

Success Key Factors of a Local Urban Strategy: the case of Solo, Central Java, Indonesia.

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Abstract

Solo is a small municipality located in Central Java, Indonesia with 522.935 inhabitants in 2008 and a population density of 11.869 inhabitants/km². It hosted in 2010 the Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Housing & Urban Development (APMCHUD) and will host in 2011, the Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum. Those big events are hosted by Solo because this municipality has been noticed as an innovative city which can implement a strategy. Better housing for people and revitalization of traditional markets are some of the urban strategies that have been kept consistently. Peaceful relocation involving 1.571 inhabitants in slum areas and 989 informal vendors into formal market are the most innovative actions that have been done successfully and were noticed by other Indonesian municipalities and also from Thailand and Cambodia's municipalities as phenomenal urban problem solving.

The major funded projects which can be monitored easily will bring big impacts for the people as proven public services. This mature strategy was supported by social and economic benefit studies and economic feasibility analysis for the projects undertaken. This helped people to understand better the municipality's policies which promote welfare for people. Appropriate methods of communication and dialogue as well as consideration for people's values have been the innovative ways to implement the urban strategy.

Inducing critical factors of a plan-process such as political commitment and perceived innovations through technical capacity and cultural understanding have been carried out by the municipality in the period 1999-2010. An historical retrospective of the Solo Plan-Process shows that in 1999 public participation started to take place during autonomy era. A new vision for Solo was launched in 2001 and a new planning process was introduced in 2003. In 2005, the new mayor administration started realistic planning and implementation. Actions peaked between 2006 and 2009 while legal planning regulations were issued in 2007.

Applying the Lourenço meta-analysis for urban growth areas (Lourenço, 2003), allows a better apprehension of the sequence of interdependencies that exist and can be addressed expanding the concepts of urbanization and redevelopment of urban areas within a continuum process associated to planning and investment cycles. The applicability of the proposed model is tested by comparing the idealized evolution to the observed urban dynamics in Solo, for a period of twelve years, from 1998 to 2010. Solo Plan-Process showed a complete cycle (planning, action, and living) during those periods. Innovative implementation by respecting people's values is one of the most important reasons of Solo's complete cycle.

Keywords: communication, dialogue, urban strategy, plan-process, meta-analysis