

Crowdsourcing of Local Thinking for Global Action Through International Competitions

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Harnessing the yet untapped power of social media opens great opportunities for engaging the local thinking to address and advise global thinking and back to local actions. This will be demonstrated through the example of an international competition on “Urban Revitalization of Mass Housing” launched by UN-Habitat 2013-14. The competition attracted 97 teams from 55 universities in 64 cities, 35 countries to the paperless e-competition aims at addressing issues plaguing existing mass housing. Competitors analysed the issues with mass housing in their own country. Through participatory approaches, they involved the communities, owners of the housing estates and developed proposals. These local actions that are proposed have been distilled to learn lessons globally. The end result will include local solutions that will guide local decision makers, practitioners and academia in addressing housing issues. Policy implications and concepts have been distilled to guide the same target groups internationally.

The competition aimed at addressing sustainability elements in mass housing which include social, economic and environmental elements as addressed geographically through urban planning and governed and managed through the soft aspects of urban management.

Results of the competition have been categorized according to concepts of the sustainability elements and more could be seen on the website <http://masshousingcompetition.org/>

This paper addresses several of the topics of the conference including: Re-use of existing housing; crowdsourcing; design strategies; and, case studies. The specific innovations targeted are spelled out in section 20 of the competition guidelines include:

- Introduction of Academic Social Responsibility whereby students serve their local communities;
- Empowerment of academia to become an advisory arm of local authorities through tackling sustainable development challenges;
- Encouragement of local and central authorities to engage more with academia to implement their innovative proposals;
- Encouragement of the private sector to gear their Corporate Social Responsibility towards benefiting the local community;
- Encouragement of broader partnerships between key actors: academia, national and local authorities, professionals, civil society, private sector etc., through the competition process to include environmental, economic and cultural aspects of sustainability.
- Encouragement of competitors and various actors to review the “soft” side of sustainability such as governance, management and maintenance, and tenure issues.
- Encouragement of endogenous solutions that do not need external funding such as value sharing the land value.
- Crowd sourcing ideas, research and references. Each team will provide a national, city and mass housing background and analysis as well as share their references and resources;
- Encouragement of international exchanges of ideas by distilling main concepts and policy implications to make it easier to compare.
- Stimulation of a very interesting and enriching exchange regionally and globally through the menu of ideas and policy implications to be available at the fingertips of policy makers and practitioners.

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- Pooling of resources by sharing resource materials to build a live bibliography during the competition and beyond;
- Documenting good local examples and creating a database.