Community Engagement

A process that aims to involve all relevant Stakeholders (including representatives of the private and community sectors) in developing the project at the preparation and implementation phases. Such process includes expressing opinions, participating in policy formulation and identifying development needs and priorities, in addition to engaging in planning and decision-making processes. This in turn, requires undertaking specific roles and responsibilities during the preparation and implementation phases of the project under study.

Sustainable Urban Development

Managing the urban development process by **making** optimal use of available natural resources, **enhancing** economic opportunity, environmental quality, social equity and community well-being while **protecting** and **restoring** the natural environment upon which people and economies depend. Therefore, it has been proved that Sustainable Development practices are the best vehicles for preparing implementable and effective plans. It also aims to meet the requirements of the present generation without harming or comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own wants and desires.

Local Identity¹

The local identity can be defined as a deeper understanding of interaction between people, place, space and environment from several perspectives which can finally feed in to the dynamic change of upgrading of local uniqueness². In this context, it contains four aspects: physical, social, sensory and memory. Therefore, it is the identity that represents a small-scaled place to provide the local community with feelings of calm, safety and pride while they live at the place. In other words, it could provide distinctive features to small-scaled places, including both positive and negative preferences of the members of the community. It also presents a powerful independent image for which the general public can develop strong identification and affection from.

Application

An application which is referred to either an application program or software, is a computer software package that performs a specific function directly for an end user or, in some cases, for another application. It is designed to help us perform our own activity through manipulating text, numbers, audio, graphics, and a combination of these elements.

Technique

It is the application of skills to achieve specific outcomes, or provide certain services. It includes all the tools and methods that are used to transform resources and embody them in the form of outputs. In other words, it is a way of conducting a specific task, especially the implementation or performance of an artistic work or a scientific procedure (Andy lane, 2006).

¹) Glossary of Land Use and Planning Terms – (Institute for Local Government, 2010)

²) Shao, Y., Lange, E., Thwaites, K. *et al.* (2017) *Defining Local Identity. Landscape Architecture Frontiers*, 5 (2). pp. 24-41. ISSN 2096-336X

SECOND : THE MAIN RESEARCH PROBLEM

The main problem of this research is to monitor the obstacles that prevent the embodiment of Community Engagement within a framework that employs the available opportunities and capabilities to accommodate the problems and develop consensual solutions in a sustainable context. Accordingly, many of the obstacles that prevent the integration of the local community and its involvement in the planning & decision-making processes related to its future can be observed in most Third World countries: (Royal Town Planning Institute & Consultation Institute, 2005) - as follows:

- 1) Adopting the **Centralization Approach** related to the governance and legislation system is negatively reflected in the decision- making of planning process.
- 2) The **absence of codes & regulations and institutional mechanisms** is negatively affected on the adoption of Participatory Planning Approach that can be encouraged by conducting the Consultation and Community Engagement processes with the concerned stakeholders of planning projects.
- 3) **Lack of funds** that are necessary for the implementation of many planning projects on the ground.
- 4) The **absence of applying the Planning Institutions' State** or the Whole of Government Approach: under which all the state agencies come together and cooperate in an integrated planning work system to carry out the planning and implementation stages of the development project.
- 5) The **absence of practicing and adopting democratic mechanisms** in most Third World countries will lead to paralysis in the decision-making processes related to development projects. Thus, such projects would not be able to meet the actual needs and desires of the local communities - (Lorens, P., 2018).
- 6) The **absence of trust** between government agencies and representatives of the local community will ultimately lead to disapproving the project and then making it impossible to be implemented on the ground. (Barrett, 2003)
- 7) The **lack of competent planning authorities for qualified and experienced professional cadres** in managing and organizing the Consultation and Community Engagement processes is considered one of the crucial obstacles that prevent the provision of a stimulating atmosphere for integrating all the concerned stakeholders in the various stages of the planning project.
- 8) The **weakness of the institutional structures of the community sector** in addition to the **absence of legislation & laws that allow the establishment of such institutions** and activating their roles in the development process.
- 9) **Lack of an atmosphere that allows the effective participation** for all the concerned stakeholders (especially the private and community sectors) in the planning and development system.

These obstacles negatively reflect the failure to meet the actual needs of the targeted community to be accommodated and integrated into the planning project. Therefore, the causes of the problem raised above, requires making best uses of techniques and mechanisms to maximize the role of the concerned stakeholders. Moreover, this in turn entails the necessity of adopting an approach that is applicable in the context of prevailing socio- economic and cultural norms.

THE LITERATURE AND THEORITICAL WORKS RELATED TO THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This part highlights important issues mentioned in the recent literature and theoretical works related to the importance of community engagement as an approach to enhance the involvement of the local community as well as the other concerned stakeholders) in the planning process. Through the United Nations and the World Bank, two initiatives in UK and Qatar, and finally an outstanding international researcher and consultant called **Dave Biggs** whose expertise is focusing on organizing workshops and online webinars regarding the enhancement of the Community Engagement for planning projects.

3.1. New Urban Agenda

In October 2016, the Secretariat of Habitat III of the United Nations organized a conference centered on "Housing and Sustainable Urban Development," which was held in the city of Quito, Ecuador. Such agenda sets out a plan based on setting standards & principles for managing and developing the urban areas. It revolved around several pillars: the most important of which are urban policies, legislation and regulations, and implementation at the local level. The joint vision under which this agenda operates aims for cities and human communities to adopt the "Participatory Approach" in a way that enhances social interactions, consolidates the Community Engagement of stakeholders, and stimulates the adoption of many forms of cultural expression and political participation by providing a suitable atmosphere for holding meetings and consultation sessions at all stages of the planning process: (New Urban Agenda.,2016)

Through a paper presented by the author of this research - (Elgritly, 2018) - which addressed the most important pillars of that agenda, as he stressed the importance of adopting the "Participatory Planning Approach" in all planning processes of the project. Such an approach will help engaging the targeted community into the planning process. This in turn, will ensure accommodating the local needs and requirements for community facilities and infrastructure public utilities.

3.2. Sustainable Development Goals 2030 ³

The United Nations has formulated a set of sustainable development goals and indicators within the framework of determining development priorities at the global level during the period (2015-2030), through the formation of working groups that included representatives of (70) countries who engaged in a series of discussions centered on many topics. One of those topics is "Cities and sustainable local communities". Representatives of governments, civil society organizations, academics and the private sector participated in these discussions, as well as organizing opinion polls among the general public via the Internet.

In this context, the two most important pillars for adopting a "Participatory Planning Approach" for sustainable communities can be identified as follows:

³ تقرير أهداف التنمية المستدامة 2016 – الأمم المتحدة (إبريل 2016)

Source: Official website of United Nations <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

First: Encouraging the **building of partnerships** between relevant government agencies and representatives of the private and community sectors in a way that contributes to the preparation and implementation of development plans and operations.

Second: Empowering the local community to shape its future built environment by encouraging community participation and enhancing the role of civil society institutions to effectively contribute in formulating future planning and development processes.

This study concluded by developing a **ROADMAP** that contributes to building on the success achieved in implementing the Millennium Development Goals and ensuring sustainable socio-economic progress in the world as a whole. In addition to combining the 3 dimensions of sustainable development which are economic, social and environmental) - and establishing a balance among them, in crystallizing a comprehensive global vision.

Out of 17 goals, there are two have been related to the context of this paper – they can be shown as follows:

Goal 11 - Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable: through planning cities and other human settlements in a way that promotes community cohesion and personal security.

Goal 16 - Promote justice, peaceful and inclusive societies: such goal aims to establish peaceful societies in which no one is marginalized and based on respect for human rights, the rule of law and good governance at all levels. In addition to setting up transparent, effective and accountable institutions. One mechanism to deliver this goal is to ensure responsive, inclusive and participatory decision-making that represents diverse stakeholders at all levels.

3.3. The World Bank Group

The **WBG** has a long history of "Multi-Stakeholder Engagement" in the operations it finances. Such approach has been put into practice since the **1970s**, and was formalized in the 1980s, and finally deepened during the **1990s** by applying the "Participatory Approach." The concepts of "Community Engagement," "Social Accountability", "Governance and anti-Corruption:" emerged during the early 21st century. The **2004** World Development Report "Making services work for the poor" casts light on the benefits of listening to local community to improve pro-poor targeting in service delivery. Governance **2007** engaged with demand-side actors, and the **2012** Update pledged "to backup initiatives that enable greater openness in governments and closer interaction among the representatives of local community, the government and the private & community sectors." The World Bank requires involvement of the project-affected community representatives as part of its protection policies or performance standards.

In **2013**, The **WBG** approved a proposal titled: "Citizen Engagement in the Context of National Programs to Enhance the Social Impact of Sustainable Development". Whereas in **2019**, it issued the "Guidelines for Consultation" report, which reflects the Bank's methodology in adopting implementation standards for "Consultation Approach" with stakeholders to monitor their opinions and feedbacks regarding development projects financed by the Bank. In **2021**, the **WBG** issued a report seeking to achieve sustainable growth and rebuild economies in a better way as an attempt to overcome the repercussions of the Corona Pandemic, in a context that adopts a participatory methodology with the concerned government agencies, the private sector, civil society organizations and multilateral institutions, by providing Funding, knowledge activities and expertise of all stakeholders involved in the project are being funded by **WBG**.

The WBG is committed to mainstreaming citizen participation in the operations it supports to upgrade results, and has made a powerful institutional commitment to recognizing citizen participation in all projects specified by beneficiaries ("taking their feedback and opinions into account").

3.4. Milton Keynes city council – UK

One of the outstanding goals of conducting the Consultation and Community Engagement Approach is to grant all the concerned stakeholders (especially representatives of the local community) the opportunity to express their views and ensure that their opinions to be heard during the formulation of development strategies and policies that reflect their actual needs and desires. (Milton Keynes city council, 2006).

3.5. Qatar National Master Plan - Qatar

Several studies, including but not limited to the study of (Qatar National Master Plan), has formulated a package of urban development policies that aim to enhance a stimulating atmosphere for Consultation and Community Engagement processes with the concerned stakeholders during the course of the project. This in turn helped to meet the local community's needs and desires. The most important policies that has been addressed by this study is developing future plans for urban development through the participation of all the concerned stakeholders (including representatives of both private and community sectors) and integrating them with all phases of plan preparation and implementation. This will create vibrant, sustainable residential neighborhoods that meet the actual needs and desires of the local community, in addition to strengthen the sense of belonging to their own community - (Qatar National Master Plan, 2016).

3.6. Dave Biggs Researches and Webinars

Dave Biggs is the Chief Engagement Officer of Metro-Quest company and an internationally-recognized author and public engagement strategist focusing on utilizing software tools to promote and enforce the Community Engagement for development planning projects. In addition to that, **Biggs** is a distinguished international researcher and author with more than two decades of experience in award-winning projects, whether with government agencies or consulting organizations. He built his reputation through his work as a trainer and consultant in Community Engagement with the American Planning Association (APA), the International Federation for Public Participation, and the National Coalition for Dialogue and Consultation, in addition to many planning bodies and institutions in the United States of America and Canada.

In this part, we focus on three papers closely related to the Community Engagement Approach - as follows:

- 1) The importance of Community Engagement** is to give confidence to the decision- makers through the outcomes of integrating the concerned local community's opinions and viewpoints into the planning and implementation stages of the project. (Biggs, D., Dec.,2016).
- 2) Community Engagement will contribute** to addressing the problem of lost trust between the general public and the related government agencies - the more effective the integration of the local community into the planning process, the more its confidence in the relevant government agencies will be strengthened, and vice versa. Therefore, the local community is seen as the best tool that able to know its own interests, desires, needs, and preferred priorities. (Biggs, D., Dec., 2016).

- 3) Ensuring that the available opportunities of Community Engagement for the concerned local community will be in the interest of sound planning. Therefore, the integration of a diverse group's viewpoints will: **improve** the quality of plans, **facilitate** their implementation on the ground, and **promote** their living conditions in a way that meets all the targeted residents' needs and desires. Therefore, ensuring public and comprehensive Community Engagement will contribute to understanding and accommodating the population' needs as broadly as possible. (Biggs,D.,Feb., 2016)

FOURTH :ADVANCED APPLICATIONS AND TECHNIQUES USED IN THE CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

This part reviews a group of tools and techniques that are used in Consultation, Participation, and Community Engagement's forums and gatherings. These techniques are classified into two parts: the first: traditional methods, the second: applications and technologies used via the Internet.

4.1. Traditional Tools and Techniques for Consultation and Community Engagement:

The tools of this section will be explained as follows: as shown in this reference (Community Places & Lottery Funded, 2014)

4.1.1. Public Meetings

They provide an opportunity to consult large numbers of local community. Meetings can be organized to allow for small group discussions with oral feedback and inputs. There are often opportunities for participants to set out or strongly influence the agenda and to raise questions. From actual experience, small groups are considered a fundamental element of public meeting to engage people and involve them effectively.

The value of this method can help Participants who may feel unable to get involved or not interested to attend. Therefore, such tool can be a valuable method of sharing information and showing openness and transparency.

4.1.2. Forums

A forum is a regular meeting of people who represent a group or organization and may be issue or area based. Those engaged typically embrace members of civic, political, professional, or socio-economic groups from a local community.

Thus, this tool is a beneficial method of engaging groups who are traditionally marginalized from decision-making processes, for example young and aged people. However, it is often those who are already involved in local groups who will participate.

4.1.3. Workshops and Focus Groups Discussions

Workshops allow people to discuss their ideas in an open and relaxed atmosphere. Workshops can take a variety of formats. They can be designed to exchange information; to discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the project; to obtain ideas and innovative thinking for a way forward for a project; or they can be specifically geared towards prioritization and the production of an Action Plan. **Focus Groups Discussions – FGD** by contrast are designed to specifically concentrate on a single issue or a program of topics.

The value of the latter method is useful for encouraging discussion among those who may feel less confident in a larger group. The major benefit is that participants or certain interest groups can be

targeted and therefore those often eliminated from a wider engagement scope can be specified and invited to participate in such type of event.

4.1.4. Roundtable/Consensus Building

Roundtable discussions can be used as a tool to build consensus. They have multi-stakeholder engagement, operated by consensus and can generate co-operation to enhance the environmental, socio- economic, and built environment sustainability of a community. The basic methodology is that all participants, from business interests to the local community, are equal.

There is no leader but there may be a chair or facilitator. The main factors to be considered are sectoral representation; selection and tasks of members; size; budget and the decision-making processes. Thus, this tool is a useful way to bringing people together as equals who engage in open discussions.

4.1.5. Citizens' Juries

They are a group of citizens who are representative of the general public meet to consider a complicated issue by collecting evidence and then coming up with a decision. Jurors can 'cross examine' expert 'witnesses' who may offer different views on the issue or topic at hand before reaching an agreement or preparing a report of recommended actions. Usually, an advisory panel with expertise in the specialized area consider the jury's outputs and identify what actions should be adopted. A high level of skill is required as participants (jurors) are often asked to analyze complex issues.

4.1.6. Community Surveys

Questionnaire is an effective tool to identify the needs and views of a large number of the local community in a standard format. The main stages of preparing a questionnaire are: identifying what kind of information required; deciding on the type of survey to be used (postal, drop and collect, telephone or interview); conducting the survey and analysis of the findings. Increasingly Email and SMS (text) are being used to provide several tools for people to engage and communicate.

This tool is one of the best methods used to identify the prevailing viewpoints on a particular issue because it provides opportunities to attract the attention of the largest possible number of residents and motivate them for participation and community engagement. Surveys are best utilized as part of a program of other methods - by themselves they can be restricted in scope and provide little significant Community Engagement.

4.1.7. Planning for Real

At the core of this method is building a "**model**" for the area in question. Where possible, the model should be made by local people to build a sense of ownership and to ensure engagement from the early beginning. The model can be displayed at one or more public spots to generate and attract interest and participation. Cards with ideas or suggestions, along with blank cards, are made available for the people who can select or write their own cards which reflect their own point of views and place them on the model where they think the idea should be executed.

The significance of this method is that it is accessible to the local residents of all ages, abilities and backgrounds. It is also a valuable tool to build a sense of community ownership and enables participants to determine issues and prioritize actions. Also, it will facilitate to develop an integrated action plan for the local community planning and development.

4.1.8. Community Mapping

Maps of an area or specific site are used to clarify how people view their locality: what they like or dislike or refinements they would like to see. Discussions should be simplified to help people explore issues, build consensus or identify areas of dispute.

Therefore, this tool is a valuable method to involve people of all levels of capacity. A variety of aspects can be mapped including land use, community assets, public facilities, and modes of transport options to develop a snapshot of an area.

4.1.9. Art and Creativity

Some forms of Community Engagement are particularly good at encouraging participation and generating interest and ideas. These include – but not limited to: **Photography**, through which the problems of the area can be monitored, and enable the community members to capture their likes and dislikes in an area. Also, conducting **Interviews** with the local community via audio and video radio that will contribute to documenting many problems and discussing them on a larger scale. Such tools can contribute in documenting the issues and problems that the area is suffering from, and in addition to generating further discussions or promoting additional events.

Thus, such tool is appropriate means, especially when we want to engage local people and motivate them to express their views and crystallize their ideas in a participatory approach. Therefore, it is considered a useful tool to facilitate the process of integration and engaging of the community members of all ages into the planning process.

4.1.10. Street Stalls

Street Stalls consist of outdoor displays such as idea or graffiti walls which can be utilized to capture the views and comments of large numbers of people in the local community as shown in **Fig. 1**. Maps and plans for an area or project can be shown and the passersby will be required to comment on specific issues and themes, generate ideas or vote for particular activities or facilities.

Choosing a busy public site of the neighborhood can help to achieve high levels of Community Engagement and generate interest in the project from those who may not otherwise get engaged. The approach can be organized to synchronize with other events e.g. community carnivals and celebrations, as it is shown in **Fig. 2**.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Types of street stalls as a mechanism to attract the local community

4.1.11. Pop-Up Engagement

It is considered an informal style of participation and Community Engagement for passers-by, in which the organizers create simple means to initiate discussion and dialogue with the public. Such event can be organized by placing a tent or table in a lively and busy public site, where passers-by

are surprised in fun and simple ways to inform them of the content of the project, and its purpose. Such tool aims for getting to know the local community's opinions and suggestions regarding the future development of the project, in addition to the services and activities that they wish existed to solve the problems of their own community - (Biggs, D., March 2016).

Another method is to use posters that motivate community members to express their choices in setting planning priorities for the project, as shown in both **Fig. 3 & 4**. These tools are attractive in stimulating the participation and integration of the general public and attracting them as quickly as possible to those unexpected stations that have specialized staff to talk about the project. In addition to provide materials to introduce the project through fun activities for visitors, and other means through which individuals can be motivated to talk with the project staff to learn more about the project - (Biggs, D., March 2016).



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Pup-up Engagement mechanism to have local community's inputs and feedbacks

4.2. Applications and technologies for Online Consultation and Community Engagement

These applications and technologies have witnessed dramatic growth over the past few years, for example: online discussion forums, webinars, blogs, social networks (such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp), Skype, Google Meet, Zoom and Microsoft Team. In addition, opinion polls, voting, and digital interactive television. Such technologies and applications enable people to choose where, when, and during which period they want to participate and integrate (Biggs, May 2016).

Technology and Expectations Are Driving Uptake

According to Internet Live Status, internet connectivity has risen to (88.5) % in 2016 in North America (USA and Canada). This rise over the past 12 years, besides the spread of mobiles, has been spectacular. While some critical populations are still marginalized, there is no denying that Online Engagement is a critical path to extend the reach of Community Engagement. It's easy to see how much of people's attention is now attracted towards their devices, so the importance of this engagement channel is obvious. Given the cost effectiveness of many of the online methods, agencies have the potentials to engage an increasingly broad spectators online and save some of the effort to target the underrepresented demographic community members. (Biggs, D., May,2016)

Increased access to Information and Communication Technology - ICT in developing countries has the potential to make community engagement processes more transparent, comprehensive, and cost-effective. This calls for bringing together different kinds of experience and capacities relevant to the activities that exist at the intersection of technology and citizen participation - (Chadwick, A., 2011)

Therefore, the impact of **ICT** can be revised from two perspectives in respect to the impact of:

- (a) Technology on Participation and Social Inclusion.
- (b) Digital Engagement Initiatives on public policies and service delivery.

Thus, **ICT** can be used to support the Community Engagement processes and is designed to take the advantage of a specific approach to citizen engagement. In this context, technology can play a variety of roles such as: facilitating transparency, mobilizing, and acquiring inputs and feedback – (Macintosh, Ann, and Angus Whyte. 2006)

The most important applications and tools for Consultation and Community Engagement can be monitored online in the following applications:

4.2.1. E – Governance

Most countries in the developed world have strategies in place to adopt the new information and communication technologies (**ICTs**) as tools for **providing information** to citizens and clients, **undertaking business transactions (such as benefit applications, tax returns, etc.) with individual citizens. engaging** and consulting citizens on government policy issues and problems, providing input and feedback on progress in policy deliberation processes, in addition to **utilizing the capacity of the new technologies** to ease interactive exchanges - discussions - with as large as numbers of people.

As the United Nation's World Public Sector Report: E-Government at the Crossroads 2003 proposes, 'e-participation' is a 'special case', especially because the new technologies are both a challenge and an opportunity (by providing governments with vehicles to reach large numbers of people and enter into several forms of interaction with them, individually and collectively)- (National Institute for Governance - University of Canberra, 2004). (National Institute for Governance - University of Canberra, 2004).

It should be noted that in order for this application to be adopted in developing countries, a comprehensive assessment must be conducted of the nature of the government's relationship with its citizens before implementing it. This in turn requires a large political and financial investment and may be fraught with risks related to exaggerating citizens' expectations, which must be understood from the early beginning.

One of the key notes in the abovementioned **UN Report** is that trying to engage the local citizens through **ICTs** is likely to be faced by skepticism in circumstances where 'real world' consultations are not realized as being solid and strong or effective (p. 94). In other words, E-Government is not a cyberspace alternative to 'real world' interaction with local community. It is a tool towards the same general goals that can have certain features over other forms.

4.2.2. VOiCE: (Visioning Outcomes in Community Engagement)

It is an online tool to guide community engagement activity and an innovative **IT** based tool which backups planners in the analysis, planning, implementation and assessment processes of Community Engagement activity. **VOiCE** is issued by the Scottish Government for application in Scotland as part of its backing for implementation of the National Standards for Community Engagement.

VOiCE takes us through logical steps to ease well-constructed, managed and evaluated engagement from which we can continuously learn and promote our practice. It supplies a database of evidence of activity and provides an assessment tool to measure the quality and effectiveness of

the Community Engagement process and whether the intended findings of the process were accomplished. Users of VOiCE recently determined its benefits to contain: increased clarity of purpose for Community Engagement; enhanced quality of Community Engagement processes, approaches and outputs; and enabling shared planning and evaluation of Community Engagement with colleagues, partners and local communities -(Lottery Funded & Community places, 2014).

4.2.3. Electronic application for policy formulation

It is an academic program that aims to integrate citizens and consult with them regarding the formulation of development policies via the Internet in Britain through an example created by Coleman & Gotze (Coleman & Gotze, 2001): "Let's play bowling together." This model relies on integrating literature and references on citizen integration with several technologies and applications for Online Consultation and Engagement. These tools are classified and organized according to the extent to which they provide citizens the opportunity to express their opinions (through dialogue and discussion) in exchange for allowing them to cast their votes and empowering them to actually influence the situation. Decisions are made by some form and model of voting and referendum processes.

FIFTH : GREEN VALLEY RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX CASE STUDY

This part addresses a case study that the author of this paper has been living with since March 2022, when he was chosen to serve as a Chairman of the Board of the Owners' Union of a residential complex called (GREEN VALLEY) in Sheikh Zayed City on the outskirts of Greater Cairo - as shown in Fig. 5. This residential complex includes (16) buildings, each of which is (B+G+4) storey and includes all in all about (150) residential units, with an occupancy rate of about (70) %. This complex is inhabited by families whose economic level ranges between (average - above average), and the vast majority of them have qualifications and technocratic professions as well as freelancers.

In managing this residential complex, the author of this paper adopted a methodology of a scientific method in monitoring the problem in all its dimensions and then developing a mechanism to solve it in a participatory context. The methodology is based on applying the Community Engagement Approach of all residents and providing a healthy atmosphere that enhances communication and dialogue between them and the Board, as well as transparency in raising the problems, presenting opinions and proposals to resolve them, an example to apply such methodology is shown in Fig. 6.



Fig. 5: The Green Valley Residential Complex



Fig. 6: Healthy atmosphere that enhances communication between residents & the Board

The axes of this methodology can be explained as follows:

5.1. Data Collection Stage: It included the following steps:

- **Data of the owners of residential units** were collected at the level of each building to facilitate the communication process with all residents.
- All the circulars, rules and controls that residents must know were collected and placed on a wooden board at the entrance of each building (as a mechanism of the availability of information) which is seen an important principle that deepens trust between the Board and residents, as shown in Fig. 7.
- A **resident survey** was designed to identify the most important problems and priorities that must be addressed and worked to solve. Such survey contributed to closely identifying the needs and desires of the residents -the outcomes of this survey is given in Fig. 8.
- Therefore, it was possible to formulate a vision that honestly expresses the hopes of the residents that they wish to be achieved in reality.
- An **opinion poll** among residents was conducted to select the best workers in terms of excellence in performance - which reflects positively on the high quality of services provided to the residents (such as security and cleanliness).



Fig. 7: A Wooden Board as a mechanism to avail the information for the residents

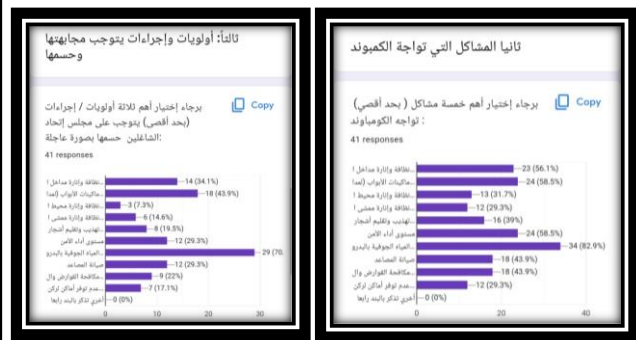


Fig. 8: A Resident Survey in respect to Problems and Priorities

5.2. Participate in Formulating the Future Vision for Green Valley

This **vision** was discussed and developed in light of series of consultation and dialogue sessions with a diverse group of residents. Its most important axes are: identifying the actual problems and challenges facing the compound and taking them into consideration, developing solutions and decisive actions through providing the opportunity for residents to express their opinions and suggestions related to improving and developing the facilities of the compound. The vision has been crystallized as follows:

“Creating a healthy and safe social environment that consolidates family traditions governed by an atmosphere of affection and respect for others “.

5.3. Formulating Mechanisms to Support Community Communication

Many mechanisms have been developed and put into effect, and others are being formulated and elaborated so that community consensus can be achieved regarding them:

- **Establishing a WhatsApp Group for the Board of Owners:** It includes members of the Board; it aims to discuss and develop solutions to the most important problems and challenges facing the compound. It contributes to the ease of coordination, formulating the agenda of meetings and tasks to be discussed, and distributing responsibilities among the members of the Board.

- **Establishing an Advisory WhatsApp Group:** This group is considered an advisory council for the Board,
- representing a mechanism to take part in formulating decisions and expressing opinions regarding specific problems and issues facing the compound and its residents, and proposing solutions in a transparent and democratic atmosphere. This council includes in its membership personalities who have a vision and innovative ideas to improve the quality of life for the compound, as well as representatives of the compound’s 16 buildings. It should be noted that there is another group- known by “the General Green Valley



Fig. 9: The Compound’s Protocol

- **Setting up a WhatsApp Group for daily follow-up:** It includes all members of the Board as well as the administrative officer of the compound. This group aims to facilitate the coordination process, ease the flow of information and instructions, stay informed of latest developments, in addition to overcome all difficulties and problems, and find immediate solutions to them. Through this group, the administrative officer prepares a daily follow-up report to inform the Board about the latest developments and issues to be resolved.
- **Setting up a WhatsApp Group for Women:** Its membership is restricted to women who is living in the compound. It aims to strengthen neighborhood bonds, get acquainted, and exchange opinions on problems and proposals raised, and express their opinions and concerns about them. Such opinions can then be discussed on a larger scale in the general group, whose membership includes all residents of the compound.
- **Communication with the surrounding residential areas:** A protocol was formulated for cooperation with a neighboring residential complex separated from our complex by a neglected pedestrian walkway. The terms of the protocol were agreed upon, and mechanisms were adopted to implement it, contributing to sustainable operations to clean, cultivate, and illuminate the corridor, which created an atmosphere of joy and increased the quality of life for both compounds.
- **Organizing an Iftar party in holly Ramadan:** This is an initiative that is being implemented to consolidate neighborly relations between various families, to enhance the atmosphere of affection among the residents of the compound, in a way that facilitates the communication process and contributes to consolidating and promoting the community engagement.

5.4. Establishing an Institutional Work System: under which the Board operates:

- **Establishing a work system for security and cleanliness** - is shown in **fig.10** - as they are the most important services provided to the residents. Cleaning operations were organized for the 16 buildings of the compound and its surroundings, as well as the landscape corridor. Job descriptions have also been formulated for each of the administrative official, security personnel, and cleaning worker to facilitate holding each of them accountable within tasks assigned to each category.



Fig. 10: Setting up the Compound's Security and Cleanliness System

- **Setting up a system for spraying insects and controlling rodents:** relying on specialists in these tasks, as shown underneath in **fig.11**.



Fig. 11: Setting up the Compound Spraying Insects and Controlling Rodent's System

- **Establishing a system for maintaining elevators:** by contracting with a specialized company who has been required to submit a periodic, quarterly follow-up report, in parallel to seeking the assistance of a technical committee of qualified residents of the compound to follow up the maintenance operations.
- **Scheduling the process of trimming and cutting trees and landscape** surrounding the compound, which contributes to preserving the splendor and beauty of the overall green appearance for the whole compound.
- **Establishing an Accounting system:** through which the overall financial situation of the compound and the extent of the residents' commitment to paying the amounts owed are monitored.

5.5. Problems and Challenges: they can be summarized as follows:

- ❖ **Negotiating with inaction residents:** who were not committed to paying the maintenance amounts due to them (which contribute to spending on the compound's facilities, services, maintenance expenses, electricity bills and salaries). One of the most important reasons for adopting **Negotiation** is to accommodate as much as possible of residents to make it easier engaging them and strengthening the spirit of understanding between residents and the Board - where the percentage of those who were persuaded to pay increased from **(48)%** in March 2022 to currently reach approximately up to **(87)%** of the total owners.
- ❖ **The problem of ground water in the basements:** It is one of the most pressing problems and fundamental challenges face the compound, as shown in pictures below in **fig.12**. After a huge effort and much time that were spent to solve this problem, a proposed Road Map is being formulated to resolve it. This will contribute to preserve the structural safety of the compound 'buildings, in addition to maintaining the real estate market value. For this purpose, a **technical and financial committee** was formed to prepare a detailed path of the

proposed plan. Such committee report will be discussed with the Advisory Group to reach a consensus on the proposed path of the plan so as to be approved and then put into effect.



Fig. 12: The problem of ground water in the compound's basements

- ❖ **Implementing parking lots in basements:** once the ground water problem is resolved and the structural maintenance of the columns and walls are carried out, the owners of the basements will be able to finish them as parking spaces and sell them to the residents. This will contribute to achieving a financial gain for the basements' owners on one hand, and solving the lack of parking places for the residents on the other hand, as it is difficult to find a safe place to park.
- ❖ **Providing a labor accommodation within the basements:** A design was developed for the basements to include, in addition to the parking spaces, rooms to accommodate workers' accommodation instead of their current inhuman places to stay.

SIXTH : RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

This part addresses the most important recommendations and lessons learned that were extracted from the latest literature and theoretical references which this paper discussed in the third part above. In addition to the most important lessons learned that were derived through reviewing the case study which was elaborated in details in the previous part. This part concludes by a set of recommendations that can be classified into six groups.

6.1. The New Urban Agenda 2016

This agenda emphasizes the importance of adopting the "Participatory Planning Approach" in all planning processes that the project passes through to ensure that the needs and aspirations of the local community are met and its requirements for public services and community facilities to be satisfied. In order for this to be achieved, the competent planning authority must undertake the following - (Elgritly,N., 2018):

- Establishing development policies that stimulate partnership among the concerned stakeholders.
- Formulating comprehensive and implementable participatory urban policies.
- Determine future development priorities in partnership with all segments of local community including (civil society and private sector institutions).
- Supporting local authorities to activate their role and urging them to participate in public meetings, workshops and consultative sessions related to identifying issues, objectives and priorities for the community that is sought to be developed.

6.2. The Sustainable Development Goals 2030

In light of the **SDGs 2030** the two most important pillars for adopting a Participatory Planning Approach for sustainable communities are:

First: Encouraging the building of partnerships between relevant government agencies, representatives of the private sector and civil society organizations in preparing and implementing development plans.

Second: Empowering the local community to shape their future urban environment by encouraging Community Engagement and enhancing the role of civil society institutions to effectively contribute to formulating and crystallizing future planning and development processes.

Goal 11 - Make cities comprehensive, safe, flexible and sustainable. This goal aims to renew and plan cities and other human settlements in a way that reinforces community solidarity and personal security, while at the same time stimulating innovation and employment

Goal 16 - Promote justice, peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. This goal aims to:

- ✓ Establish peaceful societies in which no one is marginalized and based on respect for human rights, the rule of law and good governance at all levels,
- ✓ Develop effective, accountable institutions that embrace transparency at all levels.
- ✓ Ensure responsive, inclusive and participatory decision-making that represents diverse stakeholders at all levels.
- ✓ Strengthening the capabilities of relevant national institutions by building their capacities and capabilities at all levels.

6.3. Lessons learned from World Bank-Financed Projects

Such lessons can be summarized as follows:

- Formulate sustainable procedures to enhance citizen participation in World Bank projects.
- Supporting citizen participation requires time and effort to mobilize all the concerned stakeholders for delivering the project' goals and satisfying local community needs and aspirations.
- The importance of continuously responding to citizens' opinions and observations in order to build trust between them and the project staff.
- **ICT**-based solutions can change the rules of the game, but they are not the decisive factor in achieving project success.
- It is important to build the capacity, skills and technical support of the stakeholders involved in the project being funded.
- Providing local communities with the opportunity to prepare their development agenda in a context consistent with their priorities and the prevailing norms of their localities.
- Encouraging the inclusion of the local community inputs and points of views in dialogue platforms between the public and private sectors.
- Encouraging the establishment of an advisory council for citizen participation that includes representatives of all the concerned stakeholders including representatives of government, private sectors, Civil society organizations, NGO's, and academics.

6.4. Lessons learned from the Green Valley Residential Complex Experience

- 1) Setting up a system that accommodates the local community, and provides public space for community engagement and consultation with them on a comprehensive and sustainable basis.

- 2) The possibility of exploiting the open spaces and gardens located within the boundaries of the residential complex and its surroundings. In addition to designing them in a way that stimulates social interaction and encourages dialogue among various segments of the local community, whether in the residential complex or in the surroundings in a way that contributes to building participatory communities that stimulate communication, community integration and cohesion.
- 3) Providing the appropriate atmosphere to enhance interaction among all segments of the local community and providing opportunities for dialogue and constructive discussion regarding everything related to the problems, issues of the local community and the priorities for resolving them in a manner that takes into account the prevailing considerations and circumstances.
- 4) Formulating transparent and accountable mechanisms for discussing all issues and problems facing the community and the proposals it presents.
- 5) Maximizing the use of techniques and applications used in Information Technology - IT including social media, in order to expand the scope of participation of the largest possible segment of the local community.
- 6) Formulating institutional mechanisms that allow the local community to seriously participate in the planning decision-making processes and follow up, so that decisions to be more responsive to the community needs and desires, which are reflected in an increased sense of belonging.
- 7) Support initiatives to develop the capabilities and skills of the local community with the aim of stimulating its participation in dialogue and discussions, in addition to ensuring its involvement in the decision-making processes.

6.5. Recommendations to be adopted

It should be noted that this research adopts a set of recommendations that can be classified into six groups, which are stated as follows:

1) Recommendations regarding general controls and policies in the country:

- The competent government agencies must **undertake the formulation of development policies and legislative frameworks**, in addition to enacting regulations and laws that stipulate the necessity of adopting a "Participatory Planning Approach". This can be achieved by enhancing Community Engagement in the planning process during the preparation of planning studies and projects.
- Adopting policies that would consolidate "the **Decentralization of Planning Decision-Making**" at the local level by granting the concerned local agencies the necessary powers and responsibilities to enable them to carry out their assigned tasks. This in turn will ensure that such agencies can be held accountable for the level of performance and achievement delivered.

2) Recommendations related to creating institutional mechanisms that allow for the role of community participation:

- ✓ Encouraging the "**Building of Partnerships**" between concerned government agencies and representatives of both private and community sectors during the preparation of development projects. This will contribute to all segments of society reaping the revenues

that will be resulted from the implementation of those projects, and consolidate the role of Community Engagement during the decision-making process related to the project which is under preparation.

- ✓ The competent planning authorities must formulate a methodology through which to achieve the **Establishment of a Sustainable Planning System** that stimulates the involvement of all concerned stakeholders in the processes of decision- making during the preparation of development studies.
- ✓ It is recommended to **Provide Financial Support to the Competent Planning Authorities** to enable them to fund the meetings and consultative sessions that bring together all the relevant stakeholders during the preparation of planning projects.
- ✓ It is recommended that **the Competent Planning Authorities should have an account on social media** so that they can communicate and consult with the targeted local community, and integrate all the concerned stakeholders during the preparation of planning projects. This will lead to maximizing the role of the local community during the formulation of planning decisions.
- ✓ It is suggested that **Establishing a unit/section within the organizational structure of the competent planning authority** entrusted with the responsibility of conducting, organizing and documenting the consultation and community engagement sessions with all the stakeholders concerned with the planning project that is under preparation.
- ✓ It is recommended that **the Competent Planning authority can establish a "Reference Advisory Group"** that includes representatives of the concerned stakeholders - including representatives of the targeted local community.
- ✓ It is recommended that **the Competent Planning authority can form a "Credibility Group"** which represents broad and diverse segments of the targeted local community with whom consultation and community engagement sessions will be conducted.

3) Recommendations related to removing the obstacles that prevent the embodiment of community participation in reality:

- ❖ **Maximizing the role of the private and community sectors and not marginalizing them** (during holding Consultation and Community Engagement sessions organized to discuss urban development projects. This will help in enabling their representatives to engage in the stages of making and taking planning decisions related to the plan under preparation.
- ❖ It is recommended to **conduct a continuous evaluation of Consultation and Community Engagement process** during the preparation of planning projects. This in turn will ensure removing and overcoming the obstacles that prevent accommodating the private and community sectors in the decision- making processes related to the project under preparation.
- ❖ Setting up an atmosphere characterized by **consolidating Mutual Trust and Transparency between the competent planning authority and the targeted local community**. At the same time, it will consider providing them an easy access to data and information related to the planning project and its priorities. This will contribute to removing difficulties that prevent the effective involvement of the concerned stakeholders in the planning process, as well as building credibility and mutual trust between each other.

4) Recommendations related to maximizing the use of information technology applications and techniques and developing a mechanism for their use.

- ♠ It is recommended to **organize intensive training courses for planning staff to enable them how to apply technological applications and techniques** used in conducting

Community Participation and Engagement processes during the preparation of urban projects.

- ♣ It is recommended that **the competent planning authority can establish an interactive website** that allows all the concerned stakeholders to express and present their own opinions that reflect their requirements and priorities related to the planning project under preparation.
- ♣ It is recommended to **use Information Technology Programs & applications to analyze and classify the feedback and stakeholders' point of view** (especially representatives of both private and community sectors) regarding the most important issues and problems associated with the Consultation and Community Engagement processes that relates to the project under preparation.

5) Recommendations regarding proposals to stimulate social interaction and encourage dialogue between various segments of society:

- ✚ **Forming a Focus Group** that comprises specialists and concerned stakeholders to study and analyze a specific topic, issue, or a proposal. In addition to build a consensus on resolving this issue.
- ✚ **Setting up strong relationships between cadres of the competent planning authority and representatives of the concerned stakeholders**, who are intended to be accommodated and integrated into the Consultation and Community Engagement Processes during the preparation of the project under study. This in turn will contribute in creating a positive atmosphere that stimulates the stakeholders to be engaged in discussions, express their own opinions, and raise visions & proposals regarding the future development of the project.
- ✚ **Providing a stimulating atmosphere characterized by transparency and mutual trust among various segments of the targeted society** during holding Consultation and Community Engagement sessions related to studying the most important issues and priorities in respect to the project which is under preparation. This in turn will be positively reflected on building the credibility of the competent planning authority to the local community.
- ✚ It is recommended that **the Competent Planning Authority can establish Online Discussion Forums** to accommodate various opinions and visions related to the concerned stakeholders in respect with the project under preparation.

6) Recommendations for building capacity, skills and technical support for stakeholders:

- ✚ It is recommended that **the Competent Planning Authority should design an integrated professional program which aim to building the planning staffs' capabilities, capacities and skills**. In addition, such program has to provide technical support to the concerned stakeholders to familiarize them with the scope of problems, issues and challenges they face during the preparation of the project under study. In this context, the components of the aforementioned program can include the following:
 - Methods to organize and manage meetings and consultative sessions.
 - How to Organize and manage the interactive workshops.
 - Mechanisms of resolving disputes and differences among the various concerned stakeholders.
 - Developing mechanisms and a methodology for conducting the Negotiation Process.
 - Crystallizing consensus building mechanisms.
 - Developing mechanisms and a work methodology to formulate the future development vision for the planning project under preparation so that it is agreed upon by all the concerned stakeholders and facilitates its implementation on the ground.

- ✚ Such Training Program can contribute to achieving the following:
 - Formulating consensus solutions by which representatives of the concerned stakeholders can agree and approve them.
 - Promoting broader opportunities to participate in Consultation and Community Engagement Sessions related to the project under preparation.
 - Increasing the overall satisfaction rates with the planning outputs and results of the project under preparation.

SEVENTH : SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The author of this research relied on **the latest theoretical literature and references** that addressed the importance of the Community Engagement in the planning profession as a permanent and sustainable process. The most important of these references are: The New Urban Agenda **2016**, the Sustainable Development Goals **2030**, and periodic reports issued by the World Bank Group, in addition to two examples, one of which is the city of Milton Keynes, UK, and the other is the Qatar National Master Plan Project, Qatar. And finally, an international researcher and consultant (**Dave Biggs** whose expertise is focusing on organizing workshops and webinar panels regarding the enhancement of the Community Engagement Approach for planning projects).

The case study presented in this paper « **GREEN VALLEY RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX** », cast light on the important role that the local community can play, if we planners, provide an encouraging and stimulating atmosphere that:

- Enhances social interaction among all segments of the community.
- Provides opportunities for dialogue and constructive discussion regarding the community issues, priorities and its actual needs & desires.

Therefore, based on the case study results and the above discussions, the following conclusions can be derived as follows:

- ✚ It is now widely acknowledged: that **Sustainable Development Practices** are the best vehicles for preparing implementable and effective plans.
- ✚ The main **Research Problem** is to monitor the obstacles that prevent the embodiment of Community Engagement in the reality, and to accommodate the problems and develop consensual solutions in a permanent and sustainable context.
- ✚ This research aims to highlight the importance of Community Engagement in strengthening the identity of local community, and to develop mechanisms to support the community development process.
- ✚ This case study can further act as a **pilot example** to influence cultural and national social policy, and it would provide a high reference value to other similar cases.
- ✚ **Empowering the local community** to shape their built environment by encouraging Community Engagement and enhancing the role of the community to effectively contribute in formulating the Future Vision.
- ✚ The most **effective mechanisms and techniques** which stimulate the Community Engagement and encourage the residents to be involved in the Decision-Making process can be determined as follows : Public Meetings, Focus Group Discussions, Citizen Juries, Community Surveys (such as Questionnaire and Opinion Pol) and Social Media Applications (WhatsUp).
- ✚ Formulating **institutional mechanisms** that allow the local Community to seriously participate in the decision-making processes and follow up, so that decisions to be more

responsive to the Community' needs and desires. As a consequence, such mechanisms can be reflected in an increased sense of the community belonging.

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