HOW TO MAKE A SUCCESSFUL URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

EXPERIENCES FROM NINE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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CONTENT

1. THIS HANDBOOK – ITS USE AND SCOPE
2. AIMS – IMPROVING THE SOCIAL, THE PHYSICAL, AND THE ECONOMIC CONDITION OF AN AREA
3. AREAS – PEOPLE, PLACE, AND POLICY
4. TIME – CO-ORDINATING DIFFERENT CALENDARS
5. PARTNERSHIPS – BETWEEN ACTORS AND LEVELS
6. INTEGRATED APPROACH – CO-OPERATION BETWEEN SECTORS
7. PARTICIPATION – EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS, ASSOCIATIONS, AND GROUPS
8. MONEY – WHERE TO GET IT FROM & HOW TO USE IT
9. ORGANISATION – CONTRACTS, COVENANTS, AND PROCEDURES
10. EVALUATION – INDICATORS, ANALYSIS, AND IMPACT
11. KNOWLEDGE – HOW TO ACCUMULATE AND TRANSFER IT
12. A CHECKLIST FOR UDP’s – 30 RELEVANT QUESTIONS

Appendices

- THE MAIN PLAYERS: THE COUNTRIES, CITIES, DEPRIVED AREAS AND UDP’S
- EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

UGIS is the acronym of an international research project – ‘Urban Governance, Social Inclusion And Sustainability’ – financed by the 5th Framework Programme of The European Community For Research, Technological Development And Demonstration Activities (1999 - 2002). It is a part of Key Action 4: The City Of Tomorrow And Cultural Heritage. Partners come from nine countries: Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, France, Spain, Italy, and Hungary. The project started in April 2000 and ends in March 2003.
CHAPTER ONE

THIS HANDBOOK – ITS USE AND SCOPE

During the last decade, all over Europe hundreds of policy makers, public officers, social scientists and ordinary citizens have been busy discussing, preparing, organising, defending, criticising and implementing programmes and projects that were intended to tackle urban problems and stimulate urban development. Individually, and collectively at local or national levels, they have built up a rich collection of practical knowledge about what worked and what did not. It is the aim of this handbook to present this knowledge in an encompassing, systematic and concise way to all those who are, or in the future will be, involved in the conception and implementation of UDP’s: Urban Development Programmes. What should be done? What should be avoided? What is feasible? What is not? Who should be involved at what moment? What are the benefits and pitfalls of an area-based, integral approach to urban renewal? How can the sustainability of results of UDP’s be improved? How to develop and use a budget? How can results be evaluated? These are some of the basic questions we will try to answer, using the experience of people in the field.

By communicating experiences of different actors in different institutional contexts in such a way, we think that we can contribute to more successful urban initiatives in the future. Although this Handbook is the result of scientific inquiry by an international team of urban scholars, it is not an academic publication. This does not mean that what we argue is not underpinned by painstaking and detailed research. It is. This Handbook is based on a research project that covered 32 neighbourhoods in 19 cities in 9 countries. We worked for more than four years with more than 30 people on this project. We collected piles and piles of data of all kinds, and we wrote dozens of reports and papers on different cities, countries and topics. Many of these writings can be found on our website: http://www.ufsia.ac.be/ugis/. The last and most original part of the research project was an international ‘cross-evaluation’ by an international project team. During this cross-evaluation, we interviewed policy-makers and confronted them with information that we collected in the field.

This Handbook is meant for those who work in the field and who, by the very nature of their demanding profession, have no time to read in depth about concepts, theories and methodologies. It is meant for those who want an answer to the basic question how to make a successful UDP. Trying to answer this question is what we have done in this book. That is why we called it a Handbook. We have tried – and that was hard work for university professors – to give practical answers in clear and straightforward language. We have tried to avoid academic jargon as much as possible and to be as practical and ‘down-to-earth’ as we possibly could be.

So, we are writing about how to make a successful UDP: an Urban Development Programme. By that, we mean a set of interrelated projects on a local level to be implemented within a certain period of time within a certain area. The projects may be
focussed on physical measures, such as demolishing and rebuilding parts of the housing stock or on social and economic targets, such as decreasing unemployment. They may also be a combination of physical, social, economic, and cultural initiatives, and they usually are. This is what we call an ‘integrated approach.’ By ‘local level’ we mean cities, or urban municipalities; by ‘area,’ urban districts or neighbourhoods. The temporal dimension of a UDP refers to the fact that it has a clearly defined beginning and end. The dimensions of space and time are highly variable when we look at practices in different European countries and cities. But in spite of that, by their very nature, they raise the same kind of questions and call for the same kind of decisions.

All over Europe, UDP’s have been conceived and implemented. It is widely believed that because of their more or less ‘integrated’ and area-based character, these programmes are more effective than one-issue projects or programmes of a categorical nature. We share this conviction; that is why we wrote this Handbook. At the same time, because Urban Development Programmes are integrated, they are more complicated and thus more difficult to manage. In order to make a UDP work, some things have to be done, others to be avoided. That is what this Handbook is basically about: the do’s and don’ts when conceiving and implementing a UDP. It tries to make explicit those issues and dimensions which have to be decided upon and taken into account.

What are the targets of urban policies and programmes, and how and by whom are they defined? How exclusively should urban programmes and policies focus on specific areas? If so focussed, how should these areas – or these policies – be designated? What should be done to avoid displacing problems from one neighbourhood to another?

What time span should UDP’s cover? How closely should they reflect the mandate of local representative institutions? Is there a gap between the short-term perspective of the politicians and the long-term perspective of the administration, the professionals, and the research community? Does this impede the successful completion of the programme? What about after the programme has come to an end?

The number of actors in urban policy-making on urban matters is increasing, and so is the number of levels of policy-making. The national level has been supplemented by the European level at the ‘upper end’ and by the local level at the ‘lower end’. At the same time, public administrations remain ‘departmentalised’, which means that complicated matters, such as urban policies, must be split up into different facets – such as housing, training, employment, and social welfare – and the integration that is needed is very difficult to realise. How should this increased complexity of urban governance be organised?

Does it suffice just to inform target groups/clients, or should they be stimulated to participate directly – and not only through their elected representatives – in the conception and implementation of projects, programmes and policies? And if so, how can this best be accomplished?

Also in the case of UDP’s, the question of money is both trivial and fundamental. How to deal with potential financiers of UDP’s? How to spend available budgets? Should subsidising authorities blindly trust the intentions of local authorities? Or is some form of specification of goals, means, processes, and procedures in contracts (or covenants) in place? If so, how ‘general’ and how ‘differentiated’ should these contracts be? What period should they cover? How closely should they reflect the mandate of local representative institutions?
Does intuition, guts, or political feeling provide a firm enough basis for evaluating urban policies, or are more sophisticated means needed? If so, what are the minimum requirements with respect to databases, qualitative and quantitative indicators, and evaluation procedures?

What can we learn from past experiences? What can be learned from other countries? How should knowledge be stored and disseminated? How can positive results be sustained?

This Handbook tries to answers these basic and practical questions and by doing that aims to improve the quality of Urban Development Programmes in the future.
CHAPTER TWO

AIMS – IMPROVING THE SOCIAL, THE PHYSICAL, AND THE ECONOMIC CONDITION OF AN AREA

UDP’s aim to improve the social, the physical, and the economic condition of the targeted district or neighbourhood. Basically, UDP’s are packages of concrete measures and projects addressing these three central elements. In some cases, as a hidden agenda, UDP’s also attempt to change the way cities are governed. The improvement of the social condition, the built environment, and the local economy of the district involved are interrelated in the sense that positive changes in one element often will lead to changes in the others; that at least is the main presupposition of a UDP. In this chapter, we will focus on these three dimensions of UDP’s and their interrelations; the pros and cons of an integrated approach will have to wait till chapter 6.

The social dimension of UDP’s: more than employment alone

Many contemporary UDPs have as their main social objective to increase the employability of the residents of targeted districts and neighbourhoods. Employment is seen as the major antidote to other problems, such as crime and lack of integration of minority groups. That is why, much more than in the past, the economy plays an important role in most UDP’s today.

Although employment is a crucial condition for inclusion in society in many respects, this is not the only, and in some cases not even the most important, feature of the social condition of people living in deprived neighbourhoods. Employment is only one aspect of a broader notion of social exclusion. Basically, there are three spheres of social exclusion. One is indeed the labour market. Being unemployed often means that one lacks the financial means to buy those goods and services or to take part in those activities and social circles which are deemed necessary for a normal or decent life in the society of which one is a part. But it is possible to be employed and yet be socially excluded, a situation that occurs when people are stuck in dead-end or junk-jobs and do not have prospects to improve their labour market position.

Besides the labour market, two other spheres of exclusion can be identified. One is the sphere of collective arrangements: entitlements to rent subsidies, unemployment benefits or health insurance are but some examples amongst many. Being excluded here means that one either has no rights to public assistance, or that one is not able to effectuate formal entitlements. The third sphere of potential social exclusion consists of communal relationships. Here, one can be excluded from informal social networks of family, neighbours, friends, immigrants with the same ethnic background, voluntary associations and the like.
Important as a job may be in terms of social integration and citizenship, UDP’s are very often biased in overemphasising employment as the only manifestation of social exclusion. In deprived areas, some categories of inhabitants first of all need to be included in social networks and forms of public arrangements. Many residents in deprived neighbourhoods have an age and level of education and training which make it very improbable that they can be re-integrated into the rapidly upgrading labour market that is typical of an urban service-economy. The form of social exclusion that realistically could be cured here is not so much unemployment, but rather social isolation.

Another category whose main problem is not necessarily employment is one-parent (mostly female-headed) households with small children. Labour market opportunities for this group must of course be improved, but policies should equally focus on the building of social networks and social support, including child-care, subsidies for kindergarten, help in education, and developing strategies to cope with poverty such as empowerment. Public assistance in terms of education and subsidies for kindergarten could be of great importance in this case. In terms of social exclusion, the problem to be solved here is not so much unemployment, but first of all the limited geographical mobility of single parents who are in care of small children. Again, creative solutions should be sought as much as possible so that different forms of social exclusion are ameliorated more or less simultaneously. A kindergarten that could increase the geographical and, thus, social mobility of single mothers could employ members of that same category, for example.

In the light of the overpowering importance attributed to employment, the mistake can easily be made to attribute all forms of social pathology to unemployment. One example of this way of reasoning is relating crime to unemployment. One explanation of the occurrence of crime is that it is a substitute for regular employment. Although there is empirical evidence for this mechanism, so that growing employment can really contribute to the decline of crime rates, this is not the whole story. First, even when a lack of jobs is a cause of crime, this does not mean that this relation can be easily reversed. People engaged in criminal activities have become part of a social network and a related lifestyle, both of which are ‘sticky’ in the sense that criminal behaviour continues even when the number of jobs starts to grow rapidly. Second, crime can be understood in part as the continuation of the economy by other means. And where the stakes are high, a lot of money can be made. In terms of the money to be earned, not many ordinary jobs can compete with some activities in drug trafficking and dealing. This means that crime will persist, even when proper jobs become available.

Feeling safe and secure is an important factor when it comes to how people evaluate the quality of life in their neighbourhood and district. An emphasis on safety and reduction of crime and concrete, determined, and visible action against criminal behaviour are of the utmost importance in enhancing feelings of well-being in the population of deprived areas. The reduction of crime and other forms of deviant behaviour is an important asset in making urban renewal more sustainable. New physical infrastructure and more jobs do not make people more satisfied with their district or neighbourhood. The causes of dissatisfaction, such as crime and deviance, also have do be rooted out. Indeed, they can be ‘dissatisfiers’ to such a degree that even relatively few incidents will have devastating consequences as to how people judge the quality of life in their area. More than being employed, feeling safe and sound is the stepping stone to feeling at home, the most basic form of social integration and inclusion.
The UDP of the district of Hoogvliet in Rotterdam was and still is considered by most relevant actors at the local and national levels as very successful. Large parts of the housing stock have been demolished and rebuilt, and a detailed scheme for relocating the residents involved, taking into account their housing preferences, was set up. The local elections in 2001 in Rotterdam were a landslide. The winner was a political party led by the assassinated Pim Fortuyn, who campaigned on the issues of minorities, integration, and safety. The outcome of the elections was seen as basically a protest-vote of people who felt they were not listened to. Despite its successful UDP, in Hoogvliet the relative number of people voting for the party of Fortuyn was about the same as in other Rotterdam districts.

Organised or institutionalised crime has to be dealt with by professionals. To tackle some forms of petty crime, which have a great impact on feelings of wellbeing in an area, the social potential of the area may be used. In some cases, it can be organised in such a way that several problems in the district can be dealt with simultaneously. This happens when unemployed or underemployed residents are mobilised to take part in the surveillance of public space.

In some Dutch cities, Moroccan fathers see to it that Moroccan youngsters are kept from disturbing behaviour in streets and other public spaces: the ‘neighbourhood-fathers’ projects. Apart from preventing annoying behaviour, this initiative can contribute to the creation and reinforcement of local social networks, and thus of local social capital.

The Physical Dimension of UDP’s: the main instrument

The physical dimension of UDP’s is relatively straightforward: the number of dwellings built or renovated, roads constructed or ameliorated, shopping centres developed or rebuilt, parks created or redone. In fact, in many cases the physical dimension is easiest to realise. That is good news: the great bulk of the budget of many UDP’s is spent on the built environment. In terms of evaluation, the goals are also rather straightforward: mostly numbers indicating dwellings, square meters of retail surface, kilometers of roads, to be realised within a certain period of time.

The physical dimension is important because its results are very visible. The district is changing in its appearance, sometimes very rapidly. For the inhabitants, physical measures can be a clear sign that the district is taken care of by local authorities. Spectacular projects can contribute to a sense of local pride and therefore to feelings of social cohesion in the district. But the commitment of residents to physical restructuring has to be organised. First of all, physical measures are, when underway, pretty annoying. Noise, dirt, and heavy traffic are the natural companions of most building activities. Inhabitants not only need to know what is going to be (re)built, but they should also be constantly informed during the building process. Besides the customary and relatively aloof forms of written information, more active forms of involvement, such as guided visits to construction sites, should be pursued. Physical reconstruction and development could be used in a more creative way, as a means of organising meeting points of inhabitants and thereby stimulating a sense of local commitment. This should be done not so much to realise ‘communities’ on a district or neighbourhood level - which from a sociological point of view is nonsense in most cases - but to provide yet another opportunity to organise meetings of the local population with
policymakers and civil servants, and also of inhabitants of different areas or of different social
groups within the district. In this way, physical restructuring can contribute to the increase of
local social capital and feelings of commitment.

The physical dimension of UDP’s is by far the most important in financial terms. But it is
basically only an instrument. That is why the realisation of physical projects is not in itself the
most important result of a UDP. Physical measures are taken in order to improve the quality
of life in the targeted district. But what does that mean? Let us take housing as an
illustration. In this case, there are two options. One is to provide better housing conditions for
the inhabitants of the district. The other one is to use new housing to change the social
composition of the district.

Better housing conditions for the residents are realised by building new dwellings or by
renovating existing ones. In either case, not all inhabitants will want to return to the area in
which they used to live, even if that would be feasible. Rising rents can be a reason to
relocate. But people may also choose not to return because they have other priorities. An
assessment of the position of inhabitants in this matter should be part of any physical
renewal initiative. Are they willing or able to pay for higher housing costs? Moving out of a
district is not always a negative sign - we will come back to this issue later.

If people who feel attached to their neighbourhood are not willing to pay the costs of new
or ameliorated housing, an effort should be made to offer them housing accommodation close
to their former residence. More generally, care should be taken of those inhabitants who are
affected most by physical restructuring of a neighbourhood. This regards not only their
preferences in terms of future housing, but also their wellbeing during the process of physical
restructuring. For instance, when huge constructions, such as high-rise apartment blocks, are
to be demolished, care should be taken that they remain liveable during the process of
vacating and demolishing. Vacant dwellings and apartments often attract activities and
people that increase actual or perceived situations of insecurity. One solution is to make
vacant apartments available for temporary uses, so that apartment blocks to be demolished
do not make an increasingly desolate impression in the process of ‘emptying’ buildings or
streets.

In the district of Hoogvliet in Rotterdam, the architects involved in the conception and
implementation of the UDP, opened up an office in an apartment block to be demolished.
Apart from preventing the building from making a desolate impression, the remaining
residents were close to an important source of information about the UDP.

Another option is to use a UDP to change the social composition of an area. More
expensive dwellings will attract higher income residents who could counterbalance the weak
social structure of deprived districts. The idea is that an inflow of new residents with a higher
status than the average resident will have a positive effect. If this policy succeeds, in the
sense that middle class people are willing to come to live in the district, it is important to
realise that it is highly unlikely that they will socialise with their lower class neighbours. In
this era of high mobility, social networks are not based on spatial propinquity. At best, new
middle class residents will relate to the old residents in a more indirect way. They bring in
more spending power, which can contribute to the sustainability of the local retail trade.
Some forms of ethnic entrepreneurship could receive a significant boost by a middle class
clientele. And the odds are that new middle class residents have a greater ability to see to it
that the quality of their neighbourhood is sustained and enhanced. ‘Old’ residents profit from
that capability of their new neighbours as well, of course. But even in this respect, expectations should not be too high. Retail trade catering for middle class residents generally is different from trade catering for lower classes. The danger exists that the influx of new, middle class residents will push out cheap shops and bring in more upscale retail trade that is too expensive for the original population.

Encouraging higher status groups to move to deprived neighbourhoods by creating expensive housing is not automatically a good medicine for curing those neighbourhoods. If too few members of higher status groups come, only a few islands of wealth will be created in a sea of poverty that will not have any effect on the quality of life in the area. If too many of them come, they will take over the district in more than one respect and in due time may actually push out the original population and the facilities of all kinds on which they depend. This is called 'gentrification', dreaded by some and welcomed by many. It would be better to try to increase the average social status of a district by linking new, more expensive housing opportunities to the dynamics of the neighbourhood itself. For instance, upscale housing could be realised in order to keep socially upward mobile residents aboard.

As to the physical part of UDP’s, two additional remarks should be made. First, the urge to renew or rebuilt everything that is old and dilapidated is a natural one for policymakers who want to increase the liveability of cities. However, one should not forget that cities need marginal places that can function as spaces where all kinds of experimentation, in the arts, in economic enterprise, and in the development of social relationships, are possible. Marginal spaces also have the capacity to house newcomers and marginal people who are not yet able to take part in all the formal institutions of mainstream society. Especially in countries in which welfare state provision has reached a high level, a keen eye for the positive aspects of marginality is of importance.

Second, urban renewal is important to the city at large, maybe even to a metropolitan region. Therefore, higher interests (of the city) could overrule the more specific ones (of a neighbourhood). For example, a deprived district or neighbourhood may, because of its specific geographical position and cultural tradition and features, possess an enormous potential, in terms of attracting visitors and tourists over long distances and also more wealthy inhabitants. The gentrifying potential of such neighbourhoods - usually situated in or near historic inner cities - could in the long run lead to increasing real estate values which could eventually push out the original population. But on the level of the city as a whole, employment created by the tourist and cultural industries, as well as the coming of financially stronger inhabitants and perhaps even private investors, could be considered to be of such great importance that improving the living conditions of the original inhabitants of the district should at least partially be realised outside the district of their original residence.

The Economic Dimension of UDP’s: trying to fit the local into the global

As we stated earlier, the most important social aim of many recent UDP’s is to decrease local unemployment. Therefore, the economic element has become more central in urban development plans for distressed areas. On the one hand, all kinds of projects are set up in order to pave the way for unemployed people into the labour market: job centres are established, all kind of training programmes are set up. On the other hand, efforts are made to attract new economic activities to distressed areas, especially to the ones that have lost
much employment. That goes for many traditional working class areas that have fallen victim to processes of de-industrialisation.

Looking at experiences in several European cities, we can conclude that it is very hard to realise a good match between supply and demand in the labour market at the district level. Where new employment has been created in distressed areas, most of the time this has taken one of two forms. Either old large-scale industrial sites have been transformed into new and modern business parks where start-up industries or service activities have settled or to which already existing industries have been relocated, or new employment has settled in a more scattered way in neighbourhoods. This last pattern can be found in neighbourhoods that have been subject to gentrification. In either case, the advent of new employment has not been completely beneficial to the local unemployed.

Immediately after the war, the district of Cornigliano in Genoa industrialised rapidly; the steel industry and port-related activities dominated. During the early eighties and early nineties, the district lost 30% of its industrial employment. Apart from unemployment, the district suffered from different forms of severe pollution, which was the reason why successful children of working class families fled the neighbourhood in the 1990s. At present, new economic activities have been attracted because of the restructuring of the industrial area, and many of the employees in the district are daily commuters from other districts. So, if we consider the number of jobs in the area, urban development plans have certainly been successful, but few of the local unemployed got a job in the newly arrived companies.

This is a more general trend. Many people who profit from increasing employment in the service economy are newcomers in the labour market. Especially the lower segments of the service industries, such as leisure and tourist activities, do not provide jobs for the middle-aged male long-term unemployed, but do for women and especially young people. This is not a problem in itself. On the contrary, new entries in the labour market sometimes may provide newcomers with promising stepping-stones for an upwardly mobile labour market career. At the same time, many new jobs in targeted districts are not suited for re-integrating the long-time unemployed.

In both the case of restructured industrial sites and of scattered new employment in the service industry, a mismatch often exists between available jobs and local unemployed. Sometimes this is not very clear from the social indicators used in UDP’s, and often only the newly created jobs are counted. It is important to monitor exactly who the people are who have been employed.

Apart from this mismatch, there is the problem that a large and increasing part of the economy has a global or international character. It is becoming increasingly difficult to steer and to control the economy at the level of national states. It is, of course, even more difficult to do so at the level of cities and city districts. What can be done on a district level, though, is to accommodate the trends that already are visible and active: fitting the local into the global. So, centrally located districts in historical cities can accommodate tourism that has been booming anyway during the last decades. Even areas with a questionable reputation can profit from international tourism if they are centrally located in attractive cities.

A good example is the Quartieri Spagnoli in Naples. The most densely built neighbourhood in Naples, it is known for its poverty, crime, and informal activities. It is close to the city...
centre, and it borders on the trendy shopping street Via Toledo. It is still densely populated, but much less than it once was because many people had to leave the district after the earthquake in 1980. There are now signs of gentrification, one of them, a newly established four star hotel in the middle of the district. It is not difficult to predict that this district will eventually develop in a kind of historical, museum-like neighbourhood, where tourists can see how it was in the old days. By that time, of course, poor people will live elsewhere and will be pushed out of the district.

Usually, housing markets and labour markets are linked at a regional level. Therefore, unemployment should in general be cured at this level. In other words, from the point of view of unemployment in specific districts, solutions do not necessarily have to be found within the area. However, possibilities do exist to create local employment from which local unemployed may profit. Recruitment of candidates for new jobs should start by scrutinising the pool of local unemployed, especially where employment is created to solve specific social problems in a district. Also within districts employment at local government agencies should be used as much as possible to alleviate the problem of local unemployment, not only to offer individual residents a job, but also to make clear that local authorities are actively dealing with local problems.

Initiatives to attract private investment and employment should be co-ordinated by the city and the districts. A distinction should be drawn between the coming of really new private investment – start-ups and companies coming from outside the city – and the relocation within the city of existing employment. In the latter case, a problem solved in one district might create a problem in another. Competition between districts should remain within certain limits.

Employers already present in districts should be targeted – at least if it is believed worthwhile to keep them in the district – by informing them of what is going on in the area and what plans are being developed and, most importantly, by asking them what their concrete wishes are in terms of the location most suitable for deploying their business. By giving local private employers a substantial role in developing UDP’s, their commitment to the district might be strengthened. Expectations should not be too high in this respect, though. In most cases the logic of the market is so compelling that the degrees of freedom are few in terms of settlement or concentrating on very small areas as pools from which to recruit employment. Again, committing a corporation to a city is in many cases of much more importance than committing a corporation to a neighbourhood or district. The most important local economic policy in this respect is trying both to equip as many residents of the district as possible with the necessary skills to function in an urban service economy – no matter where employment is located within the city at large – and to help them to apply successfully for vacancies in the labour market of the urban region at large. Should transport to and from the place of work be a problem in terms of money and/or geographical mobility, a more feasible solution than attracting new private investment for a district might be at hand: if work cannot be brought to potential workers, workers could be brought to workplaces.
Summary

Although employment is crucial, it is not the only, and in some cases not even the most important, condition for social inclusion. Being embedded in formal and informal social networks and being entitled to welfare provision are other important aspects of social cohesion.

New physical infrastructure and more jobs do not make people more satisfied with their district or neighbourhood. Crime and deviance can be ‘dissatisfiers’ to such a degree that even relatively few incidents will have devastating consequences as to how people judge the quality of life in their district. Therefore, the reduction of deviance and crime is an important asset in making urban renewal more sustainable.

Although the physical dimension of UDPs is by far the most important in financial terms, it is but an instrument. That is why the realisation of physical projects within the planned timeframe is not in itself the most important result of a UDP.

Encouraging the influx of higher status groups to deprived neighbourhoods by creating expensive housing is not a good medicine for curing those neighbourhoods per se. If too few higher status individuals come, only a few islands of wealth will be created in a sea of poverty, which will not have any effect on the quality of life of the area. If too many of them come, they will take over the district in more than one respect and in due time may actually push out the original population and the facilities of all kinds on which they depend.

One should be aware that cities need marginal places that function as social laboratories for the arts, economic entrepreneurship, and social relationships. Marginal spaces have the capacity to house and to integrate newcomers and marginal people who are not yet able to take part in all the formal institutions of mainstream society.

Usually, housing markets and labour markets are linked at a regional level. Therefore, unemployment should in general be cured at that level. In other words, solutions for unemployment in specific districts do not necessarily have to be found within the same area.

A distinction should be made between the coming of really new private investment start-ups and companies coming from outside the city - and the relocation within the city of existing employment. In the latter case, a problem solved in one district might mean a problem created in another. Competition between districts should remain within certain limits.

The most important economic policy at the district level is trying both to equip as many residents of the district as possible with the necessary skills to function in an urban service economy - no matter where employment is located within the city at large - and to help them to apply successfully for vacancies in the labour market, no matter where they are located in the urban region at large.
CHAPTER THREE
AREAS – PEOPLE, PLACE, AND POLICY

UDP’s are area-based: they focus on neighbourhoods or districts that are characterised as deprived. An alternative way of tackling urban problems would be a policy aimed at certain population groups, wherever they live, such as ‘newcomers’, the unemployed, children, or the elderly. Even the fact that these groups are concentrated in specific urban areas would not make the programmes area-based. The spatial dimension then is just an unintended feature. Thus, it is important that programmes specify why they adopt an area-based approach. There are three reasons for choosing such an approach:

• The existence of a ‘neighbourhood-effect’;
• A preference for an integrated approach to solve problems;
• Cost-effectiveness compared to other approaches.

An area-based approach, however, also has its pitfalls. First, problems do not occur exclusively in the targeted areas. Selecting only areas with the most severe problems might imply that areas that are only slightly better off do not receive any attention at all. Second, area-based policies may move problems from one area to another. Third, by focusing only on a few neighbourhoods or districts, the potential of other parts of the city or the metropolitan area may be ignored. Finally, area-based policies are generally more visible than categorical policies. This can be both an advantage and a disadvantage. In this chapter, we will discuss both the advantages and the pitfalls of an area-based approach.

The Neighbourhood Effect

One reason for choosing an area-based approach is the assumption that the spatial concentration of social problems makes them either worse, or more resistant, or both. This effect is called ‘the neighbourhood effect’. The general idea is that when social problems are concentrated in a certain area, they become a sort of natural phenomenon - a kind of local culture - and they then tend to reinforce each other. Unemployment, poverty, teenage pregnancy, crime, drug abuse, a lack of investment in the built environment, short life expectancy and bad health conditions then would become so intertwined that it is difficult to identify causes and effects.

So, in the case of very high spatial concentrations of social problems, an area-based approach seems appropriate. Where unemployment is the rule and not the exception, where crime is an accepted way of living, where streets are so unsafe that people from other neighbourhoods avoid the area because they are afraid of being mugged or robbed, then an area-based approach is the best way to intervene. But even then, two important risks should be taken into account.
The first risk is that of reifying a neighbourhood or district. An area-based approach often isolates the targeted areas from their wider urban context. It tends to treat them as cities in their own right, which should keep all the present inhabitants aboard and be complete in terms of public and private facilities. Problems then could be artificially constructed.

An extreme example of imbalance between districts and city can be found in Budapest, Hungary. Districts possess a high degree of autonomy and function more or less as cities within a city. This leads to the anomaly that the central district of Pest is so rich that rents of relatively high quality housing are lower than in adjacent districts where large parts of the housing stock are in decay. Most of the gypsy families from the Ferencvaros district have been 'accepted' by more peripheral districts, following the demolition or renovation of their public housing, in exchange for financial compensation. Further social and geographical polarisation will certainly result from this extreme degree of decentralisation.

A high mobility rate – in terms of migration – is then seen as something negative, as an indicator of dissatisfaction or malfunctioning. But is that really so? It is not necessarily problematic when the population turnover in a neighbourhood is high. If people are successful in improving their life chances and status – maybe even because of opportunities created by a UDP – and move out, that is a positive development. We should not forget that deprived neighbourhoods or districts are the problem, and not deprived people; they are the victims. One should be aware of the dynamics of a neighbourhood or district and not focus only on statistical averages.

The second risk of an area-based approach is the perverse effect of (further) stigmatising the area. At least in the short run, being selected as an area to be targeted by a UDP may make things worse in terms of the bad image a district has. Especially when there is a form of competition between districts or neighbourhoods to be targeted, the danger looms that districts themselves exaggerate the problems they are faced with. In that competition and afterwards, the special attention drawn to that area may enhance the negative image it already has. This may scare off potential investors and employers. Therefore, not only the problems of these areas should be highlighted, but also their opportunities and assets. They should be advertised as early as possible in the policy cycle.

In the Danish case of “Avedøre Stationsby,” the area that was selected for promotion by the municipality already fulfilled the application criteria. Yet, this was not enough. In order to obtain money, the local government had to present, prove and even aggravate the problem.

An Integrated Approach

A second reason to adopt an area-based policy is that it offers the possibility of an integrated approach. Choosing a neighbourhood or district provides a concrete platform to co-ordinate interventions in different, but supposedly interrelated, social problems. Moreover, the spatial approach is popular among politicians because it allows them to produce visible results within a relatively short period of time. Finally, an area-based approach can produce considerable synergy, as it implies direct involvement of and co-operation with the local community, as well as with public authorities, private corporations and other organisations.

But there are three potential flaws when it comes to the integrated character of area-based UDP’s.
The first is the displacement of social problems from one part of the city to another. Whilst
the situation in the targeted area improves, problems may migrate to other neighbourhoods. Being
tough on crime or prostitution in one district may only move these activities to other
places. The same process of displacement may occur when more upscale housing is made
available and cheap housing demolished. Low-income households then are pushed out of the
area into other neighbourhoods where lodging is cheaper. This may turn these other
neighbourhoods into new centres of deprivation. At the level of the city and for the city
administration, in a way nothing has changed. One should always carefully monitor the
effects of a UDP both inside and outside the targeted area.

The second flaw is that an integrated approach has the tendency to clean up everything
that seems marginal and deviant and to create a tidy, clean, neatly arranged area. Here, one
runs the risk of dismantling transitional and marginal zones that have a vital function, maybe
not so much for the district, but for the city at large. These are the localities where, for
instance, newcomers arrive and live until they have found a more adequate dwelling, or
where artists have their ateliers, or where starting entrepreneurs find cheap business
locations. More generally, transitional zones can function as a breeding place for innovation
and are of great importance for the creative capacity of a city. This does not simply mean
that such a locality has to remain marginal or transitional forever. It only implies that a city
at large needs some of those areas, because marginality has positive as well as negative
functions.

The third flaw of an integrated approach is its tendency to replicate the city in each of its
districts, especially in terms of social composition. The main instrument used here is the
housing stock of an area. New, more upscale dwellings are built to attract higher income
groups. In many instances, such a policy to create a better ‘social mix’ makes sense.
However, a greater diversity of residents can be achieved at different levels. Two things
should be kept in mind. One is that the hallmark of city life, a great diversity of people and
activities, may also be realised at the city level. What makes world cities like New York, Paris,
or London so attractive is the existence of a kaleidoscope of ethnic villages. The second is
that social heterogeneity should not be a target at the lowest spatial levels. Within apartment
blocks, streets and even small neighbourhoods, social heterogeneity is not only hard to
realise; it often creates more problems than it solves and will be self-destructive in the end.
Do not try to create ‘communities’ through physical constructions.

**Funding**

Sometimes it is cheaper to target just one specific area in an integrated way than to
target problems or categories of people citywide. Cities have limited budgets, so the money
available has to be used as efficiently as possible. Rather than trying to target certain
problem groups with a general policy for which not enough funds are available, it can be
more sensible to target certain parts of the city with an integrated approach.

Moreover, by focussing on one area the city sets a visible example of what might be done
about deprived areas in general. By doing so, not only the inhabitants of the selected area,
but also those of comparable districts or neighbourhoods, may get the impression that
something is done about problems they are confronted with. It is, however, important to
realise that the higher visibility of the results of an area-based strategy will lead other
districts to ask for the same remedy. If the necessary funds are not available, then the
argument that an area-based approach is relatively cheap may be outbalanced by the
dissatisfaction generated in other districts that are not yet targeted. Also, when it comes to money and efficiency, it might be strategic to target an area that is in the first stage of a downhill development and therefore could be more easily remedied with the budget available. Again, a balance has to be found between needs and means.

Given that neighbourhoods can and should provide the context for specific programmes and policies, two questions are relevant:

- How should an area be selected?
- How should an area be delineated?

**How to select an area**

To find out whether an area can be defined as ‘deprived’ or ‘poor’, one could follow several tracks. These range from subjective evaluations by politicians to the use of databases and statistical techniques. The widest accepted method is to compare different data on areas with average scores on the city-wide level.

**To select the candidates for the Flemish Impulse Fund, the following criteria were used:**

- Number of migrants
- Number of subsistence income beneficiaries
- Number of single parents
- Number of widows, orphans, disabled, pensioners
- Number of youngsters in Special Youth Care
- Number of fully unemployed under 25 entitled to unemployment benefits
- Number of long-term unemployed (over 1 year)
- Number of births in poor families (set of indicators ‘Child and Family’ containing income, education, work, housing, health, and child development)
- Number of dwellings without basic amenities
- Number of social rent apartments

Not all criteria are objective in the strictest sense. More ‘pragmatic’ criteria might be introduced for acceptable reasons, such as rendering the programme more acceptable to the general public or to crucial partners. A common example is the need for an equitable geographical spread of the target areas so that both older inner city areas and younger peripheral areas are selected. Some areas may be selected because of the presence of strong and energetic leadership and creative public officers, important factors when it comes to the potential success of a UDP.

In particular cases, the need to combat the presence and growth of extremist political movements and parties has been a basis for defining the criteria of selection.

*In Flemish Region (Belgium), the fear of more electoral successes of the xenophobic political party “Vlaams Blok” has contributed to the selection of certain neighbourhoods, at least indirectly through the choice of indicators.*

*The mayor of a Danish municipality decided, in agreement with the municipal council, to deny new immigrants and refugees access to one of the neighbourhoods, although this was illegal.*
However, it became a hot issue in the media and the starting signal for a heated debate concerning the concentration of immigrants and refugees, not only in that specific neighbourhood, but also in many other suburbs throughout the country. Shortly afterwards, the former government established the Urban Committee.

The important conclusion here is that particular (private) motives of self-interest (electoral promotion of a politician) should never become accepted as one of these pragmatic criteria.

**How to delineate an area**

After having specified which districts or neighbourhoods will be targeted, it is necessary to decide upon the exact delimitation of the area. Areas are often statistical units because statistical data play an important role in their selection. Usually, these statistical units are also (part of) administrative and political units. However, areas thus defined do not always correspond with what could be called ‘natural areas’: areas that are meaningful from a social point of view and that exist in the heads of the inhabitants. ‘Formal areas’ lack the potential to mobilise and obtain the commitment of the people living in them. If the UDP has to fall back on them - and usually there is no alternative - they should be as close as possible to ‘natural areas’, even if this means that parts thereof are outside the formal UDP area.

In Sweden – with the exception of the neighbourhood Hjällbo, where actors seemed to be pleased with the delineation – many actors expressed the view that delineation has to be far more flexible. The municipal district of which the targeted neighbourhood is part should be free to use money in the way it finds best for local development. This might mean that the area boundaries can be more flexible, that investment does not have to be restricted solely to the targeted area, but can also be used to support projects that are not located in the neighbourhood, but might have a positive effect on its development. Thus, local actors would like to have more freedom in deciding where to locate interventions.

In defining areas for an UDP, or sub-areas within the UDP area, account should be taken of a number of considerations which will not be met simultaneously. According to the specific situation of a neighbourhood, the weight attached to each of them will differ:

- The availability of statistical information on the area. One needs basic statistical data on the area to evaluate the effects of a UDP.

- The presence of natural boundaries of an area, such as train tracks, fallow areas, highly structured housing quarters.

- The perspective of the inhabitants and citizens: do certain neighbourhoods have a specific identity, whether positive, negative, or neutral?

- The size of the area. Choosing a small area on which all measures focus should be avoided. Rather, a targeted neighbourhood might consist of a core area, with the highest concentration of problems, and a periphery which should also be included in promotional activities, but to a lesser extent than the core. This may also help to avoid conflicts between adjacent, similarly deprived neighbourhoods, if one area is promoted and another is not.
**Summary**

**Why opt for an area-based policy?**

**Because:**
- of the impact of the spatial dimension on the living conditions of people;
- a severe spatial concentration of problems makes some areas worse off and more resistant to change;
- it offers the possibility of an integrated approach to solving social problems;
- of its demonstration effect: area-based policies can produce fast and visible results, which may give the inhabitants the feeling that “something is happening”;
- it is relatively cheap.

**How to select an area**
- use a checklist of processes as indicators for the “spiral of decline”;
- compare socio-economic indicators in the area with averages in the city as a whole and/or with other cities

**How to delineate an area**
- check for the statistical accessibility of the potential area;
- use ‘natural’ boundaries;
- take into account the identity of areas and the cognitive map of residents, both within and outside the area;
- use the area as the main target, but try to include its periphery in selected measures.

**CAUTION:**

Do not lose track of the situation of the city as a whole. An area-based approach may have unintended effects on other neighbourhoods.
CHAPTER FOUR

TIME – CO-ORDINATING DIFFERENT CALENDARS

The problem of time

Time, of course, is an essential dimension. Any policy plan is basically a set of targets to be reached within a certain span of time. The fact that the temporal dimension is one of the basics of a UDP does not mean that it can be taken for granted or that it is unproblematic. The problem with the temporal dimension of UDP’s is threefold.

First, the time that is needed to realise physical targets is much easier to predict and to control than the time span of social or economic processes, which have their own dynamics. This is a problem because UDP’s aim at an integrated approach, which means that the physical, economic, and social dimensions are co-ordinated.

Second, the main actors in a UDP often have different time perspectives, which may lead to frictions in the implementation and evaluation of the programme.

Third, there is the problem of sustainability. Even if targets are reached at dates set, and therefore a UDP can be considered successful, the question is whether the effects will last beyond the lifespan of the UDP.

Different targets, different temporalities

Usually it is not very difficult to estimate at what time physical measures will be realized. The physical aspect of urban renewal programmes is rather visible and in that sense ‘immediate’, because it results in buildings, playgrounds, or improvement of public spaces, such as streets and squares. The effects of social interventions are much harder to assess and in many cases will materialise only years after the implementation of social policies. Combating forms of social exclusion may even be a matter of generations as in the case of the integration of ethnic minority groups. The problem with solving social problems is that in many cases not only new opportunities have to be created for deprived and excluded people, but also that changes in lifestyle and culture have to be brought about, not only in the case of deprived and socially excluded people, but sometimes also in the case of potential employers, landlords, teachers, social workers, politicians or just the other residents of the neighbourhood or district involved. Discrimination and stigmatisation are difficult obstacles to overcome.

That it takes so long to solve most social problems may mean that the sense of urgency needed to mobilise and activate relevant actors gets lost. In order to keep up their commitment, fast and visible successes are needed. One should try to avoid both the setting of unrealistic targets — those that cannot be realised within the available time span - and of vague targets - those that cannot be evaluated. In this case, the solution might be to
formulate a hierarchy of targets in terms of temporality. When, for instance, ultimately the aim is to decrease differences in labour market participation among different ethnic groups, intermediate, short-term targets could be defined, starting with increasing numbers of people from minority groups taking part in employability and job-training programmes, decreasing school dropout rates of vulnerable groups of youngsters, and creating job opportunities within the public and private sphere. Important here is to avoid ‘goal displacement’: exchanging the ‘real’ but difficult goal for a more formal and easier one. In the example of decreasing differences among unemployment rates: when the targeted number of people enrolled in, say, an employability programme is reached, that does not necessarily mean that unemployment will decrease in the future.

It is of the utmost importance to find an optimal balance between feasible and relevant targets and a realistic time perspective, in such a way that the targets mobilise and motivate people to commit to the programme.

**Different actors, different time perspectives**

Not only targets, but also different actors, have different temporalities, which can create frictions in the process of implementation and evaluation of UDP’s. The calendar of a UDP and the calendars of local actors public and private cannot always be easily synchronised. Often the main problem is the tension between the short-term perspective of politicians and the longer-term perspective of the administrators and professionals. This may result in a high degree of uncertainty for urban programmes with a timeframe beyond that of the political cycle of elections.

Especially when a UDP includes huge renewal schemes, a sustained political commitment of local and/or national politicians is needed for their successful completion. It is important that those in charge of the UDP use already completed and successful – physical and social - initiatives as a means of attracting popular, and thus political, attention. We should realise that UDP’s need the effective support of politicians at different levels, but politicians also need successful UDP’s in order to increase electoral support. From this perspective, it may even be possible to have politicians compete in terms of support for a specific UDP. As the saying goes, success has many fathers.

In the district of Hoogvliet in Rotterdam, the most substantial part of the UDP was demolishing and rebuilding a significant part of the housing stock. Financing was needed for a period beyond the formal duration of the UDP. This created a high degree of uncertainty as to the continuity of the policy envisaged by the district. Hoogvliet is considered locally and nationally to be a successful district in dealing with urban renewal. The district government and public officers working at the district level very skilfully used this success to put pressure on politicians at the urban and national level in order to secure the future of urban renewal in the district.

However, too much commitment from politicians can also burden the continuity of UDPs, particularly if they meddle with its content, and only mere technicalities are left to professionals and administrators. The electoral cycle then overrules all other temporalities. The danger in this kind of institutional context as it pertains to the continuity of UDP’s is that the financial means involved are perceived as windfall profits, ‘gifts from heaven’, which come and go with changes in political power. Especially in this case, a UDP should be rooted in and
supported by the local community. Only strong grassroots movements can commit politicians of different parties and ideologies to a programme and thus create continuity in the implementation of measures beyond the time span of the election cycle.

The experiences in Spanish cities show that the influence of politics can be very important in design, decision-making, and implementation. Experts are basically constrained to the technical dimensions of the UDP, while substantial decisions are always in the hands of politicians or politically appointed officers. Elections produce substitutions among politically appointed policy makers, which have an impact on the implementation of UDP’s. This also explains the lack of an evaluation tradition in Spanish policy making, since the results of a policy would have to be evaluated by decision makers of another party.

‘Contracting’ is an important aspect of modern UDP’s. A UDP as a contract or a set of contracts can increase its accountability and generate a high degree of commitment by the relevant actors involved. But accountability should be directed at the achievement of physical, social, and economic targets, and not solely at spending the available money before the deadline. In the latter case, a process of just spending money lest it be lost could be set in motion.

Both in Naples and Genoa, local government was not always able to develop integrated development programmes in time for the European ‘Urban’ Programme. As a result, sometimes the money had to be spent almost randomly in order to meet the expiration date and the rigid criteria for accountancy imposed by the EU.

**What is the optimal time span for a UDP?**

This, of course, is a tricky question. The answer to this question depends on many variables, such as the specific character of a UDP, the political context, and the nature of the area. But it seems that a span of less than three years is too short. As was stated before, some of the targets, especially those in the realm of combating social exclusion, can only be reached over a longer period of time. Of course, intermediate targets can and should be set, as was suggested before. But it seems that when UDP’s fall below a certain threshold in terms of length of time, too much energy has to be spent on formulating new programmes and new UDP’s during the implementation of the previous one.

The German case is exemplary. Whereas the first Urban Development Programmes were at least supposed to be running for three years, now the tendency is toward even shorter projects. Most contracts of social workers have to be renewed every year. New projects may be planned for a period of a few years, but whether the budget for their implementation will remain is re-decided on a yearly basis. This makes working in these projects very difficult. It is never certain whether the project and its collaborators will ‘survive’ the year. A lot of time that might better be spent on actual project work goes toward administrative purposes, as for example trying to secure funding for the next project period. Also, interviewees complained that it is impossible to achieve a sustainable effect with measures that end just when the target group has been successfully contacted. In Germany, most Länder (states) finance Social City programmes for a few years at a time, but there is an increasing number of contracts for project collaborators, which only last for one year at a time. For example, if a
A youth centre wants to employ a new member for a certain project, this can only be done for one year. It is not possible to plan longer than that, which makes continuous work quite difficult. Of course, it can happen that the person is employed for another year after the end of the first contract, but it is impossible to know this in advance. As a result the situation for implementers can be very insecure, and it might be hard to keep up motivation.

Is there an upper limit when it comes to the duration of a UDP? Earlier on, we indicated that too long a period of time leads to decreasing levels of commitment, sense of urgency and accountability on the part of different actors involved. On top of that, the charm and effectiveness of an integral approach might be lost as a consequence of a high degree of institutionalisation of the network of actors, specifically of the civil servants, involved in the formulation and implementation of a UDP. And another problem of UDP’s that are extended over a too long a period of time is that the danger, already addressed previously in chapter 3, that a district is perceived as a meaningful unit in itself, and not as a specific part of a greater urban fabric, is aggravated. Finally, new problems may arise or get worse in other districts which, from the point of view of the city as a whole, ask for a redirection and re-allocation of funds and efforts. Optimally UDP’s should last between four and seven years.

The sustainability of UDP’s: is there life after death?

Is a UDP sentenced to death after it has come to an end, or are provisions made to extend its life, either through a follow-up or by integrating it into an existing framework? In other words: what about the sustainability of UDP’s?

One way of looking at sustainability is that a UDP not only tries to realise specific physical, social, and economic targets, but also, by doing that, shapes new ways and styles of cooperation among relevant actors, such as the central and local state, inhabitants, employers, real estate developers, and housing associations. These newly built networks may last beyond the official period of a UDP. In addition, systems of monitoring created in the process of implementing and evaluating the UDP should be made permanent so that it becomes possible to see how the district is doing after the formal end of the UDP.

Both the demand for co-financing by European and national authorities funding UDP’s and the UDP’s integral character activate municipalities to develop new abilities and tools that can be used after the UDP officially has come to an end. Thus, municipalities could be more prone to pay political attention and to commit themselves to reaching the goals formulated in the UDP’s development plans, even after the programme has subsided. A short time span for a programme can be a risk for the continuity and effectiveness of the programme itself, but can also be a strong impetus for finding new forms of funding.

In the case of Genoa in Italy, some of the activities which started with the Urban Programme are now continued with new kinds of organisation and support. The end of the programme compelled local players to reorganise and finance the most successful activities, in order to be able to continue them. This is the case of the Job Centre in Genoa that remained open thanks to a partnership promoted by the Municipality and other local institutions.
Also in Naples there is a general need to insure continuity of the intervention initiated by the Urban Programme. The final aim is not to work on individual projects but on a more encompassing plan in order not to lose all the positive results of the Urban Programme.

One final and important point should be made. One positive, and sometimes even decisive, factor in terms of the effectiveness of a UDP is the presence of charismatic personalities in a district who take a leading role one way or another. They can be civil servants, local politicians, chairs of voluntary associations, social workers or just active inhabitants.

In Hoogvliet, Rotterdam, a dedicated and charismatic resident started a boxing-gym in his leisure time. This gym not only became very successful in terms of the quality of its boxers – it produced a world champion – but in due time it developed into an institution in which problematic youngsters who had failed everywhere else and possibly had built up a criminal record were successfully re-socialised. This gym is now subsidised and part of the UDP for Hoogvliet.

The presence of those people is a great asset for the area in which they live or work. Charisma cannot be created or planned but it can be recognised, used, and institutionalised. Sustainability can be increased by the institutionalisation of charisma, by facilitating and supporting local talent and involvement. Charismatic personalities should not have to adapt too much to bureaucratic requirements, which would turn them into local public officers. It should be the other way around: they should be ambassadors of their district, both to provide a district with an identity and as a source of inspiration for local people and for similar initiatives elsewhere.
Summary

Usually, it is not difficult to estimate the time it will take to realise physical measures. The effects of social interventions are much harder to assess and in many cases will materialise only years after the implementation of such policies.

In order to keep up the commitment of relevant actors, fast and visible successes are needed. One should avoid both the formulation of targets that are unrealistic in terms of available time and of such vague targets that evaluation is hardly possible. Targets articulated should be feasible, relevant, and mobilising commitment. They could be prioritised in terms of a time scheme.

The calendars of a UDP and of local actors – public and private – cannot always be easily synchronised. In many cases the main problem is the tension between the short-term perspective of politicians and the longer-term perspective of the administrators and professionals.

UDP’s need the effective support of politicians at different levels, but politicians also need successful UDP’s for their electoral support. From this perspective, it may even be possible to have politicians compete in terms of support for a specific UDP.

‘Contracting’ is an important aspect of modern UDP’s. A contract will increase the UDP’s accountability and generate a high degree of commitment from the actors. But accountability should be directed at the achievement of physical, social, and economic targets, and not solely at spending the available money before a deadline lest the funding be lost.

UDP’s should last between four and seven years.

One way of looking at sustainability is that a UDP not only tries to meet specific physical, social, and economic targets, but also, by doing that, shapes new ways and styles of co-operation among relevant actors, such as the central and local state, inhabitants, employers, real estate developers, and housing associations.

Demand for co-financing and the UDP’s integrated character may provide municipalities with tools and experiences they can build upon after the end of a UDP. Thus, municipalities might be more prone to pay political attention and to commit themselves to reach the goals formulated in the development plans, even after the programme has subsided.

One positive, and sometimes even decisive, factor in terms of the effectiveness of a UDP is the presence of local charismatic personalities in a district who take a leading role one way or another. Charisma cannot be created or planned, but it can be recognised, used, and institutionalised.
CHAPTER FIVE
PARTNERSHIPS – BETWEEN ACTORS AND LEVELS

This chapter is the first in a series of three addressing the notion of ‘urban governance’, a key concept in contemporary discussions of urban policies. It refers to networks of both public and private actors involved in governing the city. What does urban governance mean? How is it to be used?

The problem: a new role for public authorities

Urban governance has become important because of the waning of the welfare state. The 1980s, at both the national and the local levels, witnessed the retreat of the state, thus creating more room for private initiatives. To realise policy aims, public-private partnerships became fashionable. Thus, ‘government’ changed into ‘governance’. Recently, however, national states have been confronted with the drawbacks of too much privatisation, especially in the form of a decreasing quality of formerly public services and increasing social inequality and political tension.

It has become clear that the public sector must take up a more prominent role again, albeit in a different way than in an earlier era. The answer seems to be ‘leadership in partnership’. A partnership does not necessarily mean that the partners are equal, and, in fact, in most well functioning partnerships some form of leadership is present. The public sector has to take the lead again, but in a more limited sense than in the past, involving other important actors in the preparation of new policies, in decision-making and in the implementation of policy. In addition, and of equal importance, partnership as a governing principle should also prevail within the public sector itself: different levels of public administration and different departments at the same level should consider each other as partners and co-operate. The term ‘partnership’ refers to a relationship in which the actors have common interests and share the rights and responsibilities of decision-making.

The concept of urban governance is important in relation to UDP’s because they, by their ‘integral’ approach to problems, presuppose a form of urban governance. The urban governance character of UDP’s stems from the facts that they:

- are based on partnership of actors at different levels (this chapter);
- tackle different domains simultaneously and coherently (chapter 6);
- promote participation of stakeholders: the local population and other actors (chapter 7).

These three characteristics are treated in this and the next two chapters – 6 and 7. In this chapter, we focus on partnerships among actors and among levels. Creating partnerships within the public sector itself implies co-operation between different levels (the vertical dimension), and co-operation among departments or sectors on the same level (the
horizontal dimension). In addition, there is the problem of bringing public and private partners together.

**Co-operation between administrative levels**

The vertical dimension of partnerships refers to the division of responsibilities and decision-making power among the national, regional, local, district, and neighbourhood levels. The extent of (de-)centralisation varies among countries, and so does the extent of involvement of actors at different levels. Where the institutional framework is very complex, as for instance in countries such as Belgium and France, legislation and conditions for funding can differ among policy levels. In those cases, procedures that are already very complex and bureaucratic become even more tedious, not only because of the multiplicity of administrative levels, but also because the transfer of responsibilities to the city leads to an overload of work at that level. Another complicating factor is that the number of levels in the decision-making process is increasing because of the growing importance of the European level at the 'upper end' and of the local level at the 'lower end'.

Generally, the more 'permeable' the vertical structure is, that is to say, the more 'voice' each level has, the more likely a fruitful co-operation among the levels is and the greater the chance for a successful UDP with lasting effects.

In Denmark, co-operation among the national, local and neighbourhood levels developed as an outcome of the Kvarterløft UDP, an initiative of the Urban Committee. (The Urban Committee includes representatives from six different ministries.) Inter-level relationships were fostered during the execution of the specific projects, as contacts between the central (ministerial) – and the de-centralised (local and neighbourhood) levels were very close. Each year the agreement between the Ministry and the local government was renegotiated, meaning a complex evaluation of the previous year’s performance and the setting of the objectives for the next year. In addition, bimonthly meetings – later only every four months – were organised by the representatives of the Ministry for all participating projects to exchange experiences.

Although in the process of evaluation much criticism was directed towards the central government, the general feeling of the participating municipalities was that the more-than-usual room for local variations and innovation and the less-than-usual central involvement had a positive effect on the specific projects. The day-to-day practice of running such an integrative UDP resulted in a slow transformation of local government practices. Especially when the political willingness was present, inter-departmental co-operation was eased and welcomed.

In a good inter-level partnership, the upper level determines the basic framework and and has sufficient trust in the lower level to give it the freedom and opportunity to develop a UDP, provided some coaching is given. Frequent feedback can constitute the basis for flexibility, i.e., for time-to-time changes in the planning framework. If such a partnership between the upper and the lower level is supported by guaranteed funding for a longer period of time and
by the necessary requirements for an integrated approach, a good combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches is more likely.

A lack of trust between the different policy levels may lead to extreme formalisation and over-bureaucratisation. Lack of guidance and control from the higher level may lead to a situation where the lower level violates basic principles of a UDP. But in either case it still is possible to find a modus operandi that permits the formulation and implementation of a UDP to proceed. When a lack of trust results from existing conflicts between political levels, then there is the risk that an integrated approach will make those conflicts worse. In that case it may be sensible not to embark on integrated and encompassing programmes, but to work piecemeal, that is with smaller, one-dimensional projects. Along those lines the trust can be built that is needed for a more encompassing and, in the end, integrated approach.

The relationship between politicians and public administration

An important dimension of partnership within the realm of public actors is the relationship between politicians and public administration. Politicians influence the formation and implementation of UDP’s, directly and indirectly. In particular, their role should be to:

- define the targets of the UDP,
- guarantee the viable political and economical conditions to execute the UDP,
- control and evaluate the implementation of the UDP,
- redefine the targets of the UDP if necessary.

In many cases, politicians should become more active during the implementation of the project in order to ensure the proper functioning of the conceptual framework.

In the Danish UDP’s new administrative practices were gradually developed for the local government, and the support of politicians was important in implementing the new ways of administration. If local political leadership (the Mayor) clearly signalled high political priority and backup to the UDP, it eased inter-departmental co-operation significantly.

A situation can arise where politicians try to control the policy-making realm in all of its aspects and details. In this case, public administration may resist this form of political ‘colonisation’, with a constant struggle between politics and administration as a result. It is a natural thing that politicians want to make a political profit from the implementation and success of a UDP. In doing so, they may contribute to the effectiveness and sustainability of the UDP. Important here is that they show ‘self-control’, giving enough space for the administration to develop and implement the project. Politicians should only intervene in the process of implementation if the original targets are not met, or when the targets and tools must be changed because the circumstances have fundamentally changed.
Co-operation between public and private partners and between private partners

Public-private partnership is a core element of urban governance. Many UDP’s try to engage a number of private partners in the process because that can be a condition for receiving European, national or regional financial support. Generally, two types of private partners are engaged: ‘real’ private partners, and partners coming from the third sector - quasi non-governmental organisations, or quango’s. Most of the ‘non-public’ partners are quango’s: housing associations, school boards, subsidised voluntary associations, and employment agencies. In many countries the traditional view still prevails that social programmes and urban renewal are tasks of the state and the city. This explains why private developers often do not participate in local partnerships, the logical exception being building corporations, which are awarded building contracts. But they are more or less limited to the execution of plans and projects conceived by public and quasi-public actors.

In many cases, partnerships between public institutions and quango’s are well established in local networks.

In Cologne, in Kalk and Chorweiler, all associations and initiatives from the area meet a few times a year to coordinate their activities. This helps to avoid overlapping activities or the overlooking of certain thematic areas. For closer cooperation concerning a specific problem, i.e., youth unemployment, sub-groups are founded which then meet more often to synchronise their measures. 'It is very good to have something like this, for it makes it easier for us to know what’s going on in the area and what others plan. We should be working together as we are all heading for the same aim', stated one interviewee from Cologne-Kalk.

A more far-reaching initiative was taken in Hamburg-Jenfeld, where three big associations, one for employment promotion, one for cultural projects, and one for the local youth centre, merged in 2000 to form one larger non-profit organisation. It also runs the neighbourhood office in Jenfeld. The new organisational structure greatly facilitates the co-ordination of actions.

Part of the development of urban government into urban governance is the result of the privatisation of public tasks or institutions. In those cases, urban governance – forming and using networks of independent actors in order to conceive and implement UDP’s – can be a tedious practice, because leading actors in the public sphere, be they politicians or public officers, lack the means to make quango’s comply with desired targets. A case in point is privatised housing associations, which increasingly are compelled to gear their activities to the logic of the market. This means that it can no longer be taken for granted that such associations perceive the housing of the poor as their one and only task. Therefore, much creativity is needed to find acceptable tradeoffs in order to commit private or quasi-private partners.

A good example of skilfully engaging the private sector comes from District 9, Budapest, Hungary. In order to guarantee the success of the UDP, which was rather meagrely funded by public means, the local government of the 9th district had to engage private partners. Through SEM IX, a non-profit company established with private banks, the local government
managed to invite a number of private real estate developers and building companies into the area. As 51% of SEM IX is owned by local government, public interests can be given priority. At the same time this small company - responsible for selling the plots to building companies, demolishing the outdated buildings, and carrying out the necessary infrastructure investments for selling the vacated plots - has had to act in a market-oriented manner (as expected by its private owners), and thus it could ensure the income it needed to carry on with the UDP and the revitalisation of the whole neighbourhood.

When it comes to partnerships between public and (quasi) private actors the main lessons from recent UDP’s are:

- that public authorities should maintain responsibility and accountability to the citizens;
- the more actors are involved, the more a single point of reference in the municipality is needed;
- the more the non-public partners are profit-oriented, the more problematic the partnership.

Partnership is essential because of the integrated character of UDP’s. Generally, two attitudes toward partnership prevail in public administration: reluctance or conditional acceptance. One way to generate a more open co-operation among the separate departments, levels, and other actors is to promote and organise partnerships directly. This could be done by setting up task forces, small inter-departmental groups of persons responsible for a UDP, and linking those to similar groups at other levels of decision-making. These groups should get appropriate decision-making power, including their own budgets. In addition, there should be regulations concerning the control and evaluation of the functioning of these task forces. Ideally, these should be part of the contract that is the foundation of a UDP (see Chapter X).
SUMMARY

UDP’s ask for partnerships. Within the public sector itself this leads to problems in two respects: the (vertical) cooperation of the different levels, and the (horizontal) cooperation of administrative department and sectors.

Generally, the more ‘permeable’ the vertical structure is, that is to say, the more ‘voice’ each level has, the more likely a fruitful co-operation between policy levels and the greater the chance for a successful UDP with sustainable effects.

In a good inter-level partnership the upper level determines the basic framework and sufficient trust to give the lower level the freedom and opportunity to develop a UDP, provided some coaching is given. Trust and coaching are both needed to give the lower level the space it needs to develop its programme.

When a lack of trust is the result of existing conflicts between political levels, then an integrated approach may make things worse. In that case it may be sensible not to proceed with integrated and encompassing plans, but to work piecemeal, that is with smaller, one-dimensional projects.

Partnership between departments may not only be the result of top-down incentives, but can also be the consequence of bottom-up activism. In that case, it could ensure not only the much-desired encompassing approach, but also, because of the participation of the residents, contribute to the sustainability of the results of a UDP.

Ideally, the role of politicians should be restricted to defining the general context and the targets of a programme, and they should not interfere in the design and technical implementation. However, it is a natural thing that politicians want to capitalise on the implementation and the successes of a UDP. In doing so, they can contribute to the effectiveness and sustainability of a UDP.

The main lessons from recent UDPs, when it comes to partnerships between public and (quasi) private actors, are:

- that public authorities should maintain their responsibility and accountability to the citizens;
- the more actors are involved, the more a single point of reference in the municipality is needed;
- the more the non-public partners are profit-oriented, the more problematic is the partnership.
CHAPTER SIX

INTEGRATED APPROACH – CO-OPERATION BETWEEN SECTORS

Urban complexity

The complexity of the city obliges policy-makers to tackle different urban problems simultaneously and in a co-ordinated way. This multi-faceted character of urban policy brings together initiatives regarding the built environment with cultural, social, economic, and cultural interventions. Such integration of different policies is one of the most difficult tasks of UDP’s.

Urban policies were once organised functionally, that is by specific administrative departments, such as Housing, Social Affairs, Education, Police, and Health, at the national, regional and local levels. Each department had its own programmes, priorities, aims, cultures, and budgets. Today this functional handling of reality appears largely unsuitable mainly because it is impossible to implement a policy, programme, or project without a global understanding of its urban context. UDP’s have to be implemented in spaces which have been occupied for many years. In a sense, UDP’s are recycling part of the city. That is why they have to take carefully into account the characteristics of the different people living there, the territory (the patrimony, the heritage, the quality of the environment), and its specific atmosphere (the local community and its culture, the social and cultural climate). It is important to realise that complexity is not so much a problem to solve or to deny, but a condition that UDP’s have to value and build upon.

The need for an integrated approach

In order to do justice to this complex context, the traditional urban administrations and professionals have to adapt their way of operating. This is one of the main reasons why the concept of ‘urban governance’ has become important. The question is how to manage urban complexity (acknowledging it as an asset) with a fragmented administrative apparatus, how, in other words, to organise a successful integrated approach.

An integrated approach can vary from just adding up the efforts made in different domains all the way to the development of a programme in which every issue has an explicit relationship with all others. An integrated UDP connects different projects in such a way that the success and failure of each project are at least partly dependent upon the successes and failures of the others. Implementing such a strategy constitutes a great challenge. The major difficulty in organising ‘transversal’ or ‘horizontal’ cooperation between administrations and departments is the juxtaposition of different fields of interest, which creates tensions and confrontations between various approaches, methods, procedures, professional cultures, and organisations.
Nevertheless, there are some positive attempts to set an integrated programme in motion, defying traditional departmental egotism. The French and German cases can be seen as examples of strong bureaucratic tradition, where interdepartmental co-operation occurs at administrative levels.

In France, the so called ‘Politique de la ville’ has emerged in this context. It is not a circumstantial policy for a crisis situation. Neither is it a sectoral policy, alongside already existing sectoral policies. Nor is it supposed to replace traditional sectoral policies. Through the combination of sectoral policies, the ‘Politique de la ville’, aims at taking into account the complexity of urban reality.

The ‘Politique de la ville’ covers all the fields of urban reality. ‘Thematic covenants’ are worked out within the framework of ‘contrats de ville’. These conventions may address different themes, such as housing, environment, transport, education, sport, culture and leisure. Also, these conventions may privilege an approach that takes into account a specific category (for example children, teenagers, the elderly) and then recombine sectoral policies (for example, health, safety, and so forth).

The Social City programme (‘Soziale Stadt’) in Germany can be considered as a first step to integrating the potential of various departments and administrative levels in order to tackle the complex issues of urban development programmes, aiming at physical and social “rehabilitation” at the same time. Launched in March 2000, the programme foresees collaboration on the national level among the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Housing; the Ministry of Economy; and the Ministry of Social Affairs. At the same time, it requires close cooperation between the departments at the ‘Land’ level – again of housing, economy, and social affairs – and the (federal) Ministry of Housing, responsible for the programme. City and ‘Land’ departments in turn cooperate.

How the urban development programmes are financed also may foster closer cooperation among the different levels. Within the framework of the Social City Programme, one third of the costs is paid for at the national level – from the programme budget – one third by the Lands, and one third by the cities themselves.

Cities themselves have to apply to their respective Lands in order to be included in the programme. The proposals have to demonstrate the need for a complex urban development programme and also have to present a detailed plan of integrated measures. Based on this proposal, it is on the Land level that the decision is taken whether or not to include a neighbourhood in the Social City programme.

Partnership between departments may not only be the result of top-down incentives, but can also be the consequence of bottom-up activism. In that case, it could lead to the much-desired integrated approach, but may also be successful in terms of sustainability of the outcomes of a UDP.

In Spain, in 1996, a group of social actors led by the neighbourhood association of Trinitat Nova (Barcelona) decided to promote development in their neighbourhood. They elaborated a community development plan covering a wide range of goals and including all
sorts of social and political actors. The aim of this bottom-up initiative was to launch a renewal plan for the area (a number of blocks had to be demolished due to poor construction conditions in the 1950's) through an integrated approach. This grassroots initiative has been successful in making the public administrations work in a coordinated manner, integrating the interventions of different bodies and departments. However, the commitment of the different administrations has been very different which makes it difficult for all the dimensions of the Plan to develop to the same degree. Some departments (Housing and Urban Development) have been the most committed to the Plan and more open to co-ordinating their efforts with other departments, whereas others have been more reluctant to participate in an integral and integrated Urban Development Programme. This shows that an external initiative to foster the co-ordination of different public administrations and departments may produce positive changes.

**How to proceed in developing an integral UDP**

Changing traditional city administration is one of the main objectives of UDP's, although creating new forms of urban governance generally is not one of their formal and explicitly stated aims. Changes in urban governance are not only a matter of formal legislative and administrative measures, but they also have to be rooted in concrete activities, implementing specific projects, mobilising new actors, and using special budgets. By creating new co-operative opportunities, UDP's can attract different kinds of public and private actors and promote new and stable arrangements among them.

**Use concrete projects as a starting point**

In order to be effective, this kind of horizontal co-operation needs time, a mutual understanding for the different rhythms and calendars of the actors involved, and a basic willingness and capacity to change certain traditional and institutional practices. Generally speaking, this process is tedious and needs much time, because what is at stake are new conceptions and new forms of public action. One way to do this is to proceed piecemeal, embark on concrete projects, and not be too ambitious in the sense of dealing with integral policy in a general and abstract way, and then work towards additional concrete projects. 'Integrated' means dealing with different aspects of one problem or problematic area at the same time. The starting point should be a limited and concrete problem. Do not start by bringing together all sectors and departments that could possibly be involved in a UDP. Physical investments in a district or neighbourhood in order to revitalise housing could provide opportunities to mobilise and interrelate different parts of sectored services and to give people the capacity to intervene in their environment.

In Hamburg-Heimfeld the physical renewal of the area proved very successful. Here, since 1992/93, under the direction of the housing company SAGA, apartments have been made suitable for families by combining two small dwellings of 40 sq m into one larger one. Before, due to the small size of the dwellings, most of the tenants were older unemployed men. Problems of alcoholism and drug-abuse were typical for the area. By making the apartments larger, it became possible to attract a different clientele with an emphasis on families. The improved physical appearance has changed the atmosphere in the area very much. The inhabitants now value their surroundings and take care of keeping them in order. The permanent improvement was only possible because the housing company SAGA co-operated
closely with the City of Hamburg, sticking to a common concept throughout the renovation. There was, for example, a certain percentage of apartments which had to be rented out to low-income families to guarantee that the tenant structure in the area would change.

Create opportunities that attract different competencies

Transversal co-operation implies transcending particular interests. This can result from necessity imposed by the characteristics of an initiative or project – as we just described – or of a specific territory or of a concrete situation addressed by a UDP. The role of a UDP, then, is to create opportunities in which the various competencies (professional, institutional, political) can meet and co-operate and, by doing this, to redefine borders between competencies, to cross-fertilise know how, and develop new policy concepts.

In Lyon and Chambéry, France, such opportunities were created during the preparation of the City contract through the installation of working groups preparing ‘thematic covenants’: the thematic commissions. They allowed for a certain degree of mutual acculturation and hybridisation of work. The creation of a new field of debate – combining education and culture, education and sport, economy and social affairs – brought various actors together around themes which prevented the replay of old debates and favoured cross-fertilisation. The basic imperative is to avoid splits. Sometimes specific professional interest has to be enticed to participate. This can be done by making participation advantageous (more prestige, increased budgets, and so forth) or making non-participation disadvantageous (cuts in budgets, being excluded from relevant networks, and so forth).

Focus on strategic subjects

Some subjects are more suitable for an integral approach than others because their very nature demands the co-production of the actors. Safety in the city, for example, is not limited to a particular administrative sector or a specialised professional body. Safety is a co-production of multiple actors working closely together. Because safety has rapidly become an important issue in many European cities, there are attractive opportunities for funding as well as for prestige for potential participants. The same goes for health and education. There is not much debate about the problems in these sectors, and such a broad consensus can make partnerships easier to establish. Those unwilling to participate will find it difficult to legitimise their reluctance.

Money as a means to develop horizontal co-operation

One of the most important means of encouraging horizontal co-operation and the reform of administrative practices is, of course, the allocation of money. Sectored policies are rooted in a corresponding segmentation of budgets. A segmented budget is hard to change because it provides each interest with an equitable share of the total resources. In various European countries, the policy towards UDP’s has been to establish a ‘global budget’ at the national, regional or local level. This global budget is valid for a number of years (in France for 7 years, for instance), fungible for different uses, and accessible through the introduction of projects carried out by various actors with an advantage given to transversal ones.

The role of strong personalities

In general, small and tight local networks seem to be important when it comes to horizontal co-operation, especially at an early stage. This increases the importance of (strong) characters and personalities. It is very important to realise that UDP’s not only
depend on solid administrative structures, but also on individual persons and the chemistry between them. They have to have the ability to convince and to communicate, and thus to create bonds between different sectors and departments and their respective cultures. They must possess the authority to make clear that in urban policy, the confrontation with the unforeseen, the adaptation to ever changing circumstances, and a keen eye for seizing opportunities which emerge, are of central importance. Where urban communities are increasingly unpredictable and fragmented and very volatile, administrative routines become obsolete. Cross-fertilisation of competencies, both professional and administrative, is called for.
Summary

In a sense, UDP’s are recycling part of the city. That is why they have to take carefully into account the characteristics of the different people living there, the city’s territory and its specific atmosphere. It is important to realise that complexity is not so much a problem to solve or to deny, but a condition that UDP’s have to value and build upon.

Changes in urban governance are not only a matter of formal legislative and administrative measures. They also have to be rooted in a concrete practice of implementing specific projects, mobilising new actors, and using special budgets. By creating new co-operative opportunities, UDP’s can attract different kinds of public and private actors and promote new and stable arrangements between them.

One way to achieve horizontal co-operation is to proceed piecemeal, embark on concrete projects, and not be too ambitious. The starting point should be a concrete problem. Do not begin by bringing together all sectors, actors, and departments that could possibly be involved in a UDP.

The role of a UDP is to create opportunities for various competencies (professional, institutional, political) to co-operate and, by doing this, to redefine borders between competencies, cross-fertilise know-how, and develop new policy concepts.

Some subjects are more suitable for an integrated approach than others because their very nature demands the co-production of the actors. In particular, issues universally considered to be relevant and urgent can make partnerships easier to establish. Those unwilling to comply or participate will have a problem defending their reluctance.

One of the most important means to encourage horizontal co-operation and the reform of administrative practices is the allocation of money.

In creating horizontal co-operation, strong characters and personalities are of great importance. They should have the ability to convince and to communicate, and thus to create bonds between different sectors and departments and their respective cultures.
CHAPTER SEVEN
PARTICIPATION – EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS, ASSOCIATIONS, AND GROUPS

One of the principles of an urban governance approach is that target-groups and citizens should not only be informed, but actively invited and stimulated to participate in the conception and implementation of UDP’s. This issue is crucial because UDP’s deal with and address disadvantaged groups that are often reluctant to ‘enter the game’.

Is participation, therefore, an illusion, or can it be realised, and, if so, does it effectively enhance the quality of the UDP?

Information and active participation

Participation can be described by using the metaphor of the ladder, where the rungs from the bottom up represent an increasing degree of power for the participants. The lower rungs stand for increasing levels of informing citizens about a UDP. Although the supply of information is a necessary pre-requisite, it is not real participation. The middle rungs refer to different consultation procedures, inviting people to express criticisms and to suggest improvements, but in the end having no influence on the final decision; that remains in the hands of local authorities. Ideal-typical participation is to be found at the top rungs of the ladder under various headings: ‘concerted decision’, ‘partnership’, ‘delegated powers’, ‘citizenship control’. Here, people enter into the final decision-making process and can really steer the final outcome. Only in this last case is participation a form of empowerment. There is no real participation without some form of power redistribution.

There are three reasons for organising forms of participation in UDP’s. The first, and in actual practice the most important, is making a UDP more efficient. In this case, local authorities adopt a ‘customer-client approach’ and, through participation, expect to be better informed about residents’ needs. In this approach, participation is restricted to forms of consultation. This form of participation makes itself superfluous after a certain period of time. Participation can be terminated the moment local authorities think they have enough relevant information about the needs of residents. From then on, continuing participation of residents becomes useless or even counterproductive.

A second and more ambitious reason for organizing participation is to educate participants to become capable citizens. Here, participation is seen as a process of learning about technical and financial constraints in urban policy, and also about the fabric of the urban political process as a whole. In many cases, this learning process is biased because local authorities tend to ‘teach’ their conception of what has to be done, i.e., the urban policy already decided upon.
A third and major reason for participation is the promotion of active citizenship. Participants act as citizens when they try to reach an agreement on a project that shapes their ‘common good’. This form of participation remains pure tokenism in most cases. On the other hand, it serves as a kind of utopian reference, showing how things could or should be.

**Participation and its paradoxes**

Notwithstanding national differences, local authorities in European cities are organized according to the representative democracy model. Introducing participation into this system may create paradoxes and result in disturbances.

Two paradoxes are related to two different origins of participation: a claim from the people (‘bottom-up’), or an initiative taken by local authorities (‘top-down’).

Participation ‘from below’ is a claim of residents or their associations to admission to the planning process. When they face opposition from local authorities, they need to mobilise as many local residents as they can in order to have a say in the UDP. They perceive their final admission – if they succeed in their efforts – as a ‘victory’. Local authorities tend to be negative about participation that has been achieved by ‘conquest’, and will show a tendency to neutralise its effects. The paradox here is that although participation can be the outcome of a conflict, it can be productive, fuelling further cooperative forms of participation in the future.

In Jennumparken, Copenhagen, the UDP clearly has a top-down character. This was legitimised by the fact that residents were too weak and too unorganised to participate. Residents did not acknowledge the existence of serious problems in their neighbourhood. Therefore the municipality considered it to be its responsibility to ‘tell them the truth’, for example about unemployment rates in Jennumparken.

In Spain, two UDPs, Villaverde Usera (Madrid) and Trinitat Nova (Barcelona), are in working class districts in 1960s suburban housing estates. The dense network of grass-roots organizations was used to claim their recognition as partners long before the setting up of UDP’s. This was easier to achieve in Barcelona (which has a long-standing tradition of local autonomy) than in Madrid (with a much more centralized local government). But in both cases, tenants and/or residents’ associations had to fight at times against local authorities before being admitted to the planning process.

Overall, a bottom-up claim for participation is not very common in European cities. In most UDP’s, local authorities take the initiative for promoting residents’ participation. Some of them really believe in the ‘added value’ of participation. Here the need for information about the requirements of inhabitants is stressed, or, more Machiavellian, the position is taken that it is better to prevent future conflicts by taking into account people’s views at an early stage than to solve problems, which arise from not taking them into account, later on.
Indeed, most local authorities adopt an opportunistic approach. In some cases, they are under pressure of EU and/or national regulations on UDP’s, which make funding conditional on participation of citizens.

In France, a UDP application that does not include some form of participation is rejected and not funded by central government. This financial incentive produces perverse effects. Reluctant local authorities set up a participation procedure, but their strategy is to keep it under strict control and to change only minor details in the initial plans. However, they send central government beautiful reports explaining how projects have really been improved thanks to participation.

This kind of top-down approach includes another paradox. The EU- or state-controlled obligation of participation in the conception and implementation of a UDP can lead to rather distant and fairly uninviting ways of organizing participation at the local level. In that case, few residents are enticed to take part in participation procedures because they doubt the real willingness of local authorities to take their views and interests into account. They expect, sometimes rightly so, that the main decisions are already taken and perceive participation as highly cosmetic and therefore as a waste of time.

The last, and maybe most tragic, paradox, is that when local authorities sincerely try to organise forms of meaningful participation, few residents actually make use of possibilities offered. This occurs not because there is a lack of trust in the intentions of local authorities, but because inhabitants of deprived neighbourhoods do not subscribe to the middle class model of participation and civic culture. Class and ethnic background may hamper a process of participation along middle class lines, based on the notion of capable, eloquent, active, and interested individual actors. Here, new forms of participation have to be developed, based on group participation, or on piecemeal individual participation of people directly exposed to some features of the UDP.

Conflicts do not only occur between local authorities and residents. Most of the time, even deprived neighbourhoods have a certain degree of social heterogeneity, and therefore residents may have conflicting interests and values. In particular, ethnic diversity can be a source of dissatisfaction and social tension. In some extreme cases, it might be wise to organise UDP’s in such a way that issues dividing the community are kept low profile. Participation could be organised around very specific and concrete issues, where more abstract and general discussions are avoided. In that way, trust could gradually be built between potentially conflicting groups of inhabitants.

On the other hand, the positive role of conflict should at least be taken into consideration, especially with a view toward the long run, when it comes to the restructuring of a district or neighbourhood. Here we touch upon another paradox: when conflicts are openly expressed, it can be easier to manage them and reach a compromise. From the local authorities’ point of view, participation should look for consensus. But sometimes a good starting point can be to bring conflicts into the open.

Pitfalls of participation
The case described in the box is a good example of a ‘middle class’ model of participation. We already pointed out that the some categories of residents will be more able and prone to take part in such procedures than others. One of the pitfalls of (some forms of) participation can be that it attracts the better-educated residents, the ones with the ability to speak in front of an audience and to produce written documents. It tends to exclude the weaker groups: those who are afraid to speak in public and are not able to express their views on paper. ‘Elitism’ is a major pitfall of participation.

Sometimes this goes further than a more or less innocent process of self-selection of the better educated; that is, when some groups of residents pretend to speak for the neighbourhood as a whole, but actively try to exclude some activities or people from the neighbourhood (e.g., facilities for the homeless, drug addicts, asylum seekers, clubs and discotheques, and prostitutes), the so-called ‘NIMBY-syndrome’.

In Heimfeld-Nord (Hamburg) residents have the opportunity to participate in a working group, which was initiated by the committee for the promotion of the area. Here inhabitants can word their opinion and actively participate in urban policy-making as the working group gives recommendations to the district assembly which subsequently decides upon new laws and regulations. These recommendations are being taken seriously and are usually followed by the district assembly.

Another pitfall is related to the area-based approach of UDP’s. Proximity may have perverse effects. In a UDP, not everything can be decided and implemented at a neighbourhood level. For example, in an exclusively residential area where unemployment is a major problem (such as most major 1960s housing estates, now targeted in UDPs), a strategy to create jobs in and for the neighbourhood would certainly fail, as we pointed out in Chapter 3. The city or maybe even the metropolitan level appears much more relevant for curing unemployment in disadvantaged areas. Participation is then faced with a dilemma: people will be activated to participate when it helps to solve their problems. When employment is the major concern, participation in, for instance, housing improvement schemes may not always be very productive, unless they affect people directly affected. In general, participation at a neighbourhood level can be problematic when it comes to issues that are decided upon at a metropolitan level and include actors who are not area-based, as, for instance, the Chamber of Commerce, entrepreneurs, City Hall, the Ministry of Transport. In such cases, it can make sense to organise participation at a neighbourhood level, but then the participation process must definitely and explicitly include communication with and feedback to and from upper administrative tiers. It should have the character of a ‘go-between’ process.

In Avedøre Stationsby and Tøjhushaven, there has been some conflict concerning cooperation between municipalities and residents’ associations. At the core was the question of associative representation. The aim was to involve weaker groups (such as refugees and immigrants, mentally ill residents, alcoholics), i.e., residents other than those already involved in associations. The municipality tried to develop new participation models, more sensitive to the needs of those groups with no spontaneous interest in participating. But some of the residents’ associations saw this as a way to deny their legitimacy and to exclude them.
Another pitfall of participation is that an imbalance between the importance attributed to participation by the majority of the residents and politicians and professionals. Whereas a UDP is ‘a job’ or maybe even a mission for professionals and politicians, for residents, especially for those not immediately affected by different projects of the UDP, it is just one option for spending a limited time budget. From this perspective, it can be understood that low rates of participation can be disappointing and sometimes be interpreted as a lack of involvement and gratitude on the part of the residents. But participation should not be perceived as a gift to residents, but as a right. This means ‘activism’ should also come from the side of those who organise the participation. One of the keys for success is not only to invite residents, but to come to them at places where they happen to be at appropriate times. Expecting people to travel to an office or a meeting point far from their surroundings is unsuccessful with residents who are not already strongly mobilised.

Social workers of a youth project in Cologne-Kalk use a bus, 'Wheely', to visit the places where youth and children hang out or pass by, close to a highly frequented bus stop. The children become interested in the colorful vehicle and approach it. Thus, a first contact is established. Afterwards, it becomes easier for the youngsters to talk to the social workers about problems or to come to them with questions. Other projects also send their collaborators to the places where youth hang out. By coming to the place over and over again, they get to know the youth and succeed in encouraging them to visit youth centres or group meetings elsewhere.
Summary

Participation is both a cause and a consequence of social inclusion. Active and socially integrated individuals and groups will use or try to create opportunities to participate. Conversely, excluded individuals and groups in many cases will perceive participation as useless or unimportant and thus remain inactive. Activating those individuals and groups is the main challenge in terms of participation in UDP’s.

Local authorities tend to be negative about participation that has been achieved by ‘conquest’ and will show a tendency to neutralise its effects. However, even if participation is the outcome of a conflict, it can be productive in fuelling further cooperative forms of participation in the future.

Class and ethnic background may hamper a process of participation along middle class lines, that is, based on the notion of capable, eloquent, active and interested individual actors. Here, new forms of participation have to be developed, based on group participation, or on piecemeal individual participation of people directly exposed to some features of the UDP.

In some extreme cases, it might be wise to organise UDP’s in such a way that issues dividing the community are kept low profile. Here, it could be wise to organise participation around very specific and concrete issues, and avoid more abstract and general discussions. In such a way trust could gradually be built between potentially conflicting groups of inhabitants.

Sometimes groups of residents pretend to speak for the neighbourhood as a whole, but in practice try to exclude undesirable activities or people from their neighbourhood. Participation should be organised in such a way that it is not limited to voicing the ‘Not-in my-backyard’ syndrome.

Participation at a neighbourhood level can be problematic when issues are decided upon at a metropolitan level and include actors who are not area-based. In such cases, it still can make sense to organise participation at a neighbourhood level, but then the participation process must include communication and feed-back with upper administrative tiers. It should have the character of a ‘go-between’ process.

Participation should not be perceived as a gift to residents, but as a right. This means ‘activism’ should also come from the side of those who organise the participation. One of the keys for success is not only to invite residents, but to come to them, at places where they happen to be at appropriate times. Expecting people to visit an office or a meeting point far from their surroundings is unsuccessful with residents who are not already strongly mobilised.
CHAPTER EIGHT
MONEY – WHERE TO GET IT FROM
& HOW TO USE IT

The availability of money has strong implications for the set-up and operation of a UDP, sometimes even to the degree that the possibility of financing specific issues has a stronger influence on the content and structure of a UDP than the severity of the problems to be addressed. Also in terms of sustainability, money is of great importance: are there sufficient funds available after the UDP officially has come to an end to sustain the results?

Financial strategies

Different models for financing UDP's can be applied. In most cases only one single – national or federal – funding source is available. This has the obvious advantage of simplifying application procedures. However, if the application is not successful and if no alternative source of funding is available, it can mean the abortion of an intended programme. In the case of a sole provider of money, UDPs are vulnerable to changing priorities in the political agenda. To make sure that a UDP is relatively immune from changes in governmental coalitions, it is of great importance not only to be successful in terms of meeting targets, but also to disseminate these positive results to a large and relevant audience. As the saying goes, 'success has many fathers'; no matter what their political ideology, most politicians will embrace successful policies, even if they have been conceived by predecessors – or by opponents (see Chapter 5).

In cases where UDP's are financed by multiple actors, most of the time there is one main contractor – usually the national government or the EU – who demands co-financing, sometimes even as an obligatory condition for supplying money. In cases where this strategy succeeds, it can be positive in the sense that a strong dependency on state money is avoided. But other problems may arise. For instance, it can be very time consuming and difficult to obtain money from different sources. What is more, in many cases different sources of money are related to different time cycles and different evaluation criteria. Negotiating with all potential money-donating actors at the same time can help to create more synchronised calendars.

Applying for money in many cases means that criteria, mostly established by central government, have to be met. There is a danger that complying with these criteria may give some (potentially involved actors the impression that the UDP actually will be implemented. At least, they may become convinced that their district or neighbourhood needs and deserves some help. If in such a case a UDP is not financed and thus not implemented, the failed application may make things worse than they were. Take the participation of residents. If acceptance of a project depends on proving that local people are already involved and if that implies that they must be addressed by local planners and policy-makers, rising expectations would be frustrated if the application for funding the UDP is turned down.
Programme money vs. regular budgets

The overall budget of big cities are of a scale that completely dwarfs the budget for even the most ambitious UDP.

In Copenhagen the annual total budget of the municipality of Copenhagen is € 6 billion, or approximately € 12,000 per inhabitant per year. One of the more ambitious Danish UDP's has been located in the municipality of Copenhagen (Holmbladsgade). For that UDP the average annual budget was € 280 per inhabitant. In the UDP-area the money spent on the UDP is accordingly around 2% of the normal municipal budget allocations when measured per inhabitant.

In France the budget for all local authorities was € 122 billion in 2000 and the money set aside for the 'Contract de Ville' which finances the French UDP's was in the same year € 3.3 billion, i.e., 2.7% of the budget for the local authorities.

Moreover, a large part of municipal budgets is frozen, so that there is little freedom to re-allocate funds in the short term. It can therefore be extremely difficult to squeeze out a necessary budget for a UDP, no matter how small the amount of money requested. However, even the modest financial means available for UDP's – a drop in the ocean – may have highly visible effects. Returning to our argument, the few per cent that a UDP's budget represents might be comparable to the 'degree of freedom' that the local government has for its regular budget. One of the main features of a UDP therefore should be publicising the fact that something new is happening in the targeted district or neighbourhood.

Public vs. private money

It is a common phenomenon that state money is given on the condition that there should be some kind of co-financing. The reason for this is the importance of visible local (political) support and commitment to the UDP.

In Denmark and Sweden the state demanded 50% co-financing from the municipalities. In Germany three levels were involved with equal shares in the financing: the federal level, the Länder, and the cities. In Spain four to five levels were involved: state, region, municipality, local administration and/or private investors.

This can constitute a problem for local authorities because, as we stated before, a large percentage of the local budget is fixed. There are, however, other ways than spending cash money for the municipal level to fulfil this obligation. A very common one is to delegate municipal labour force to staff the UDP, thus 'paying' the municipal share in hours of civil servants. This practice can of course be used with actors other than the municipality as well.

Increasingly, there are efforts to involve private investors in UDP's through systems of PPP (Private-Public Partnerships). The idea of partnerships between the public and the private sectors has turned out to be very difficult to realise, however.
In Hungary private investment was a necessary precondition for the UDP in Budapest, as both the state and the municipality only had very limited budgets for the programme. The experiences were good in the sense that private investment strongly multiplied the public investments, but at the same time bad as they led to a sharp increase in the rent level in the areas, gradually pushing the poor former inhabitants out.

In most cases the involvement of private capital is wishful thinking, at least at the start of a UDP. As we have seen in Chapter 5, partnerships in UDP’s mostly have a public-public character at the city level. Private investors normally come in only when upgrading processes are visible and gentrification has begun. Private investors do not want to run any risks by investing in problem areas where future development is still too uncertain. With respect to future involvement of private capital, it can be a wise strategy to inform potential private investors and even make them part of advisory boards of UDP’s in order to start a process of incremental commitment.

**Investment strategy**

Social measures may appear cheap compared to physical measures. But if social projects include direct personal assistance on an individual basis, expenditures can easily increase rapidly. The new tendency in UDP’s is to pay more attention to employment and less to traditional physical renewal.

In the suburbs of Stockholm the housing conditions are on a relatively high level. The houses were built in the late 1960s as part of the ‘million programme’ (one million new houses were built in 10 years’ time, from the mid 1960s to the mid 1970s), and they were renovated in the 1990s. But the inhabitants belong to the weakest social groups in Sweden, with up to 80-90% immigrants, and with very high rates of unemployment. The UDP’s accordingly gave priority to employment programmes with a combination of job training and a guaranteed job after training.

The costs for these kinds of projects are much lower than those for physical improvements in a more traditional urban renewal plan. However, this is the case only because of the still rather limited number of individuals coming through the employment training.

**After the end of the UDP: sustainability and money**

The financial structure of a UDP can be used to foster sustainability.

In the Danish UDP’s it was an obligatory part of the initial planning of the programmes to present a strategy for sustaining programmes when the state money ran out. In the five-year programme for support to the problematic neighbourhoods, the state financed 75% of the programme in the first year and the municipalities 25%, while the financing was reversed in the fifth year with 25% from the state and 75% of the expenditures covered by the
municipalities. The idea was to increase the municipal responsibility for the neighbourhoods by gradually increasing their financial responsibility.

At first glance, it should be easier for municipalities with a relatively high degree of local economic autonomy – in terms of taxation – to sustain or continue UDPs when state funding has terminated than for municipalities more dependent on the state for their budget. But even then, there are often rather strict limits in annual budgets caused by fixed and obligatory expenditures. It is therefore advisable in any case to think and plan beyond the period for which funding has been allocated in order to avoid crash landings.
Summary

In the case of one main provider of money, UDP’s are vulnerable to changes in the political agenda. Therefore, it is of great importance not only to be successful in terms of meeting targets, but also to guarantee continuous, sufficient, and sustainable financing. This can be fostered by the dissemination of positive results to a large and relevant audience, such as politicians. Negotiating with all potential money-donating actors at the same time can help to create more synchronised calendars.

From a point of view of budget, even the modest financial means available for UDP’s may have highly visible effects. One of the main features of a UDP therefore should be publicising something new happening in the targeted district or neighbourhood.

Social measures may appear cheap compared to physical measures, but if social projects include direct personal assistance on an individual basis, expenditures can easily and rapidly exceed the available budget.

In most cases efforts to involve private capital are wishful thinking, at least at the start of a UDP. With respect to future involvement of private capital, it may be a wise strategy to inform potential private investors and even to include them on advisory boards of UDP’s in order to start a process of incremental commitment.

The financial structure of a UDP can be used to foster sustainability.
The problem

When conceiving and implementing a UDP, two basic questions require an answer: how to organise the programme and how to enhance commitment of those involved. A contract or covenant – we use the terms as synonyms – is a very useful tool in this case. A contract or covenant, then, is a printed document that has been agreed upon and signed by actors participating in a partnership or co-operation and that structures the decision-making process, bureaucratic procedures and expected in- and outputs through formal and informal rules.

Contracts can enhance clarity for all parties because agreements are made about targets, how to reach them, and what contribution is expected of every partner. Clear rules that are agreed upon by all partners can:

- enhance efficiency and predictability of decision-making processes, which enhances mutual trust between the partners and fosters successful co-operation and efficiency of the partnership;
- increase the transparency of decision-making processes, which makes it easier for weaker partners (residents, and other partners with few or no own resources) to get and maintain access to the decision-making processes;
- enhance the controlling function of the democratically elected council.

The above implies that a series of choices has to be made in designing a contract or covenant. In actual practice, these choices do vary to a large extent and so do the specific forms of contracts found in different cities and countries. To a large extent, different practices depend on the specific institutional context and culture of a specific country. However, differences in contracts or covenants can also result from differences in focus of programmes or projects to which the contract or covenant relates.

The format of contracts and covenants: some examples

One important issue in designing a contract relates to its specificity: should it be general (the same for all cities and neighbourhoods), or should it be more differentiated (taking local specificities into account)? The Netherlands has chosen something ‘in between’: some parts of the contract are general, while others are city-specific. The cities fulfil a crucial role in designing their city-specific programmes, but the quality of such programmes is a precondition for signing a covenant and receiving money from the national government.
Within the framework of the Dutch Big Cities Policy, from 1995 on covenants have been used. While originally only the four major Big Cities (Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht) were involved, over time the number of cities involved has greatly increased. In 1999, 25 city-covenants were signed between the municipalities and the national government. These city-covenants consist of a general part that is the same for all the cities involved and a part that varies per city. In addition, within the same BCP framework, every city has written its own 'mission statement' and its long-term development programme. In the latter, the cities point out how they want to solve their social, spatial and economic problems in an integrated and neighbourhood-oriented approach and in co-operation with divergent local partners. They are 'tested' using four main criteria: general Big Cities Policy criteria; relevant law and regulations; the extent of integration within or among the social, physical, economic and employment sectors; and the extent of support among local and regional partners. A positive outcome is required in order for a covenant to be signed. The city-covenants form the basis for the allocation of national money for the implementation of Big Cities Policy for the 1999-2004 period (about 7.5 billion Euro).

Another issue relates to the contracting partners. Which partners sign the contract and what is their task and responsibility? In the Dutch case, Big Cities Policy covenants are signed between the national government on the one hand and the cities on the other. The same goes for Flanders — although here the regional government initiates the contract.

The Kvarterløft projects in Denmark are organised through so-called co-operation contracts between the Urban Committee and the municipalities. These contracts are renegotiated once a year. The contracts specify the development plan for the Kvarterløft areas: the goals to reach, how to reach them (who is responsible?), success criteria, how to involve residents, a description of the concrete projects, a financial plan and a plan about how to sustain the projects.

Avedøre Stationsby is the only Kvarterløft area that also has been using contracts for co-operation on the local level. These contracts are concluded between the municipality of Hvidovre, i.e. the relevant municipal department, and groups of residents (project committees). The contracts specify the same issues as the contracts between the Urban Committee and the municipalities. In this way the contracts also help to clarify in which municipal department the different projects are anchored. Finally, the contracts commit the actors to work for the realisation of common goals. This contract model is now being transferred to other areas of public service and public development projects.

The third relevant aspect of a covenant is the period it covers. Here again, great variations between countries exist. The Dutch Big Cities Policy covenants were entered into for a four-year period, whereas the Danish contracts are renegotiated on a yearly basis. (See also Chapter 4). Contracts in France apply to an even longer period: seven years.

In France, the ‘Politique de la ville’ is a negotiated project concluded by the signing of a framework contract ‘Contrat de ville,’ which is agreed upon between the state and its local partners (regional and local authorities, social housing organisations, and so on) to implement political and institutional partnerships within the framework of an agreed upon urban and social project. Different partnerships can be set up and can bring together the different signatories of the contract as well as other actors such as community groups and local residents. Over time the number of contracts has greatly increased: For the 2000-2006 period, 247 contracts have been signed, 70 per cent of them on a metropolitan scale.
A final issue relates to the specificity and measurability of agreements that are made in the contract, as well as to ways in which they are monitored and evaluated.

The European Community Initiative ‘Urban’ could serve as a good example. The European Commission has formulated guidelines that the individual member states should respect when submitting operational programmes for funding within the Urban-framework. These operational programmes, once approved by the European Commission, serve as a ‘contract’. As ‘Urban’ is funded by the European Structural Funds, it clearly reflects their principles, such as programme planning: the ‘Urban’-guidelines require that the operational programmes should include a clear analysis of the situation, a specific goal, a time-schedule, criteria and procedures for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. During and after the planning period, the European Commission evaluates the results of the programmes. While this often is mentioned as a strong part of EU programmes, they have also been criticised for strictness and even rigidity, for example in terms of uniformity but also for the fact that EU money that is not spent within the agreed time-period has to be reimbursed.

Finding a good balance in terms of what should and should not be regulated in a UDP is not an easy task. Covenants which are ‘over-regulated’ in due time can be experienced as highly inflexible. In addition, they might not be very open to changes in needs and perceptions of the participants. ‘Under-regulation’, on the other hand, has severe disadvantages as well. Where few things are formally arranged, evaluation of a UDP will be highly problematic, responsibilities unclear, and continuity and sustainability in constant jeopardy.
Conclusion: How to make a covenant?

When designing a covenant, a number of factors should be taken into consideration. While it would be pretentious to claim the enumeration below as exhaustive, it is a good checklist of things to take into account.

- The goal: what does the UDP that underlies the contract intend? What does the contract intend?
- The time period: what time period should be covered?
- Financing: who finances the UDP? How much money is involved (financial scheme)?
- The area: to which area does the contract apply?
- Legal basis: does the contract have or does it need a legal basis (for instance, a declaration to limit the degree of non-commitment of the partners)?
- The structure: should it be uniform or diverse?
- Specificity: how ‘general’ or ‘differentiated’ should it be?
- Agreements: how can agreements be formulated that are clear, specific and measurable?
- What does the organisational structure look like?
- What should be written down in terms of the policy process?
- The contract partners: which partners sign the contract (and why they)? What are their tasks and responsibilities?
- Which other partners are involved (responsibility, tasks) and at what stage(s)?
- What is the relationship between the UDP and other related programmes in the area? What is the relationship of the partnerships with other (established) political/administrative structures in the area?
- How and by whom are the agreements monitored and the results evaluated?
- How and to whom will/should the results of the evaluation be communicated?
- Sanctions: if the results are not realized, or the money is not spent in time, what will the sanctions be, if any?
CHAPTER TEN

EVALUATION - INDICATORS, ANALYSIS, AND IMPACT

Introduction

Evaluation should be part of any UDP. In fact, almost all UDPs we surveyed include the idea or promise of evaluation, although this requirement differs in scope and precision. Politicians, administrators, and professionals should, of course, be accountable for the way in which they spend taxpayers’ money. However, as desirable as an evaluation may be from this point of view, the task of evaluation is both complex and difficult. Three problems impede a strict evaluation. First, in the perception of actors evaluation often diverts time and energy from their primary activities. Therefore, there is an almost natural reluctance when it comes to evaluating one’s own performance. Second, the outcomes of the evaluation are unpredictable because of the potential arbitrariness of the criteria used and the resulting possibility of not doing justice to the work done by the actors. Third, when criteria are clear and undisputed, negative outcomes are possible, which will have negative consequences for the actors who are deemed responsible.

The first problem can be annoying, but indicates at least a dedication of the actors involved to their main tasks. The more UDPs have the character of a contract, the less frequently this problem will arise, at least when there are negative sanctions for failing to live up to agreed conditions. More serious are the two other problems, which we will discuss in more detail in the next section. In the final section we will outline some solutions, illustrated by examples of good practice.

Do indicators indicate what they are expected to indicate?

Evaluation may simply be defined as comparing stated goals to the implemented means vis-à-vis empirically observed outcomes. The two crucial questions are whether the stated goals have been reached and whether this was done by the means used.

Indicators are central to the evaluation of a programme. A distinction must be made between indicators for selecting the area – which were discussed in Chapter 3 – and indicators for measuring success. Both problems are related, since if the delineated area does not coincide with an administrative area, there will be no time series data available and all data relevant for an evaluation will have to be collected by (costly) specific surveys. In the following, we concentrate on “success” or outcome indicators.

Indicators are used to measure the successes and failures of UDP’s. This is not only important if contracts or covenants are concluded between different political levels, as is the case in the region of Flanders (Belgium) and in the Netherlands. There they allow the higher public authority to judge whether municipalities or districts did realise the targets that were agreed upon when funds were allocated. Good indicators also express an attitude of accountability of programme and project leaders towards citizens, who in the end provide the financial means to set up and carry out these programmes and projects. In a sense, good
indicators are a token of responsible action – one of the key elements in a ‘sustainability’ context.

Three problems related to the use of indicators, even when they are precise and to the point, have been identified,

First, there is the so-called ‘dead-weight effect’: changes in the levels of certain indicators are not always – and perhaps, almost never – the result of the introduction of the UDP. They might be induced by more general developments. The respective effects of the general economic cycle, national policies, and urban programmes usually are difficult – if not impossible – to differentiate from each other.

Second, and this is the mirror image of the former point, indicators can be misleading. Even if indicators – such as unemployment figures or the number of people on welfare in a given neighbourhood – do not change, this does not necessarily mean that the UDP has failed. People who got a job and therefore a better income may consequently have left the district and been replaced by unemployed newcomers. Although the UDP was successful, the unemployment in the area remains the same. By its very success, a UDP may contribute to the out-migration of people who have profited from its effects.

Third, objective indicators may deviate from subjective indicators. Objective indicators, such as average income, unemployment figures, and crime, may point to a significant improvement in the quality of life in a given area. The perception of the residents and even of professionals and politicians – the subjective indicators – may, however, be different. This may be caused by a time lag between the “cultural” and the “material” spheres. Or it may be related to the fact that UDP’s do not have the scope and scale to alter life conditions of people in such a way that their outlook on life and society is changed. Even in the case of large-scale physical reconstruction – arguably the most visible and lasting measure in distressed neighbourhoods – the results can be disappointing in this respect.

Types and Problems of Evaluation

Basically, there are two types of evaluation:

- evaluation of the policy and programme design;
- evaluation of the programme aims.

a. Evaluation of Policy and Programme Design

The policy dimension refers to the question of whether policies and programmes are well-organised in terms of the relations between political levels and different actors. Did national policies and programmes have an impact on the city level? Did they induce local programmes, more integrated actions, new forms of co-operation? Did they mobilise public-private partnerships? Did national policies and programmes induce a change in policies at the city level by increasing the awareness of measures necessary to alleviate the conditions in the distressed neighbourhoods? Did specific aims of the national programme change when moving from the national to the urban to the neighbourhood level? Do actors at different levels have a common understanding and consensus about the aims?

b. Evaluation of Programme Aims
Evaluation of programme aims is about assessing the impact of the UDP on the deprived neighbourhoods. If evaluation is to be more than an overall qualitative statement about the impact of a UDP on a given neighbourhood, a series of requirements has to be met.

First, as already stated above, the relation of goals and measures has to be specified. Why is a specific measure assumed to help achieve a specific goal?

Second, goals have to be operationalised with respect to desired outcomes. Obviously, it may be difficult to state goals this way, but if this not done any result can be interpreted as a success (or failure) of the given measure. To illustrate the problem, five statements of aims linked to desired outcomes may serve as an example:

1. The rate of unemployment in the area should not increase.
2. The rate of unemployment in the area should be reduced.
3. The rate of unemployment in the area should be reduced by three per cent.
4. The rate of unemployment in the area should be reduced by three per cent within three years.
5. The rate of long-term unemployment in the area should be reduced by three per cent within three years.

Statements 1 and 2 are equally precise, but statement 2 may require more efforts to be achieved. Statement 3 specifies the desired outcome by an exact value, and statement 4 gives a further precision by stating the time period in which the aim has to achieved. Finally, statement 5 supplies a more precise definition of the target group. Thus, the optimal, i.e. most informative, statement is the last one, because it is subject to possible failure more than any of the other ones. In the ideal case, it is this type of statement we wish to obtain for evaluating a programme.

To make an evaluation in the strict sense possible, one should:
- specify a target by stating which type of deficiency in the neighbourhood should be changed (aim specification);
- state the extent of change: is it sufficient that the unemployment rate in the area does not increase or do we want a reduction? (change specification);
- define the time span in which the result is to be realised (period specification);
- assess whether the effect can be attributed to the measures implemented, or if it is the result of changes in other conditions, at least in part, such as improvements in the city or regional labour market (Effect specification).

Third, evaluation requires data for several points in time. A minimal set includes the following indicators or data:
- population size;
- percentage of unemployed;
- percentage of the population receiving public assistance;
- structure (age, ethnicity, income) of immigration and emigration;
- indicators of deviance, such as crime rates, vandalism, school drop-outs, drug-addicts;
- indicators of school achievement;
- indicators of physical decay of residential buildings;
• indicators of subjective well-being;
• indicators of health conditions.

Some of these data can only be obtained by surveys, in the ideal case by panel studies. Reliance upon expert statements, e.g. from social workers, teachers, police, and church officials are valuable, but not sufficient.

Fourth, changes in the indicator values between two points in time may be difficult to interpret and one should be aware of fallacies here. For example, if it is found that the share of relatively better off emigrants has increased, this can be interpreted not only as a sign of decreasing attractiveness of the neighbourhood, but also as an indicator of the increased capacity of households to escape the distressed area. It should be kept in mind that the attribution of a given positive change to the implementation of the UDP is, in many cases, problematic. Other factors at the urban or even national level may have changed the living conditions in deprived areas, as, for instance, an increase in employment. UDP’s are always but one source for potential positive change. Therefore changes in deprived neighbourhoods should be compared with those in other less deprived neighbourhoods or in the city at large.

Fifth, it is important to include the residents’ perception in surveys. A given UDP may not be judged as successful by the residents as some of the above mentioned indicators would indicate.

Sixth, evaluation is more complicated for social than for physical measures. Physical measures, such as dwelling rehabilitation, a new green space, modernisation of facades, or a new community centre, are easy to evaluate at first sight. Their success appears to be self-evident. The question boils down to whether the measure was completed in time and less, whether it serves the aims stated in the programme. However, physical measures may be subject to what could be called the “fallacy of the obvious.” The very fact that the physical change is visible does not necessarily mean that residents have a more positive attitude towards the neighbourhood.

The evaluation of social measures can be either too rigorous or too benevolent. To resolve this dilemma, two strategies can be helpful, a comparative one and an incremental one.

The comparative strategy compares similar projects in different cities in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. This allows for a discussion about the feasibility of ways to implement and execute a given measure by a given institution. Although this may be complicated, the evaluation may at least result in statements about a given measure having been more or less successful compared to a similar one, e.g., “group A of social workers in city X has reached more persons of the target group than group B in city Y.”

The incremental strategy abandons the idea of a strictly defined set of criteria at the outset of the programme and focuses on an incremental evaluation, which becomes more precise ‘under way’. It allows for changes in the implementation of the programme by paying attention to the problems envisaged by the agents of change, mostly social workers employed in specific projects. This strategy of evaluation seems applicable when aims are vaguely defined and little empirical evidence about the success – measured against given aims – is available.

The Research Institute of the Department of Urban Development in Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany (ILS), has had long experience due to the 1993 programme “Urban Areas with Specific Renewal Requirements.” They suggest that both aims and outcomes should be stated in rather vague terms at the outset of the programme. As the programme progresses, aims and, in particular, outcomes are to be gradually specified by more precise indicators. This
allows evaluation to be better adjusted to problems that arise in the process of implementation.

**Who Evaluates?**

A basic question is: who should do the evaluation? The negative answer to this question is straightforward: none of the actors involved in the programme. Given the delicate problems of stating aims, desired outcomes, and indicators, everyone participating in the programme is biased. Hence, an external authority should be invited to conduct the evaluation. Persons involved in the programme can serve as key experts and suppliers of data. This requires the inclusion of an item for evaluation in the UDP budget sufficient to ensure that the evaluation can be conducted in depth, not as a mere token.
Summary

Evaluation of programmes and single projects should be an integral part of UDP’s. It is advisable for three reasons: to allocate resources effectively, to decide about the continuation of a programme or project, to improve the internal learning process.

Three problems impede a strict evaluation. First, in the perception of actors evaluation often is a task diverting time and energy from their primary activities. Second, the outcomes of the evaluation may be unpredictable because of the potential arbitrariness of the criteria used with the resulting possibility of not doing justice to the work done by given actors. Third, there is the possibility of negative outcomes when criteria are clear and undisputed, which will have negative consequences for the actors who are deemed responsible.

Two types of evaluation can be distinguished. First is the evaluation of the programme design. The main question here is whether the UDP did have an impact in terms of mobilising and committing relevant actors. Second is the evaluation of the programme in terms of its targets. The main question here is whether the programme has reached its aims as measured by the factual outcomes.

Physical measures can be more easily evaluated than social measures, although a careful analysis of the desired versus unintended consequences is advisable. Social measures are more problematic to specify and, hence, to evaluate. Two ways of evaluation of social measures seem appropriate:

• comparing results in one city with those in another one;
• specifying aims and indicators in the very process of implementing the UDP (incremental evaluation).

Indicators are used to measure the successes and failures of UDP’s. This is not just important if the programmes have the character of contracts or covenants between different political levels. Good indicators also express an attitude of responsibility of programme and project leaders. In this sense, indicators are a token of responsible action – one of the key elements of ‘sustainability’.

There are three problems related to the use of indicators:

• First, changes in the levels of certain indicators are not always the result of the UDP. They might be induced by more general developments.
• Second, if indicators do not change, this does not necessarily mean that the UDP has failed.
• Third, objective indicators may deviate from subjective indicators.

Given the delicate problems of stating aims, desired outcomes, and indicators, an external institution should conduct the evaluation.
CHAPTER ELEVEN

KNOWLEDGE – HOW TO ACCUMULATE AND TRANSFER IT

The systematic accumulation, storage, and dissemination of knowledge are an undervalued aspect of much policy-making, and UDP’s are no exception to this rule. The issue of knowledge and its dissemination is all the more important in the case of UDP’s because they are relatively new policy tools, and therefore the actors involved in many cases lack the expertise that usually is available to more traditional forms of policy-making. In terms of knowledge, three issues are important:

- supplying the (potential) actors involved with relevant information about the UDP in a timely manner;
- collecting, accumulating, and transferring the knowledge developed during the implementation of the UDP;
- linking the different forms of knowledge (scientific body of knowledge and urban practices) and the actors, that is, the producers and consumers of knowledge.

Informing the actors

Supplying information to the relevant actors has to be done on different levels and at different stages of the conception and implementation of UDP’s.

First, local authorities (mostly municipalities) have to be informed about the eligibility for financial and other means to develop and implement a UDP. Tedious application procedures may be a hurdle, discouraging some municipalities from applying at all. At the national level, care should be taken that municipalities are not only well informed, but also supported in such a way that their applications will not be turned down purely for ‘technical’, bureaucratic reasons.

Second, when a UDP is in the process of conception, participants at the local level – policy-makers, professionals and ‘clients’ alike – may need coaching and training as to their future roles, their tasks, and responsibilities in and for the UDP. Poorer cities or districts run the risk of being excluded from projects for both of the above reasons.

Third, public relations is an important consideration when setting up and executing a successful UDP. A good public relations campaign is of great importance, especially to promote new forms of urban governance. Not only does the UDP need to be advertised in order to mobilise commitment from various relevant actors, actors also need to be informed about what has been done, with what effects, what is about to happen, and with what expected results.

This is all the more important because of the integrated character of the UDP, where institutionalised ways of communicating need to be transcended. Information has to be supplied by more than just the normal written accounts such as leaflets, brochures, reports.
and the like. New and more active forms of information should be introduced, such as regular face-to-face contacts with groups of residents. In Chapter 2 we gave the example of inviting people in the district or neighbourhood to visit newly developed physical structures. A permanent effort should be made to elicit commitment from all the actors, especially target groups – mostly residents – by keeping them informed.

Storing and using knowledge developed in the policy process

When it comes to knowledge useful for the conception and implementation of UDP’s, there are basically two problems.

First, there is the more technical problem of storing relevant knowledge and making it accessible for the use of others. For instance, it can be of great use for one city to know about successful projects in other cities. Sometimes districts within the same city are not fully aware of what is going on in other districts.

Second, knowledge can be lost for more substantial and even deliberate reasons. This is often the case when, after elections, former initiatives and the knowledge that was gained through them about urban problems are often either thrown in the dustbin of history or fundamentally rearranged to suit the needs of the new (local) government.

After the last elections in Denmark, urban development and urban policy are not as high on the political agenda as they were before the elections; the abolishment of the Ministry of Housing and of the Urban Committee is a telling indication of this fact. Political attention is now being moved from a comprehensive urban policy towards more fragmented efforts, especially focussing on refugees and immigrants. The new generation of Kvarterløft projects has been moved from the Ministry of Housing to a newly established Ministry for Refugee, Immigration, and Integration Affairs. At present, it is hard to say how and if the new government in the future will use the experiences from the Kvarterløft projects, and how and if an integrated urban policy will survive.

It seems logical to pay attention to the storage of knowledge for present and future use, not only from a more technical point of view of accessibility, but also in terms of political and ideological debates in which data on different programs and projects can be helpful in focussing the discussion and legitimising different political positions.

The Internet is, of course, a good means to store and supply knowledge. Here, all kinds of good and bad practices, memoranda, new ideas, conferences and seminars, and invitations to develop ideas from other local and national contexts can find their place. A good structure of the web-site will stimulate people from many different backgrounds – for example, national, regional and local policy makers; members of relevant institutions such as housing corporations and investment companies; and, not to be forgotten, inhabitants of cities – to visit and revisit the web-site.

A good practice is the initiative of the Dutch Ministry of the Interior to establish a national ’Big Cities Knowledge Centre’ (‘Kenniscentrum Grotesteden’) in order to meet the need of the Dutch ’Big Cities’ for the exchange of information (www.kcgs.nl). It offers an interesting
overview of news, ongoing research, practical examples (organised by theme) and an option to discuss particular issues. In addition, once every month it organises a 'knowledge workshop' ('kennisatelier') with the intention of stimulating the sharing of knowledge about particular current issues. Other initiatives have also been taken in the Netherlands, like the establishment of the ‘KEI Urban Renewal Knowledge Centre’ ('Kenniscentrum Stedelijke Vernieuwing'). This centre is an independent intermediary between the supply of and demand for knowledge regarding urban renewal. As opposed to the initiative of the Ministry, KEI works with a network of organisations that are involved in the urban renewal process (www.KEI-centrum.nl). Both web-sites are in Dutch.

Also in Dutch is the web-site on Flemish urban policies (www.thuisindestad.be), which provides a number of other useful links, such as to cities’ web-sites (which usually also have an English version). Information (albeit very basic) from the federal level can be obtained from www.belgium.bu or www.statbel.fgov.be or www.ksz.fgov.be. The Platform for Viable Cities is on www.platform-viable-cities.be/proch_nl.htm

The interesting web-sites in France are only in French. On www.i.ville.gouv.fr an enormous amount of information on French urban policy can be found. The site includes links to all kinds of local initiatives.

Another ‘good practice’ worth mentioning comes from Germany. The German Institute for Urbanistics (DIFU) documents the national programme ‘Soziale Stadt’. It does not evaluate the programme, but rather collects data about the areas and provides good process descriptions. ‘Soziale Stadt’ (www.sozialestadt.de) also organises workshops and conferences on certain topics and provides a platform for the advertisement of all UDP-related events. The website is in German.

Information on metropolitan policy in Sweden can be found on www.storstad.gov.se. This site gives information in English on the backgrounds and the aims of metropolitan policy; it lists the local agreements and the municipalities involved and provides a list of institutions involved in the policy. At www.bestpractices.org one can find a searchable database with over 1600 solutions from more than 140 countries for social, economic, and environmental problems in cities. It shows how public, private and civil society sectors are working together to improve governance, eradicate poverty, provide access to shelter, land and basic services, protect the environment, and support economic development.

Of course, many more relevant websites are available. It is difficult to state which demands a good website should fulfil, because this depends heavily on the specific need for information. Some people will be satisfied with a calendar of upcoming events, while others want to have a complete analysis of different programmes or projects. It is important, even in the case of specific knowledge on local projects, to have at least summaries in English, so that the learning capacity of people and institutions engaged in UDP’s can be optimised.

**The link between research, policy, and urban practices**

There is a world to be won when it comes to the interchange between specialised research institutions, and policy practices. The development of knowledge, as well as its dissemination, can be much better organised.
In many research institutions, such as universities, a lot of relevant research for urban policy and practice is carried out. However, most policy makers and practitioners either are not aware that this knowledge exists at all, or, if they are, they think that it is not relevant for their everyday praxis. Urban researchers, on the other hand, especially the ones working at universities, carry out relevant research projects that find their way to the international scientific journals, but rarely hit the ground of urban practice. This is not only the result of publication strategies, but also because scientific analyses are not always adequately translated in a language that is understandable and useful in the practice of policy. Sometimes this is literally the case, when scientific analyses are reported in foreign languages and voluminous books. Policy makers and practitioners simply do not have the time to find their way in the enormous pile of articles and books that have been written on urban problems, urban perspectives, and urban policies by scientific researchers.

Practitioners should not be afraid to ask researchers very specific questions. It could be productive for all sides to have urban scholars take part in the conception and implementation of UDP’s. They can advise, give immediate translations of scientific knowledge, supply research capacity, and play a part in the evaluation of UDP’s. Researchers, practitioners, and all kinds of institutions (such as ministries, cities, regions, provinces, et cetera) could formulate joint, co-financed research programmes. In doing so, research could be both sound and practically useful.
Summary

The issue of knowledge and its dissemination is all the more important in the case of UDP’s because they are relatively new policy tools, and therefore actors involved often lack the expertise that usually is available to more traditional forms of policy-making.

Local authorities have to be informed about eligibility for financial and other means to develop and implement a UDP. At the national level, care should be taken that municipalities are not only well informed, but also supported in order to submit an application which will not be turned down purely for ‘technical’, bureaucratic reasons.

When a UDP is in the process of conception, participants at the local level may need coaching and training as to their roles, tasks, and responsibilities.

Public relations is an important factor in setting up and executing a successful UDP, especially to promote new forms of urban governance.

It may be productive to have urban scholars take part in the conception and implementation of UDP’s. They could advise, give immediate translations of scientific knowledge, supply research capacity, and play a role in the evaluation of a UDP.
Chapter Twelve
A Checklist for UDP’s – 30 Relevant Questions

In the first eleven chapters we explained the purpose of this Handbook and we tried to make clear how to make a successful UDP. The issues that we have raised have the character of things to do or to avoid, of things to decide about or to take into consideration. At the end of each chapter, we have summarised the main points addressed. In this last chapter, we present a final roundup in the form of a checklist, which can be used to evaluate UDP’s in the stage of conception. A draft-UDP can be put to the test by answering the questions that follow. The more positive answers, the better the odds are that the UDP will be successful. If several answers are negative, there are good reasons to reconsider the UDP as it is.

1. If the creation of employment in the district or neighbourhood is one of the targets of the UDP, has an analysis been made of what kind of employment that could be, and from where it might originate? Has a distinction been made between new and relocated employment? And, in the last case, between employment from within or from without the city or urban agglomeration?

2. Is the UDP, in curing unemployment in the targeted district or neighbourhood, also using opportunities and vacancies outside that district or neighbourhood?

3. Is the UDP based on the awareness that employment is not the only dimension of social inclusion? Is attention paid, in the form of concrete projects, to the use, establishment and strengthening of informal or communal informal networks? Is attention paid to making residents aware of their entitlements to public facilities and support?

4. If the social composition of the district or neighbourhood should be changed by the provision of new, more upscale forms of housing, are the consequences analysed for the original population in terms of changing real estate values and of the resulting mix of different groups in terms of both location and numbers?

5. Has an analysis been made of the assets and positive functions of deprived areas and run down physical structures in order to prevent viable ‘breeding places’ from being demolished?

6. Has an analysis been made of the social and cultural potential of the area of the UDP, including the possibility of strong and charismatic leadership, and of ways of tapping these potentialities?

7. Is attention paid to issues which can counter- and even outbalance the results of large scale physical restructuring and ambitious work-fare projects, such as petty crime, dirty streets, and annoying behaviour of youngsters?

8. Are statistical data available for the area of the UDP in order to monitor and evaluate its results?

9. Is the area a meaningful one in the cognitive maps of residents, both in- and outside the area?
10. Is the evaluation organised in such a way, that it is possible to monitor the results of the UDP outside the area, that is, in adjacent areas and the city at large?

11. Is the UDP so organised that fast and visible successes are guaranteed, in order to create commitment of the residents?

12. Are targets prioritized chronologically, so that evaluation of the UDP is possible in a relatively short time-span, and yet the UDP can still work towards middle and long range aims?

13. Are targets so defined that they are feasible, relevant, and likely to mobilise commitment?

14. Is the calendar of the UDP adjusted to relevant political dates such as elections, and the changes in the local administration? Does it take account of the time perspectives of different groups of residents, including those who are deprived of cultural and social capital?

15. Does the evaluation of the UDP focus on relevant and substantial targets, and not so much on bureaucratic procedures such as spending budgets before deadlines?

16. Are measures taken which increase the sustainability of the UDP’s results, for instance by developing new ways and styles of co-operation among relevant actors such as the central and local state, inhabitants, employers, real estate developers, and housing associations?

17. If the UDP aims at promoting or even developing new forms of urban governance, has it been organised in such a way that this is not just a formal issue? Is this aim rooted in concrete practices of implementing specific projects, mobilising new actors and using special budgets?

18. Is the integrated character of the UDP embodied in concrete projects tackling concrete problems, instead of in large and general meetings of every professional and each department related to the themes addressed in the UDP?

19. Are the problems and issues to be tackled in an integrated way compelling and undisputed enough to make it difficult for professionals and departments to flee their responsibility?

20. Are the budgets allocated to horizontal co-ordination attractive enough to commit the departments and professionals needed?

21. Are both project-leaders and co-ordinators powerful, convincing, and communicative enough to create bonds among different sectors and departments and their respective cultures?

22. Is participation so organised that it constitutes an integral part of the UDP? Do the form and contents of the participation correspond to the different population groups in the area?

23. Does the way in which participation is organised facilitate accommodating and dealing with existing conflicts in the area? Or does it rather invite the voicing of the ‘not-in-my-backyard’ syndrome?
24. Is participation geared to issues that can be decided upon at the district level? In other words: are the expectations raised by participation in balance with what can and cannot be decided upon at district level?

25. Is participation organised actively, in the sense that residents not only are invited to offices, but are also visited by the professionals ‘on the spot’?

26. How is the communication of the results of the UDP within the area and to a wider audience organised? Haphazardly or according to a well-thought communication plan?

27. Are different budgets sufficiently synchronised? Or do projects have to spend their money before the conditions to be successful have been created (e.g. by other projects)? In other words, have trajectories been developed?

28. How are potential private investors in the area committed to the UDP? Is there a balanced exchange of input and output, or do only private partners profit from the programme?

29. Is the covenant or contract character of the UDP sufficiently articulated and agreed upon (see detailed checklist in Chapter 9)?

30. Is an explicit evaluation procedure part of the UDP? Is the evaluator an independent, external, and expert institution? Are possible consequences of the evaluation specified? Has any mechanism been included to – positively or negatively – sanction the results of the different projects and partners?