

MODALITIES OF TENANTS PARTICIPATION IN THE REVITALIZATION OF OPEN SPACES IN COMPLEXES WITH HIGH-RISE HOUSING

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Abstract. *Participation of tenants is an actual and very efficient instrument for revitalizing open spaces in complexes with high-rise housing. The share of tenants in joint activities in open spaces and in their improvement contributes to the development of the feeling of pride of the tenants and the responsibility for the housing environment. Therefore, through participation, tenants become motivated to undertake activities that can prevent further devastation of open spaces. Modalities of tenants' participation are diverse and some of the key are: tenants' personalization, learning to improve common spaces (semi-public, semi-private) and collective gardening. The aim of this paper is to affirm the participation of tenants in the programs of revitalization of open spaces and articulation of its significance in complexes with high-rise housing in the context of improvement of quality of life. In these complexes there often occurs alienation, lack of awareness of tenants for the improvement of open space, and encouragement of participation of tenants is of particular importance. In this context, this paper analyzes an example of good practice of revitalizing open spaces in the residential complex Eriksbo in Gothenburg, where a great diversity of modalities of tenants' participation can be identified.*

Key words: *participation, tenants, open spaces, revitalization*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The processes of urbanization and industrialization in the 20th century have caused a wide range of social, economic, cultural changes, as well as the intensification of housing needs in cities throughout Europe. The answer of architects and urban planners to the mentioned problem was the re-enrollment of residents into larger urban groups - housing complexes and residential areas, whose construction in some European countries marked housing construction until the late 1990s. The basic accompanying function with housing in residential complexes is recreation, and the modalities of the arrangement of open spaces as integral contents of the residential zone are realized in different ways. However, in spite of the generally known importance of open space for the quality of life of tenants of complex with high-rise housing, in current conditions there is a tendency of their devastation and non-compliance with the needs of tenants. Neglecting open spaces manifests itself in the disruption of their key role - the determinants of quality of life and the desired destination of the occupants for leisure time, whether it is on a daily or occasional basis. Their neglect, both at the design stage, inconsistent performance or poor maintenance, results in a loss of usable value, which contributes to the deterioration of the physical and social dimensions and the ambient value of the whole area to which they belong. Neglected and unsupported open spaces affect negatively both the health of tenants and social interactions, and may also be the initiators of anti-social and destructive behavior. Finally, people do not want to live in a residential environment that is not attractive, which does not motivate them and does not initiate the affiliation with the housing environment.

The sustainability of settlements and complexes with high-rise housing, apart from the mentioned factors, is conditioned by innovations in urban planning and planning practice, urban design and modalities of development and improvement of open foreign practices in the form of numerous programs and projects, in which their revitalization is treated as an integral part of the urban development. For several decades, various studies have focused on identifying the key factors for revitalization of open spaces in cities, which was particularly helpful for the Leipzig Charter [1]. It has become a political priority of the EU and at the national levels of many countries and it indicates the importance of promoting open spaces in the context of the quality of life. The modalities of advancement in current foreign practice are numerous, and include the application of spatial / functional, ecological, design and social measures. It is of particular importance to respect the requirements and needs of tenants of the housing complex, both in the finishing of the realization of innovative ideas and solutions, as well as in terms of the sustainability of the complex. In a plethora of instruments that are applied in revitalization projects of open spaces, the participation of tenants is emphasized. It is realized through various occupancy activities. The subject of the research of this paper is the consideration of the importance of the participation of tenants in the revitalization of open spaces as an instrument for improving the quality of life. The aim of this paper is to indicate the modalities of tenants' participation in the improvement of open spaces, as well as the articulation of the participatory approach, with consideration of the current practice. In this context, this paper analyzes an example of good practice of revitalizing open spaces in the residential complex Eriksbo in Gothenburg, where a great diversity of tenants' modalities can be identified.

2. TENANTS' PARTICIPATION IN THE REVITALIZATION OF OPEN SPACES

The participation of tenants as a right to participate in decision-making in the management of the housing community belongs to the group of political human rights [2]. Judging by the current development of global politics and a multitude of initiatives, the participation of tenants in joint activities in open spaces and in their improvement seems more current than ever. In this context, contemporary urban-architectural practice recognizes the diversity of measures and instruments to encourage the participation of tenants. Respecting the tenants' opinion regarding content and urban design of open spaces encourages control and responsibility for space and tenants becomes motivated to undertake activities that can prevent further devastation of open spaces. The key benefits of the participation of tenants are: the development of a sense of pride of tenants, increasing the sense of community, responsibility at the individual level, encouraging territoriality and intensifying the sense of belonging, self-expression and security, reducing the alienation and anonymity [3]. In addition, it is important to improve skills and knowledge, to improve mental and physical health, as well as to promote good neighborly relations. Identification and belonging to the open space manifests itself through the sense of pleasantness of the residence of the tenants, as well as participation in joint activities, which is shown by numerous foreign studies [4]. All of this is of special importance in the complexes with high-rise housing, where the devastation of open spaces, neglect and disorder of these spaces is often noticed. The consequences are the residents' dissatisfaction with open spaces, the absence of the tenant's identity with the housing environment, the anonymity and alienation of tenants, as well as the lack of interest in participating in the revitalization of open spaces.

On the other hand, through participation, tenants become motivated to undertake activities that can prevent the devastation of open spaces. Participation of tenants contributes to finding better solutions, whereby the following prerequisites must be met: motivate tenants for active participation, inform tenants about the importance of planning actions for revitalization of open spaces, educate them on the subject of work and timely involve them [5]. Participation also allows them to make choices for alternative urban design and affirmation of the quality of space such as security, readability, identity, which will enhance their sense of belonging and control [6]. The current foreign practice confirms the significant contribution of the participation of tenants in the efficiency of the program of revitalization of open spaces. Residents express their wishes and are involved directly in the creation of promotion projects. It is considered that without insight into the wishes, needs, habits and visions of the tenants, it is not possible to create a quality project for improving the open space, and the design of open spaces must refer to patterns of behavior and the value of the tenants to whom the space is intended. The successful participation of tenants can be seen only over a longer period of time, and it is desirable to combine the wishes of tenants with social issues and values of the housing community. Efficiency of tenant's participation can be seen in different stages of improving open space - participation is used as a driving force for mobilizing resources in the community itself and implementing activities through its own potentials. At the same time, it contributes to achieving better solutions, greater cooperation among different actors, strengthening local democracy, education and developing new skills, improving the culture of housing and raising tenant awareness, which is also important for achieving a sustainable urban development [7]. On the other hand, numerous studies show that the abandonment of open spaces is not only the result of planning failures, but also the absence of the participation of tenants in joint activities. In that sense, it is especially important to leave tenants the opportunity to create their own housing environment - open spaces and to be included in their revitalization.

2.1. Modalities of tenants' participation

Various modalities of tenants' participation can be observed in the literature and examples of good practice. They differ depending on the goals of revitalizing open spaces, socio-cultural milieu of tenants, social, political, economic and planning preferences of countries. In this paper, the following modalities of the tenants' participation are considered: tenants' personalization, learning to improve common spaces (semi-public, semi-private) and collective gardening.

Personalization of tenants in open spaces can be considered as an important instrument for encouraging and imparting privacy, territoriality, and tenants' belonging to these areas and mutual feeling of closeness, which is of particular importance for tenants of high-rise housing. Affiliation is related to the physical distance from the space, but it also implies that the space really belongs to users and that they can edit and use it according to their needs and engage in its maintenance. At the same time, the belonging of open space to the primary housing group contributes to the degree of usable value of the living environment and encouraging personalization of the users. Many types of tenant personalization can be observed, which relate primarily to the design and improvement of primary open spaces in the immediate vicinity of the entrance to residential buildings, high-rise housing, fences, and urban furniture [8]. This type of participation of tenants in the improvement of open space contributes to the creation of the identity of the own corner in terms of operation, maintenance and regulated access, user translation into the tenant - provides a framework for the planned operation of tenants in the environment. There is a number of factors that positively influence the marking of space and personalization: the level of household income, ownership of the apartment, type of housing, topography and accessibility of space, regular maintenance of space, privacy concerns and the need to determine borders of the territory, possession and security, neighborhood perception, socializing and strong social relations with friends and neighbors [9].



Fig. 1 Personalization of tenants [10]



Fig. 2 Individual courtyard [10]

Personalization can also be defined as the activity of an individual to change space, in accordance with his own preferences, which are recognizable among others [11]. In this sense, territoriality and personalization can be realized and recognized in open spaces. Personalization is also a tool, which functions as an intermediary between an individual and a community to accept or eliminate social contact. There are various types of territorial markings and personalization. Some of them have borders, such as curbs, pillars and fences, as well as signposts by residents themselves, such as living fences, arranging ground floor plants and pots, seating mall, tracking personalization (Figures 1, 2). Identifying tenants with the space in which they operate means a positive attitude towards preservation and maintenance.

In addition to the personalization of tenants, participation in the improvement of common (semi-private or semi-public) spaces is also significant. The types of participation can be direct and indirect, and can be realized through: information, research, consultation, participation and delegation of tenants. In doing so, it is possible to notice the following activities (Figures 3):

- informing the tenants about problems, needs and measures for improving open space through press, web sites, billboards [12].
- research - interviews with focus groups or setting boxes for suggestions, and objections
- consultations through various techniques - conferences, workshops, inviting tenants to discuss development issues and priorities with other tenants and intensive groups seeking written responses to urban policies and proposals
- involvement in partnerships or delegate involvement in committees, whereby tenants are invited to participate actively in a process that involves identifying the problem and providing concrete proposals for improvement; the final decisions are made by members of local authorities
- delegations - where they have been officially selected by local authorities or other bodies in a committee that has the ability to decide on the improvement of open spaces.



Fig. 3 Forms of participation of tenants in the arrangement of open spaces a), b) planned greening c) discussions about the draft project of revitalization of open spaces [13].

In current conditions, apart from the mentioned modalities of participation of tenants, collective gardening is particularly important (Figure 3). It can be recognized as a form of joint activities in which tenants of the residential buildings voluntarily participate in the design, improvement and management of open spaces [14]. In projects of revitalization of open spaces it is possible to observe the following activities of collective gardening: exchange of ideas, problem solving and joint work with others, discussion, division of responsibility and other types of interactions, where the individual is part of the collective process. These activities include gathering information, socializing, discussing and other formal relationships that link local groups of tenants with external actors representing society as a whole. Collective gardening activities can be initiated and implemented in several ways:

- residential companies initiate tenants to participate in gardening and open space maintenance, so-called "self-management of tenants"
- tenants can get to use garden with plots within open spaces; the tenant's association signs an agreement on taking over responsibility of maintenance of common gardens from a residential maintenance company
- housing association can form a garden on an empty and unregulated open space in a residential complex as a key mechanism for the revitalization of open spaces and residential complexes (Figure 4).



Fig. 4 Example of collective gardening [15]

3. REVITALIZATION OF OPEN SPACES IN RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX OF ERIKSBO IN GETEBORG

The housing estate Eriksbo in Gothenburg was built in the 1970s, as a response from the Swedish authorities to the deficit of housing needs. The project of revitalization of open spaces in this complex represents a successful example of improving the part of the devastated residential complex initiated and realized with the participation of tenants [16]. In addition to the occupancy of the tenants, the new structure of the involved actors is significant, then the redesigned role of the City Residential Company in the process of revitalization and participation of the voluntary association. Ten years ago, the tenants of this housing estate formed a Volunteer Cooperative Association with the aim of improving buildings, open spaces and community activities. The aim of the tenant was to improve the open space in the immediate vicinity of flats and to maintain renting gardens. Director of the City Residential Company was responsible for the involvement of tenants in the discussions about their visions for improving the quality of open space. This initiative resulted in such a successful project that this settlement is no longer considered an unattractive living area. The project was realized thanks to the close cooperation between the municipal administration and the local tenants' association [17]. In support of this, there is also a social program that provides newly-resident tenants with the publication *Welcome to Eriksbo*, where all the benefits of this residential complex are explained in detail, especially in terms of arranging open spaces.

The program of revitalization, initiative and participation of tenants is represented through concrete activities, where the creation of individual gardens, common gardens and residential yards are first defined (Figures 5, 6). These activities represent the examples and personalization of tenants and participation in the arrangement of common gardens and open fingers, as well as the participation of tenants in collective gardening. In addition to the aforementioned activities, the project carried out the remodeling of nursery in the ground floor of one of the residential buildings and an oasis was formed for the stay of children in the open space. Private gardens have been expanded outside of public green spaces - which is very convenient, as it reduces the scope of work for managers of the residential complex (also an example of personalization of tenants). The volunteer association gradually assumed responsibility from the City Housing Company for the maintenance of open spaces. The association got funds that the housing company should otherwise use to hire workers, and 6 workers from the ranks of unemployed tenants for garden works and open space maintenance.



Fig. 5 Individual residential yards [17]



Fig. 6 Children's playground [17].

This system works very well, and all tenants are aware of their own potentials for improving the living environment. It is particularly important that tenants have the opportunity to discuss their visions with managers about what should be done. Alternatively, people with an idea or complaint can go to the Center for Housing Assemblies within the complex and talk to someone who can react immediately to the observed problem. Benefits include getting a meeting space, which also acts as an office for those who work to coordinate and improve the Eriksbo complex. The nearby park is also hired for the needs of the tenants - a children's farm with a playground for children (a joint tenant's activity) has been built and there is a board for its management and work, and the occupants spend a lot of time in volunteering there (Figure 7). Also, part of the open space is taken over by tenants for collective gardening (Figure 8). The jurisdiction of the maintenance is in the hands of a volunteer association. Applying this kind of comprehensive measures with the different types of tenants' participation, the usable value of open space in the Erikso complex increased. Besides that, contacts between tenants in open spaces and good neighborly relations were intensified, affiliation and territoriality of tenants were strengthened and the antisocial behavior was reduced. Particularly significant is the improvement of the quality of life in the whole residential complex, which is the primary goal of every revitalization project.



Fig. 7 Children's farm [18]



Fig. 8 Collective garden [18].

4. CONCLUSION

The current state of open space in most European countries is characterized by various types of deprivation and the lack of adaptation of open spaces to changing social, demographic, economic, cultural trends, as well as the needs of tenants of complex with high-rise housing. Given the wide range of open space issues, the current instruments of revitalization should ensure the protection of the existing values and at the same time provide new opportunities in accordance with the contemporary trends in the arrangement of open spaces and new lifestyles of tenants in the direction of ensuring a higher level of quality of life. In current conditions, the participation of tenants is considered as one of the basic instruments for achieving a successful and sustainable revitalization of open spaces. Through this process, tenants participate in the development, creation and implementation of plans for the revitalization of open spaces, that is, in the planning and decision-making that affect the improvement of the housing environment. The modalities of tenants' participation, which are discussed in the paper, are: personalization of tenants in open spaces, participation in the improvement of common spaces and collective gardening. Each of these modalities has a distinct significance, and it can be concluded that in order to create efficient and sustainable solutions, it is advisable that each of this modalities should be represented in the revitalization project. The mentioned modalities are recognized in the case of promotion of revitalization of open spaces in the Eriksbo complex. From this example, we can conclude that the effectiveness of the implemented measures was especially contributed by the application of various approaches to the design of open spaces, while respecting the needs and demands of tenants. The most obvious sign of the success of this project is the improved good neighborly relations, which can be identified through regular and intensive contacts between tenants, and they are realized thanks to the fulfillment of several interrelated requirements: offering adequate content, opportunities for meeting, gathering, socializing, adequate and functional urban equipment, aesthetics, as well as the symbolic meaning of open spaces. Opportunities for revitalization of open spaces in complexes with high-rise housing are realized by establishing an integrated planning and design approach in correlation with the partnership approach, adequate organizational and institutional structure and financial instruments. In doing so, it is necessary to respect the needs of tenants and to involve them in making decisions on the character of open spaces, which is a significant and necessary instrument for improving open spaces.

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MODALITETI PARTICIPACIJE STANARA U REVITALIZACIJI SLOBODNIH PROSTORA U KOMPLEKSIMA SA VIŠESPRATNIM STANOVANJEM

Participacija stanara je aktuelni i veoma efikasan instrument revitalizacije slobodnih prostora u kompleksima sa višespratnim stanovanjem. Udeo stanara u zajedničkim aktivnostima na slobodnim prostorima i u njihovom unapređenju doprinosi razvoju osećaja ponosa stanara i odgovornosti za stambeno okruženje. Stoga, putem participacije, stanari postaju motivisani da pokrenu aktivnosti koje mogu sprečiti dalju devastaciju slobodnih prostora. Modaliteti participacije stanara su različiti, a neki od ključnih su: personalizacija stanara, učešće u unapređenju zajedničkih slobodnih prostora (polu-javni, polu-privatni) i kolektivno baštovanstvo. Cilj ovog rada je afirmacija participacije stanara u programima revitalizacije slobodnih prostora i artikulacija značaja njihovog unapređenja u kompleksima sa višespratnim stanovanjem u kontekstu unapređenja kvaliteta života. U ovim kompleksima često se javlja otuđenje, nedostatak osećaja stanara za unapređenje slobodnih prostora, te je od posebnog značaja podsticanje participacija stanara. U tom smislu u ovom radu je analiziran primer dobre prakse revitalizacije slobodnih prostora u stambenom kompleksu Eriksbo u Geteborgu, gde se može identifikovati veliki diverzitet modaliteta participacije stanara.

Ključne reči: participacija, stanari, slobodni prostori, revitalizacija