between



ENERGY

and the



ISBN 978-99956-676-7-2

20 €

VACUUM

Besnik Aliaj , Sotir Dhamo , Dritan Shutina



BETWEEN ENERGY AND THE VACUUM!

Co-PLAN and Urban Planning in Albania

Besnik Aliaj, Sotir Dhamo, Dritan Shutina

Besnik Aliaj, Sotir Dhamo, Dritan Shutina
Tirane, 2010

Between Energy and the Vacuum

© Co-Plan
Rr."Vaso Pasha" , nr. 20
Tirane
Tel. +355 (4) 2 257808 / 2 257808
Fax. +355 (4) 2 257807
e-mail: co-plan@co-plan.org
web: www.co-plan.org

© Universiteti Polis
Rr. "Vaso Pasha" , nr. 20
Tirane
Tel. +355 (4) 2 223922 / 2 237236
Fax. +355 (4) 2 220517
e-mail: info@universitetipolis.edu.al
web: www.universitetipolis.edu.al

Authors Besnik Aliaj, Sotir Dhamo, Dritan Shutina
English translation by Olta Çakçiri
English editing by Benjamin White
Graphic Design by Gjergji Dushniku
Publisher Co-PLAN

Between Energy and the Vacuum
Tirana, Aprill 2010

Printed by afroidit botime afrojdit

Aknowledgement

This book is dedicated to all the professionals that have worked with Co-PLAN over the past fifteen years. On the behalf of these professionals and on behalf of the communities in which we have worked, we express our deep appreciation for our primary partners, who have supported us in our endeavors: Cordaid, IHS Rotterdam, Novib, the Embassy of Netherlands, the World Bank Mission, and the Austrian Development Agency in Tirana.

2010 Co-PLAN, Institute for Habitat Development

Contents

10 **Introduction**

24 **1.From a City of Basic Needs to a City of Opportunities**

66 **2.The EGUG PROGRAM: Towards Good Urban Governance!**

100 **3.Post-EGUG Reflection…**



…has been an endeavor to create patterns of hope and provide orientation in a social and political context in which the spectrum extends from the austerity of the institutional "vacuum" to the perpetual "energy" of people and society.

… is a positive way of thinking …a reading of the transformative energy and power that exist within the Albanian context …. is a hope that Albanian society is arriving on a normal path of development, and is no longer a victim of a limiting past.

... is a shifting mentality that does blame outside circumstances for our contemporary problems ...so that the situation is not the "fault" of others ...so that we and the causes of our problems are one and the same ...so that solutions rely having a relationship with problems rather than avoiding them.

... aims to shift mentalities away from looking at individual components, instead focusing on the whole system... To again treat people as active participants in the building of their own living realities, and not as passive actors.

... is an approach to the challenges of urban development in post-1990 Albania from the perspective of a core pool of experts... chronicles the story of an organization that altered field work at the level of national policy, university education, and academic scientific research.

For some time, Co-PLAN has felt the need to organise the following reflections on our efforts, which began in the context of the significant changes of the 1990s, at which time Albania was struggling to establish order in the face of chaos. Many of the ideas, reflections, and projects written about in the following pages were actualized, while others remained tentative. In writing this book, often we faced the dilemma of being critical professionals and self-chroniclers, all the while being aware of the valuable contributions of various people that have not been directly discussed in this book. This is why our writing approach combines a chronology of events, a guiding theoretical framework as well as artistic indulgences that allow us to introduce color into an otherwise dark reality. Most of all, our challenge lay in presenting the following material not merely as a chronicle of urban and territorial developments in Albania, but rather as a new approach to urban planning, urbanization and life in general. We strove to present a thoughtful approach capable of generating sound alternatives, which we are excited to share with others.

Besnik Aliaj, Sotir Dhamo, Dritan Shutina

INTRODUCTION

... It required significant effort to create models of hope and to provide a sense of orientation in a political and social situation whose spectrum extended between the emptiness of the institutional "vacuum" and the never-ending "energy" of the people and society...

This publication documents three important phases in the development of urban planning and governance philosophy in Albania, focusing on the practices of the Co-PLAN Institute for Habitat Development and its partners in Albania and abroad. Co-PLAN is a pioneering Albanian civil society organization that uses its urban planning and administration expertise in order to promote the development of good governance in society.

Co-PLAN views urban planning not merely as a technical issue, but above all as an effort to improve the structure of society, to be actively oriented and adaptive as society constantly changes and evolves. But in order to understand the development of a country's territory, one must pay heed to historical context and especially to the hindrances posed by the past, the reasons and forms of neglect, as well as society's reaction to this neglect.

The experience described in this book can also be seen as an effort to establish a profession and a science that has long been missing in Albania and the region more broadly. Over the past fifteen years, Co-PLAN has played a key role in the socio-economic and urban development of Albania, responding to the unique problems posed by this historical context. During this time, Co-PLAN's institutional structure and concomitant methodological approach have gone through three distinct phases:

I. 1990-2000: City Made by People!
During this phase, Albanian society desperately needed to face the truth about itself, and society itself required reference models. At this moment, Albanian society needed to understand that the matter of internal migration within Albania not only had negative aspects but also carried with it a significant opportunity for economic development. Thus during this phase, Co-PLAN created pilot urban upgrading schemes and community-based urban planning projects. In these efforts and under the motto 'City Made by People!' Co-PLAN enlisted the participation of citizens in urban development processes.

II. 2000-2006: "Making Cities Work!"

During this phase, Albania witnessed a deepening of the spatial crisis, both at the territorial level (manifested in sprawling construction projects undertaken in the absence of any central planning criteria) and at the urban level (manifested in the reformulated relation between city centers and more peripheral areas of the city). Albanian cities, in general, and Tirana, in particular, were beginning to take on dimensions that pre-existing control instruments were unable to cope with. What traditionally had been understood by "city" had been completely transformed by the prior decade of political and socio-economic restructuring. City-territory dynamics had changed in unprecedented ways, and a lack of understanding of these dynamics further aggravated the situation. As this new problematic became fully evident, Co-PLAN's planning expertise evolved to center on planning initiatives such as municipal regulatory and strategic plans. The Enabling Good Urban Governance program (EGUG)[1] stands out in this regard. Supported by the Dutch Government, the EGUG program focused on the cities of Fier and Elbasan. Co-PLAN's experience with the EGUG program proved to be formative, as the organization began to focus on planning instruments and took on a new motto, 'Making Cities Work!' At the same time, the EGUG program marked a new phase in Albanian urban planning more generally, as it aimed to lead professionals and municipal authorities away from traditionally used models and towards an integrated, dynamic, realistic and multidimensional urban planning approach.

III. 2006 -onwards – "Making Policies Work!"

This phase has coincided with the consolidation of national efforts towards Euro-Atlantic integration, and has been marked by reductions in international support and aid for development and planning programs. In this phase, new paradoxes and contradictions have arisen in Albanian society, as portions of the citizenry strive for new opportunities and higher living standards in difficult conditions characterized by insufficient physical and social infrastructure.

For Co-PLAN, this phase has been a time of "post-EGUG" reflection, and the organization has taken up and consolidated new instruments and methodologies under the motto, "Making Policies Work!" During this reflective phase, Co-PLAN has come to understand the importance of utilizing policy to create a critical mass of human resources armed with the necessary knowledge and expertise to enable and institutionalize positive changes in Albania. This strategic approach ultimately inspired the founding of POLIS University, an alternative school in architecture and planning. POLIS University is providing an arena for discussion and the formation of professionals in a new spirit of architecture and city planning for Albania.

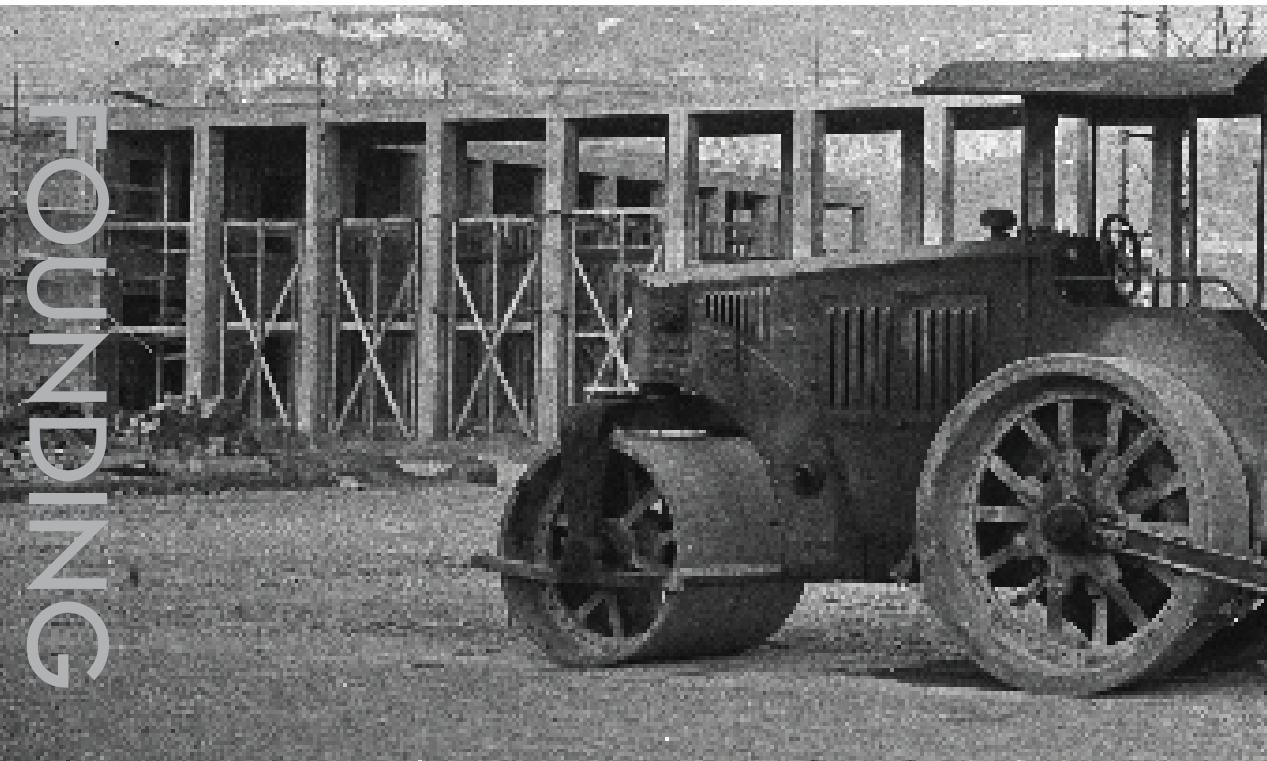
1 More information about this project is provided later in this book.

Historical overview:
Between City "Founding" and "Re-founding"

I. 1922-1944: The Monarchy Period - First "Re-founding"

The "transplant" of symbolic interventions;
Albanian cities show an extensive and spontaneous structure;
Initiation of systematic urban planning of the cities;
Moving from spontaneous to organized urban planning;
The urban "structure" of the main cities is outlined.

Before World War II, the Albanian territory was still practically feudal. This feudal structure existed throughout the period of Ottoman dominion, and continued with the proclamation of independence in 1912 and throughout the Zog monarchy and the period of Italian occupation. Up until the end of this period, Albania was 80% rural, and local traditions were often mixed with Mediterranean-Oriental elements. The only exceptions to this feudal situation lay in a number of attempts by the Zog administration to initiate urban modernization. During the period of the monarchy, the consolidation of the new Albanian state created a need for new typologies of space and new institutions. By the end of this period, the most advanced planning instruments being used were those of "urban design." According to these instruments, the urban plan aimed to be a definitive, perfected, state-of-the-art "social master-piece." It was naively believed that lines drawn on paper could magically solve the concrete problems of society on the ground, as engineers, architects, and artists came to dominate urban planning as a profession. Thus in this period, a paradigm arose in which the architect came to be viewed as a sort of "superman" whose duty it was to safeguard the public interest and secure public goods.

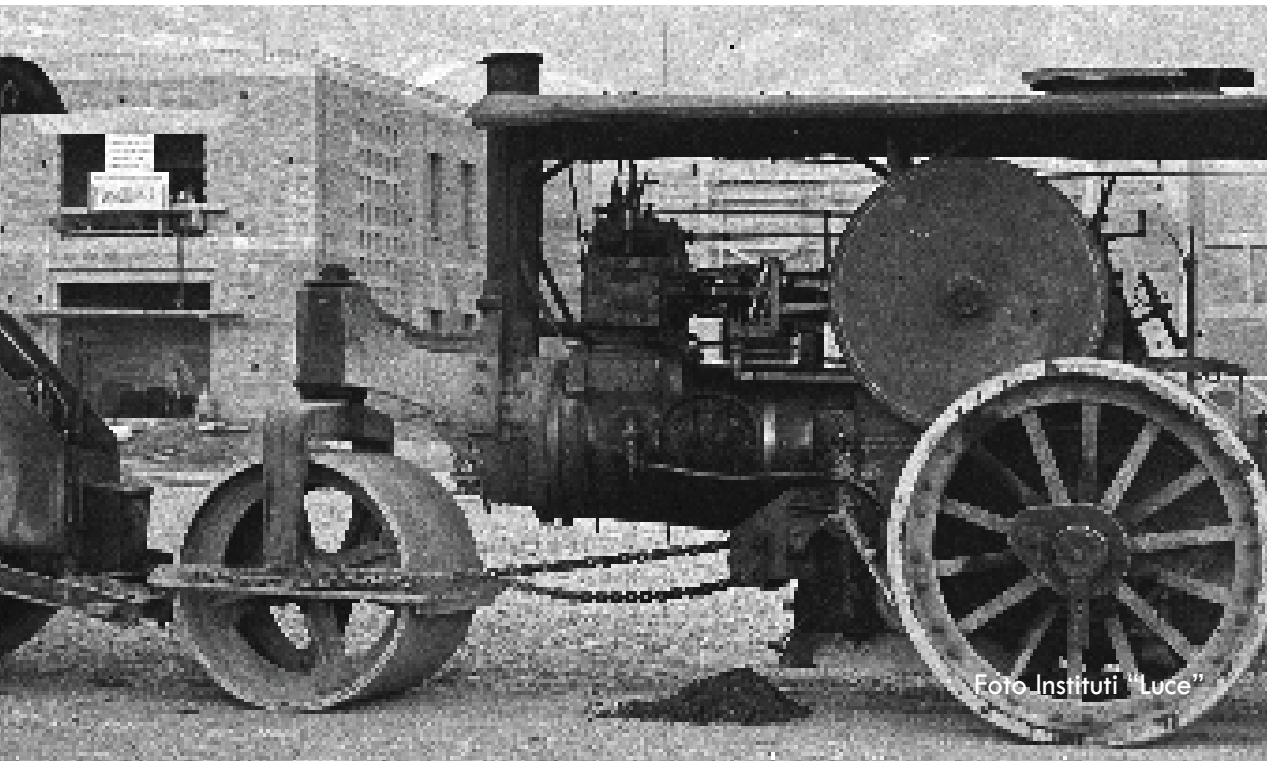


II. 1944-1990: The Centralized Economy and the Second "Re-founding"

Significant urban operations resulting in changes of city structures;
Destruction of historical architectural and urban heritage;
Centralization of planning and construction sector;
Widespread adoption of Soviet architecture and urbanism;
Loss of identity and "place" (genius loci);
Urbanism becomes an ideological instrument for the demonstration of "socialist" state power;
Foundation of the new towns of Kukës i Ri, Laç, Cërrik, Ballsh, and Çorovodë, amongst others;
Massive erasure of the traditional neighborhoods and construction of new residential areas, including prefabricated housing stock;
Majority of cities and villages provided with regulatory plans;
Cities take on larger physical dimensions;
To support the "new" collective way of life, housing standardization is undertaken. Apartments located in 4-5 story housing blocks;
Ideological limitations to forms of creative expression, and extreme reduction of the use of materials and technology;
Ideological motto: "Village = City!";
Development interventions at national scale have strong environmental impacts on the territory (e.g., marshes drying up, deforestation and terracing, hydroelectric plants, etc.).

This phase lasted more than four decades and was marked by three important developments effecting urban planning and administration: i) Post-World War II reconstruction (1945-1960); ii) Industrialization (1960-1970); iii) Self-isolation and economic collapse (1980s). By the end of the 1980s, only 35% of the population was living in urban areas, and the agricultural sector still comprised 55% of the Albanian economy[2].

2 V Misja, Y Vejsiu, at B Aliaj 1995;. Low cost housing, the case of Tirana, IHS, Rotterdam.



Notwithstanding the public investments of socialist authorities, the Albanian housing sector had become a social "nightmare." Although 230,000 residential units had been built during the communist period, at the end of the 1980s Albania's housing indicators were half those of Romania and the second lowest in Europe. Within Albania, housing indicators for some parts of the country (the northeast, in particular) were half the national average, and in these same areas, health indicators were one-tenth the value of those in the capital.

At the end of the socialist period, peripheral regions would fall into total economic and social depression as a result of a combination of factors such as the anti-urban policies and binding instruments of the socialist political apparatus; the denial of private property; structural economic impediments to industrialization; and the failure of state-subsidized economic enterprises. Local populations in peripheral regions remained hopeless and were totally neglected by the nation's new political elites. It was common for two to three families to share a single apartment. In addition, early 1990s Albania inherited at least fifty thousand families of politically persecuted people, in urgent need of housing. This was worsened by the claims of historical owners, who demanded the right to recognition, restitution, and/or compensation of their own properties.

During the socialist era, the key urban planning and administration instrument was the Regulatory Plan. Regulatory Plans practically imposed strict methodologies that sought to shape the physical space of the territory and cities while suppressing freedom of movement and therefore urban migration. Socialist urban planning was understood as an extension of the principles of architecture to the level of the city overall, and urban planning strategies were dominated and articulated primarily by architects. The predominant planning paradigm of the time was rational-functionalist and was guided by the presupposition that the planner need only be a technician, a sort of "justifier" who acts based on the dictates of the absolute political authorities. It is therefore not surprising, then, that socialist urban planning exhibited a strong ideological component.



Socialist urban planning understood itself to be scientific, and the planning solutions it derived presupposed perfect knowledge of complex data, as state institutions were understood as being mobilized to collect this requisite data. The very word "rational" in "rational functionalist" presupposes an understanding of this complexity and the efficient use of this complex data. According to socialist urban planning, planners were thus presumed to be able to collect "all" the data necessary to take "rational" decisions. Since knowledge can never be complete, such expectations were utopian at best, especially given the political conditions and limitations of Albania in this period.

The socialist urban planning paradigm had its precedents in the urban planning projects that were "imported" by King Zog in the late 1930s and early 1940s, when urban plans came to be used in Albania's larger cities. During the socialist period, this model was "enriched" with elements of the centralized planning model borrowed from communist countries. "Remains" of this resultant traditionalist model continue even in the present, effecting governmental institutions and official attitudes. It should be sufficient to recall here the interminable discussions of Albanian urban planners and state officials in the early 1990s about the "impossibility" of designing effective urban plans because the state system was no longer providing experts with the "accurate data" on which "rational" urban planning could be based. The following section presents how this "endless data" dilemma was resolved

III. 1990 - 2000: The third "Re-founding" –

The "Bathorization" of Albania and the creation of the "New Metropolitan Brand"

The first phase of the pluralist state;
Changes in political-economic-social conditions;
The state plays only a minimal role in the coordination of construction activity;
Insufficient public budgets and "anti-tax" attitudes;
Rapid and uncontrolled urbanization of Albania's main cities;
Emergence of Illegal suburbs, comprised primarily of 1-2 story residential buildings;
Densification of city centers with 10-15 story high-rise buildings;
Replacement of traditional buildings and "occupation" of public spaces;
Lack of human resources to manage urban growth;
Conservative positioning of urban planning institutions towards real problems;




Spatial Crisis
Cannot be solved with old
Pressure from de
identity, orientation,

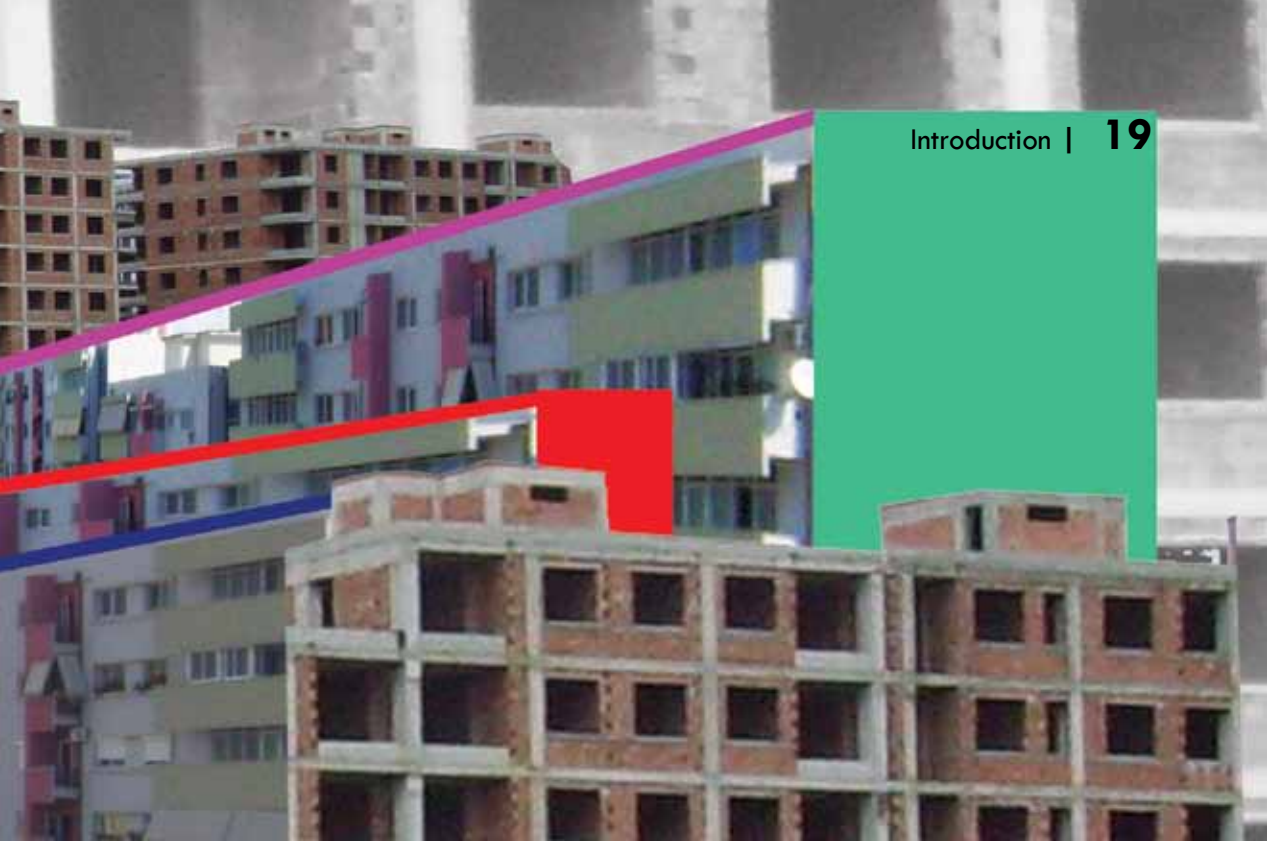

Alienation
mentalities
ensity
livable CITY???



During the 1990s, post-communist Albania went through a period of socio-political stagnation and economic decay punctuated by a series of episodes of public disorder, first in response to the 'shock' therapy of the early 1990s, then with the collapse of the pyramid schemes in 1997, and yet a third time again with the humanitarian crisis that was created by the Kosovo conflict in 1999. During this period, Albania underwent a period of rapid and chaotic urbanization brought about by the sudden privatization of the economy, decentralization of governance, and the explosion of the informal sector.

The changes of the 1990s were most typified by the unauthorized constructions that arose throughout Albania. The first neighborhood to develop informally was Bathore, located in the northern part of Tirana. From this fact, the term 'Bathorization' came to refer to the appearance of unauthorized construction sites in Albania. Unauthorized construction skyrocketed for two reasons: first, there was pent up demand for housing stock, and many Albanians were aspiring for better living conditions; second, public authorities proved to be incapable of providing legal and affordable alternatives. It must not be forgotten that by early 1990s, citizens had gained the legal right to freedom of movement, and thus many citizens began to migrate within Albania, seeking out a better life characterized by employment, housing, infrastructure, and public and social services.

Even now in 2010, local and central state institutions in Albania are failing to provide affordable opportunities for legal investment in social housing and necessary infrastructural improvements and public service provisions. Furthermore, most of the approximately 15,000 residential units built primarily by the National Housing Agency over the last two decades have come to be controlled by social groups other than the families in need they were originally designed for. Currently, the construction market is controlled by "wild," spontaneous, and unregulated monopolies, which has had the effect of making construction practically unaffordable for most the segments of Albanian society.



IV. 2000 and Onwards: Re-founding of Urban Planning

Efforts to reconfigure the coordinative and monitoring role of the state;
Weak impact of state interventions on urban planning and construction sector;
Political class begins to recognize and deal with issue of informal settlements;
Broadening of tax base and further decentralization;
"Cleaning" of informal economic activities from central public spaces, and legalization of informal housing;
Efforts to re-establish planning as a legally binding development instrument;
Planning initiatives undertaken in the mid-size cities, with a positive outlook for plan implementation;
Organization of international urban design competitions for the city centers of several Albanian cities, including Tirana;
Boom and bust in the real estate sector;
The need for urban planner/managers.

Since 2000, Albanian society has faced the challenge of the stabilizing a democratic society in the midst of radical economic reforms aimed at stimulating growth and development, and in the framework of the European integration. These developments, of course, have not come without their costs. Nowadays, though it is generally understood that resources and territory are foundational to the building of a better future, little has been done to preserve them. However, it must be recognized that, in comparison with the situation in dictatorial societies, in democratic societies, territorial administration is much more complex. This is due to the fact that the public interest must be protected by respecting the rights of the individual.

Meanwhile, key planning instruments have been gradually reformed, notwithstanding the hesitation and traditional resistance that has met their application. Disseminated first by foreign donors and later by local institutions such as Co-PLAN, Strategic/Action Plans and Development Programs have complemented pre-existing Regulatory

Plans. In contrast with the latter, however, these newer instruments have increasingly sought to think in terms of Processes rather than merely in terms of technical design.

The current phase has witnessed the creation and consolidation of the profession of urban planner as public manager and political administrator. The Co-PLAN Institute and the philosophy it represents are making concrete contributions to the establishment of this profession in Albania. Crucial in this regard has been the recent establishment of POLIS University as an alternative, architecture and urban planning educational institution for Albania and the region more broadly.

The re-founding of a profession: Beyond physical approaches

It must be underlined that in spite of efforts made over the last decade, territorial development and administration in Albania remain misunderstood by professionals and mishandled by politicians. Indeed, even though several legal initiatives on urban planning have been undertaken in the post-socialist era, most have amounted to failures. Amongst such stagnation, one thing remains sure: what in popular language is known as "urbanism" can be considered a legal and historical failure. Unfortunately, this situation continues because this backward system still 'survives' in the outdated mentalities of the professionals and decision-makers!

In the meantime, over the last two decades, the opportunity for the establishment of a new modern system of territorial-spatial planning has not been seized. Without denying credit where credit is due, it is nevertheless the case that, contemporarily, traditional "urbanism," in the sense of "codes and distances," has become more a kind of "administrative alibi" for the corruptive over-exploitation and densification of land rather than an urban management tool. It has thus become a sort of "professional toxin," practically constituting a threat to the sustainable development of the country.

Because of this "planning alibi," over the last two decades entire new neighborhoods and residential areas have been settled spontaneously, in the near total absence of any design or proper planning, and with no infrastructure and services. In these neighborhoods social and economic discrepancies have grown at frightening levels, creating negative consequences for the entirety of Albanian society. On the other hand, some peripheral regions in the north and the south of Albania have been

nearly abandoned. Thus, in the district of Tirana, although there has been dynamic urban growth, this has not kept apace with population growth. Whereas the population has tripled, developed land has only doubled without proper physical and social infrastructure, thereby creating a problematic urban model. The situation is much the same along much of the Albanian coast and in the main urban centers of the country. In these areas, automotive traffic and concomitant pollution have become unbearable for inhabitants.

In such circumstances, people have taken matters into their own hands, undertaking individualistic solutions, and aiming to avoid inflated prices and often corrupt procedures of public administration. Although informal settlers make large incremental investments in their communities, the overall invisibility and isolation of informal settlements risk producing dangerous social exclusion. This increasing gap between the "formal" city and the "informal" has the potential to provoke social tensions and political conflicts.

Realistic, inclusive planning seems to be the only rational alternative in these circumstances. Such a planning approach encourages people's integration through a market economy model in which informal assets and businesses access the formal economy. Indeed, increasing political pressure has lately forced policy- and decision-makers to undertake a national process of formalization. However, in the absence of an accompanying overhaul of the planning and urban governance system, formalization of the economy will remain elusive. Unfortunately, this sector remains one of the least reformed fields of governance in Albania. The need for a reorganization of academic-scientific institutions in this sector has thus become ever more urgent, as it is in these sites that alternative planning approaches and methodologies must be officially adapted. Currently, Albania desperately needs to invest in local capacities in the field of territorial planning and administration if changes in mentality are desired. On top of this, the extreme inertia of disrespect for the law must be fought!

This publication, summarizing the unique experience of Co-PLAN and its partners over the last fifteen years, aims to provide a modest documentary contribution to the analysis of directions for reform in this crucial sector in Albania. Across its initiatives, Co-PLAN has striven to create models of hope and provide a sense of orientation in a political and social situation whose spectrum extends between the emptiness of the institutional "vacuum" and the never-ending "energy" of people and society.

PUBLIC SPACE 222

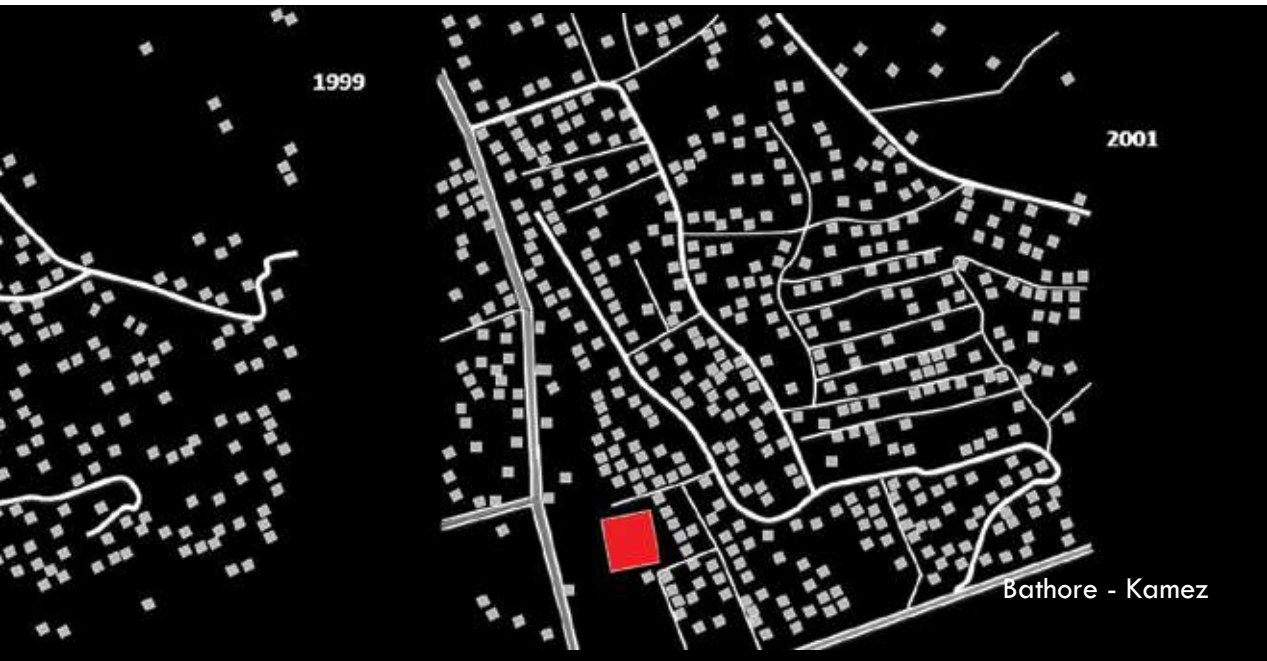




1
From a City of Basic Needs to a City of Opportunities



When can we use the word "city" to define human settlements? Historically, the word "city" implies a special process whereby socially organized human settlements are created...



...A second 'Bathore' is emerging in Durrës too – ...A 'Bathoris
'Bathorised'... – In fact every city or town in Albania has
will expel them and demolish their barracks! ... But you know, B
architects and constructors are doing with building perm
What about the 'Bllok' area just at the centre of Tirana? There
At least in Bathore it is all set in on itself... Looks like
started a project there... Did you hear that someone is opening roads
But still Gjelosh does not want to give up
back at the origin village in the mountains where he
road... His youngest kid unfortunately died two years ago simply
even think about it! . He has an electric poll in his 'own
access it when there are problems.. Life made
ter the very first night of her marriage... haha
told me that Tirana will become th
You know even Ballsh now has its own 'Bathore.' The television news announced toda
was approved... I heard it will be the BIGGEST harbour in the Balkans...! "
legalization papers'... The guys of 'urban-pla
'own' land for roads and a school... "Come on when will
David the expert from the World Bank told me th
'Skanderbeg Square', You have t
tion; otherwise we won't pay for it... The co
The World Bank said it is enough to start the project... They cheated

ation' of Albania is happening – The territory has been
its own 'Bathore'... What are you saying? We
athore isn't even the worst of it... Haven't you seen what
issions in Golem beach...?... It is a real massacre! ...
is no space left there anymore
a future 'garden city.' ... Even the World Bank has
and spaces there? A channel of 120 cm was opened...
his 'own' corner of land... ... His own house
comes from was eleven hours away from the main
because he could not be brought to the hospital in time! Terrible to
' garden.. and the power company cannot
him a bit 'wild.' His daughter returned back home af-
ha... Wasn't she a virgin...? A serious Jewish investor
e 'NEW YORK' of the Balkans...
y that the urban study for the development of the Lalzi Bay in Durres
Berisha, Nano and Rama promised
n' (what hell is their name?) wants us to give up our
you repair our roads! These 'roads' are destroying our Mercedes...
at Breglumasi is missing its own
o first tell us the price of land legaliza-
mmunity and its inhabitants are joining the project... at least 70% paid.
us once before ... What we need is not pipes, but water!







PREAMBLE

Impressions from our Diaries (1993-2005)

On a green hill at the northern periphery of Tirana, in the agricultural cooperative of Kamza, lies Bathore. Bathore was unknown to most Albanians before 1993, at which time the piles of stone and fledgling constructions first became visible from the national highway that passed by Bathore. In 1993, nobody could have imagined that the appearance of these materials in this peripheral area of the capital was really the first waves of an impending "urban tsunami."

"But they are temporary!!!"
This is what most of Albanians thought at the time.

"A second 'Bathore' is emerging in Durrës too... A 'Bathorization' of Albania is happening… The territory has been 'Bathorized'… In fact every city or town in Albania has its own 'Bathore'... What are you saying? We will expel them and demolish their barracks!

"But you know, Bathore isn't even the worst of it... Haven't you seen what architects and constructors are doing with building permissions in Golem beach...? It is a real massacre! What about the 'Bllok' area just at the center of Tirana? There is no space left there anymore, and it is getting pretty crowded… At least in Bathore it is all set in on itself... Looks like a future 'garden city.' Even the World Bank has started a project there... Did you hear that someone is opening roads and spaces there? And roads too...! A channel of 120 cm was opened... But still Gjelosh does not want to give up his 'own' corner of land... His house back at the origin village in the mountains where he comes from was eleven hours away from the main road... His youngest kid unfortunately died two years ago simply because he could not be brought to the hospital in time! … Terrible to even think about it! … He has an electric poll in his 'own' garden... and the power company cannot access it when there are problems. Life made him a bit 'wild.' His daughter returned back home after the very first night of her marriage... hahaha… Wasn't she a virgin…? You know even Ballsh now has its own 'Bathore.' The television news announced today that the urban study for the development of the Lalzi Bay in Durres was approved... I heard it will be the BIGGEST harbor in the Balkans...! A serious Jewish investor told me that Tirana will become the 'NEW YORK' of the Balkans...

"Berisha, Nano and Rama promised last night at their electoral debate that they will give us 'legalization papers'... Gjin was lucky because his house happened to be right next to the main road... All he needed to do was open a 'window' facing the garden-fence to start a 'mini-market'... One week later all the neighbors did the same... Did you hear that Marta, Mark's widow was really unlucky? All she has for herself and her six kids is 80 square meters and three big bunkers… Hahaha. Come on, don't laugh! She lives there… The guys of 'urban-plan' (what hell is their name?) wants us to give up our 'own' land for roads and a school... But we have paid for the land! …Yes Gjin, but you paid to thieves not to the state…
"Come on! When will you repair our roads!? These 'roads' are destroying our Mercedes... Man we will not feed you! You must learn how to get the fish yourselves… David the expert from the World Bank told me that Breglumasi is missing its own 'Skander-

beg Square'... I think he means identity… but it is sufficient that at least the bus stops somewhere there...! You have to first tell us the price of land legalization; otherwise we won't pay for it... They cheated us once before on the water-pipes... What we need is not pipes, but water! …The community and its inhabitants are joining the project... at least 70% paid. The World Bank said it is enough to start the project…
"Mahmut the alderman is rushing to complete the roof of his house without first completing the walls. His neighbor told me that he wants to do that before 'They' take pictures from the sky... At least the roof will appear and he'll get the papers... You see, he is the cousin of an elected Member of Parliament… Even in the church the priest invited everyone to apply for the papers… Vote for US! We will give you the papers for the houses... And then, even if the new plan destroys my house, I will be compensated... But you know before the plan can demolish my house, I will sell my land again... I am in contact with a construction 'boss' who will build an eight-floor building on my land. I am on the main road... and the main square of the plan is right in the front... everyone would buy my land... At least my children will be rich one day..."

Retrospective '0' – 1993

The international development organization Cordaid Holland (then known as Cebemo) carried out an investigatory mission in post-communist Albania.
Despite various challenges, experts Jan Last and Joep Van Zijl identified the first signs of an approaching wave of informality; urgent need to prevent this situation via community organization and participatory planning; lack of local capacities to realistically handle the situation and initiate community-based participatory planning.
Given these conditions, while local capacities were still to be identified, Cordaid Holland began to think about collaborating with the 'Don Bosco' Center, a social development program in northern suburbs of Tirana (specifically, in Breglumasi-Lapraka, the area of Tirana's one-time building materials factory), financed by the Catholic Church and implemented by the Italian NGO, Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo (VIS).

New Influxes and the First Signs of Neglect:
During the first four years of transition (1991-1994), Tirana's population increased at a rate of 7-9% per year, or 30-35 thousand inhabitants per year, which is the equivalent of 3-4 mid-size Albanian towns. These first years of transition marked the end of the traditional Albanian city, imprisoned by the 'virtual walls' of socialist-era urban boundary lines. This development led to the expansion of Albanian cities beyond 'themselves' and to the growth of suburbs. It seemed that the old mechanism of urban concentration had failed, and was being naturally substituted by waves of uncontrolled expansion never before experienced in Albania. In these conditions, the most developed regions of the country were gradually transformed into metropolitan-like areas, often without identity or ownership. The individual fragments of such metropolitan areas are still not well connected by public transportation systems.
In the early 1990s, Albania entered a radical phase of political, economic, and social transition, moving from a centralized economy to a market economy. In the preceding





four to five decades, the socialist authorities had been responsible for almost everything including housing and employment. Private property and religious beliefs were forbidden by the constitution. But suddenly in the 1990s, concepts such as democracy, pluralism, free movement, market economy, private property, and human rights, although still not fully understood, started to become part of everyday vocabulary. Under these conditions, authorities were unprepared, both financially and in terms of human capacity. Amongst the countless political priorities being discussed in Albania, urban planning and administration were thought of as peripheral issues. Thus initiative for planning was completely left in the hands of citizens and local communities. Consequently, there was no room for new, alternative forms of planning, which could have helped to prevent chaos and oriented private investments.
Local and international development organizations played an important role in piloting new approaches and capacities. These development organizations were supported by nongovernmental structures and governmental programs of bi/multilateral cooperation. Co-PLAN emerged as one of the pioneers in this area.

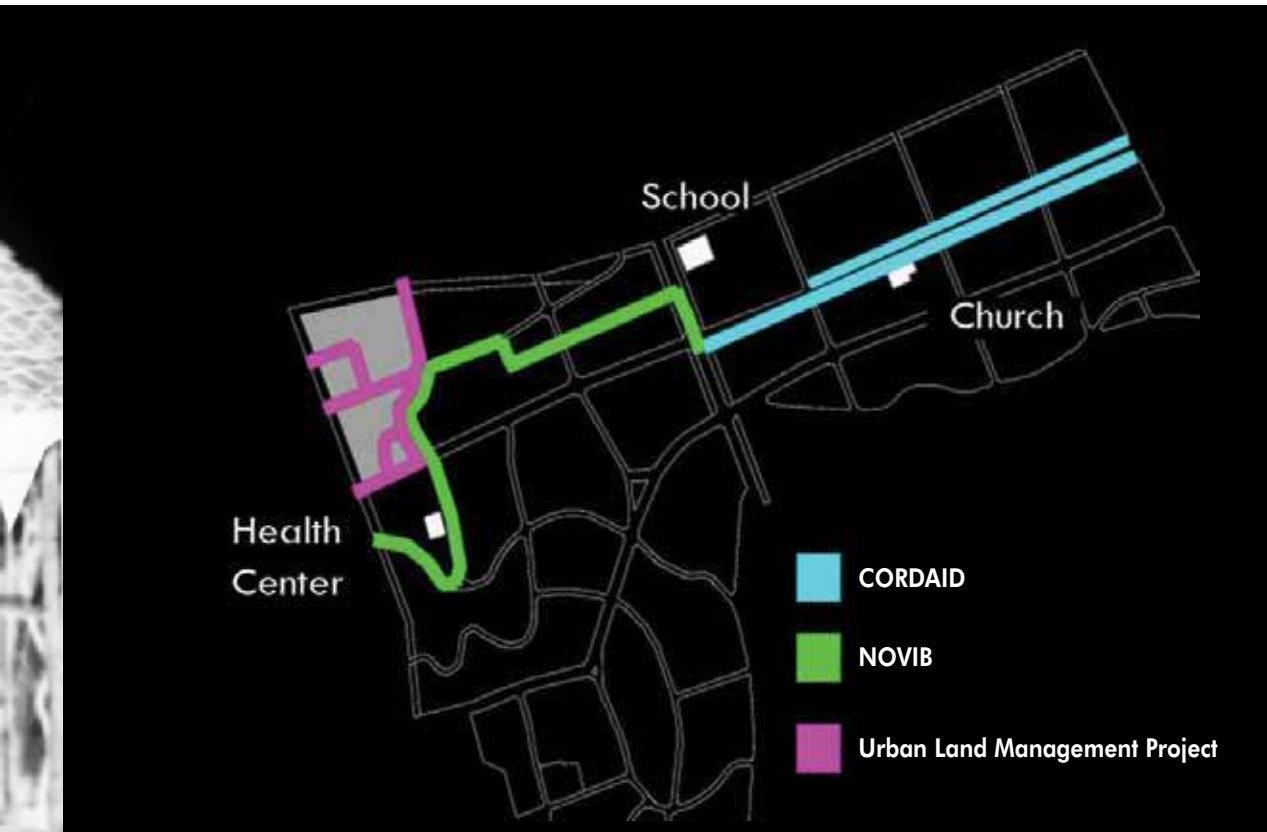
From Neglect to "Resistance" to Changes:
Dutch development organizations such as Cordaid and the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies, Rotterdam (IHS) became the primary pioneering institutions investing in local capacities and experimenting with urban development programs, the majority of which were implemented by Co-PLAN. At this time, the Albanian government made its first official attempt in these matters with the establishment of a Land Management Task Force near the Ministry of Public Works. Supported by USAID from 1994-6, this project brought together the insights of experts from the Planning Unit of Harvard's Graduate School of Design, to bear on urban planning issues in Albania. This unit developed a pilot 'site and services' housing scheme for Albania, which officials ultimately failed to support.
Unfortunately, throughout the 1990s Albania remained unable to take advantage of the generous international assistance available in the field of spatial/urban planning and physical infrastructure. For example, at this time attempts were made to plan and

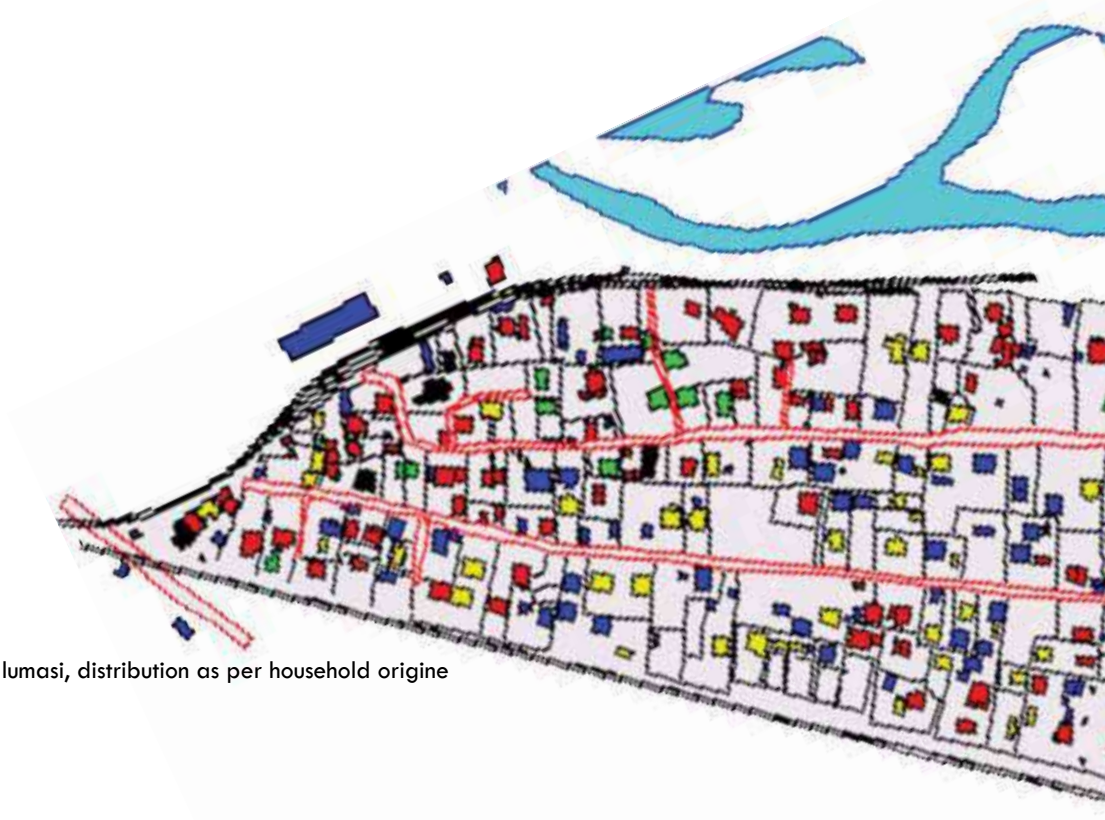


reconfigure the "Greater Tirana" region (nowadays called the metropolitan region). These initiatives elicited realistic socio-economic observations about the primary challenges facing the emerging metropolis of Tirana. However, due to misunderstandings and disagreements between local and central institutions, the plan was not completed until 2002, and was ultimately never completely approved.

In a similar case, the Austrian government assisted the Municipality of Tirana in designing an urban and public transport study. Amongst other recommendations, the study provided an efficient formula for the transformation of existing urban patterns in Tirana. Public-private partnerships were introduced as an instrument aimed at establishing clear responsibilities in matters related to public space and infrastructure. Unfortunately, however, the study was ignored, and in practice, urban developments in the Tirana were driven by private interests with no consideration of the public good. By ignoring the development "formula," a vacuum was created in which corruptive development procedures were established, based on the principle of mere "technical urban distances." Urban development thus continues to favor individual parcels of land, rather than integrated urban units. Authorities were apparently indifferent to the underground infrastructure study financed by the Japanese Government (JICA).

These new planning processes were not easily understood by local experts, who were steeped in the methods of traditionalist planning. These local experts were hesitant to adopt new planning methods because they feared they would lose out with changes to the status quo. Meanwhile, official urbanism remained in its "virtual reality" and further deepened the crisis. Although many sectors in the country were going through radical reforms, this was not true with regard to urban planning. To the contrary, urban planning remained a victim of the totalitarian mentality, according to which the state was the only stakeholder. However, this dramatic situation would later lead to a desperate need for a reorientation of the urban sector towards new urban paradigms. Subsequently, by investing in Albanian development projects, institutions like UNDP, the World Bank and other bilateral donors would become important actors.





Breglumasi, distribution as per household origine

Retrospective "1" – 1995-1997
Chronicle of Co-PLAN's first project in Lapraka

Design and implementation of the "Urban upgrading pilot program" in the informal area of Breglumasi, Lapraka-Tirana:
Cordaid Holland sends a program manager to Albania.

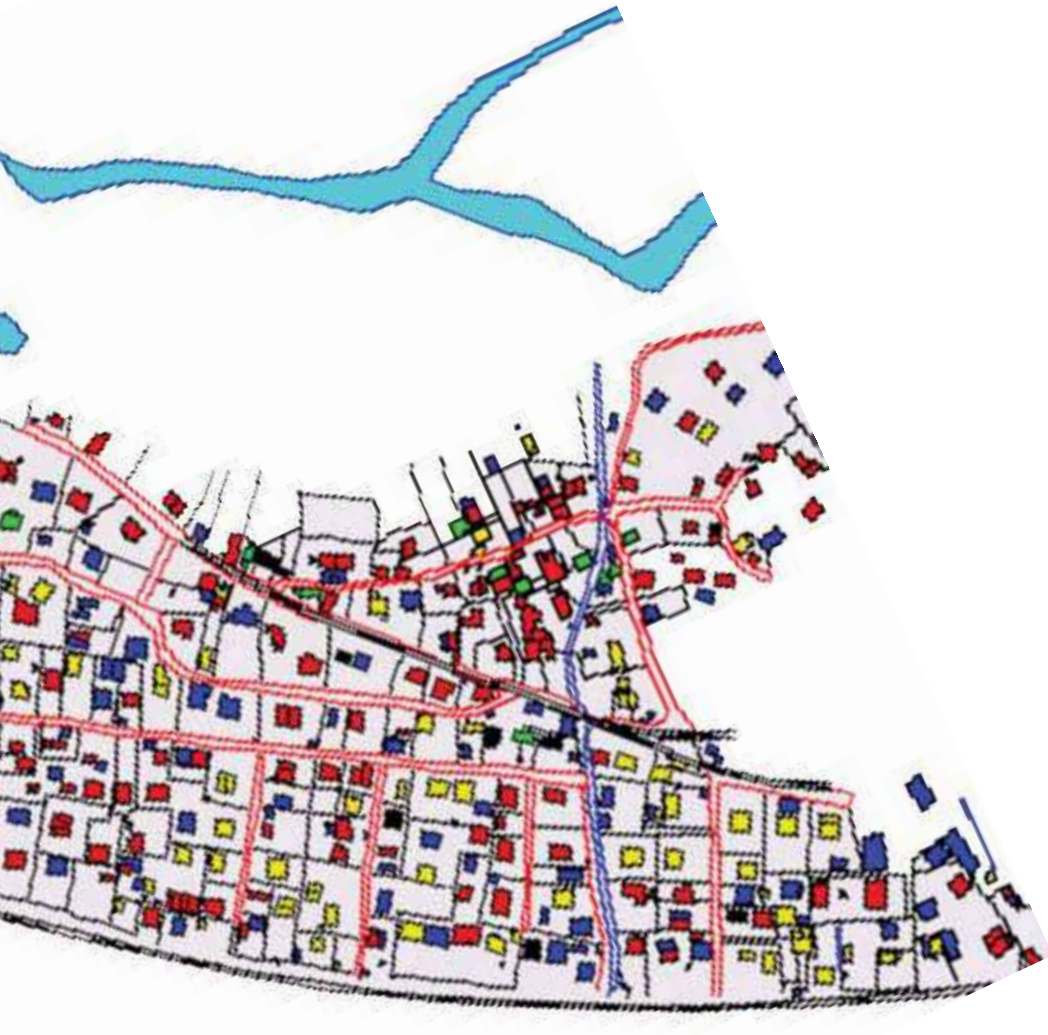
In addition to his primary task of implementing the Lapraka Program in collaboration with the 'Don Bosco' centre, Sef Slootweg identified the necessary staff to build up local capacities and to transfer responsibilities to the local level.

Dritan Shutina, Luan Deda, etc, and the Italian and Albanian volunteers of the "Don Bosko" Social Center created the very first team that started working in the field.

Besnik Aliaj, a young University lecturer, joined the Breglumasi project. He was encouraged by John Driscoll to pursue his post-university studies in the Netherlands. His final thesis tackled housing and planning alternatives in transition-era Albania by looking at the lessons of the Lapraka project.

The Lapraka project was successfully completed in the summer of 1997, under the conditions of socio-political turmoil that followed the collapse of the Albanian pyramid schemes. Because of its feeling of co-ownership, the community of Lapraka itself protected its investments. This was in contrast to other "gift-type" projects that in many cases were looted.

The first efforts to change mentalities...
Community leadership representing more than 3,000 informal settlers was consolidated

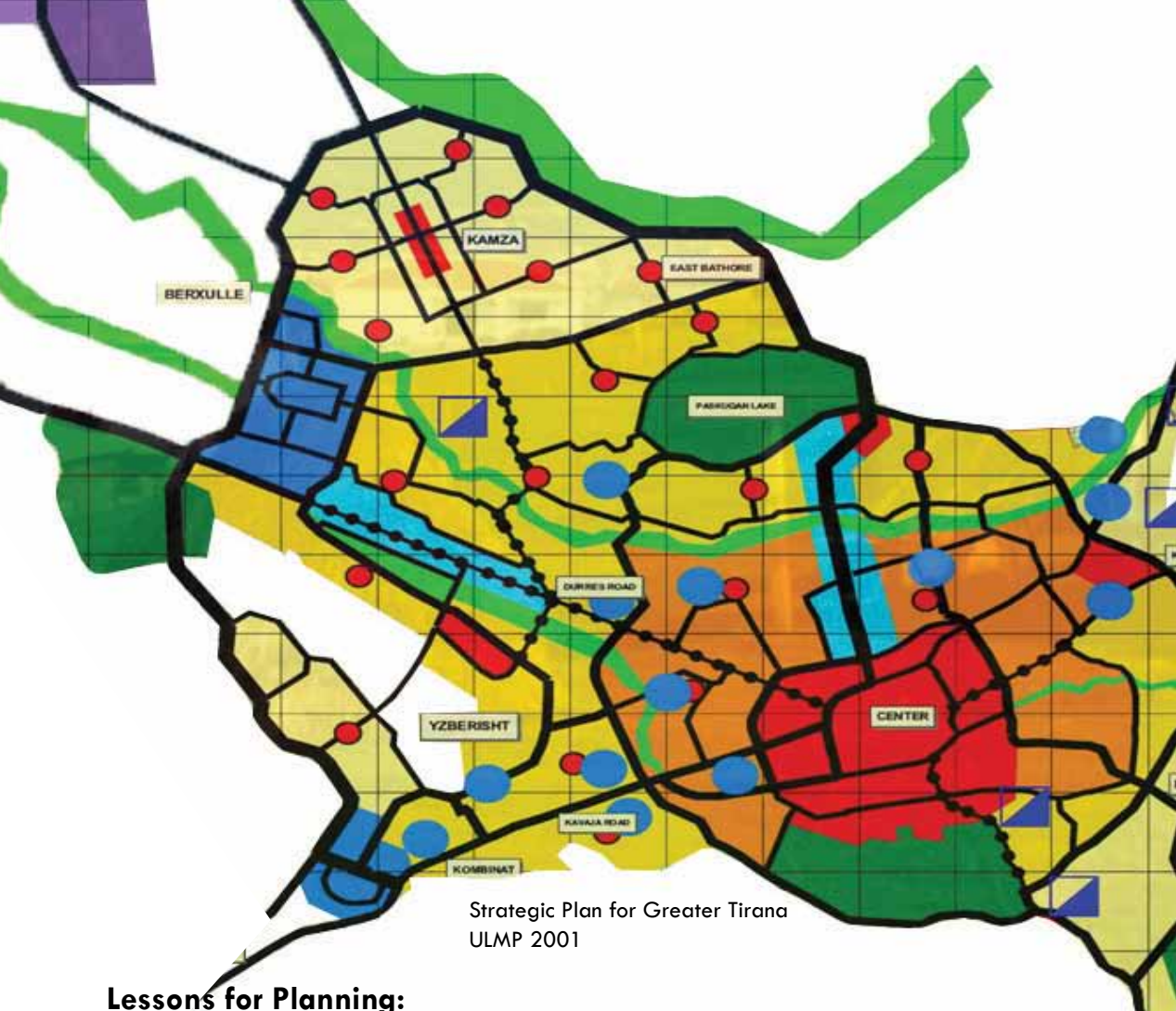


through a process of democratic elections. This representative body was legally registered as a formal Community Based Organization (CBO). Consequently, contact with local authorities was established.

The area was planned with the consensus of at least 70-75% of the inhabitants. A community social center was developed, with an ambulatory care center, a kindergarten, a playground. The local community covered at least 20% of associated costs. In addition, three kilometers of road and public space were reopened and improved through participatory processes. Extensive work was done with vulnerable groups such as youth and women. As people began to tear down walls and fences to clear way for a road that was being constructed, a change in mentality began to become apparent.

The Lapraka project was officially evaluated by the donor (Cordaid), and by an independent urban expert from IHS Rotterdam, Peter Nientied. Upon his recommendation, the Albanian staff transformed the Lapraka Program into a non-governmental, not-for-profit, non-political organization. The NGO was named Co-PLAN, Center for Habitat Development, which stands for the "co-operative planning." The concept of "Process" was taken as the central principle of the organization.

Ultimately, a team of young Albanian experts, trained and assisted by specialized international institutions, were able to successfully pilot in Tirana a participatory urban planning project using principles of self-help housing and incremental development approaches.



Strategic Plan for Greater Tirana
ULMP 2001

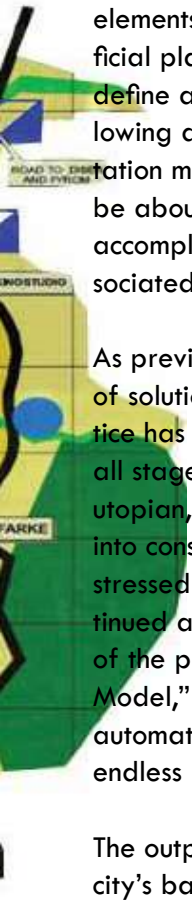
Lessons for Planning:

The "Upside Downing" of the Planning System

Hopes for changing the traditional planning paradigm

From the beginning of the process of political and economic change in the early 1990s, the classic planning sequence – *Plan, Supply infrastructure, Build and Inhabit* - appeared to be deformed. In contrast, the arrival of new inhabitants constituted only the first step, with home construction, infrastructure provision, and planning only being addressed subsequently. In this situation, planning aimed only to improve the de-facto situation of spontaneous developments. This "paradoxical" situation is typical not only for informal areas but also in so-called formal areas, often designed by architects. In such conditions, characterized by the near absence of official oversight, the identification and legitimacy of local leadership becomes imperative. Consequently, it is also crucial to establish consensus between the community and authorities. The community is seen as a partner in designing new, realistic and feasible plans for physical and social improvements. Such community partnerships allow local needs and priorities to be identified, while also facilitating community participation in project implementation.

The main challenge of this planning approach has been the overcoming of prejudices and the acceptance of the fact that planning is not only related to physical dimensions. Planning it is not merely or only a "perfect" graphic design, as it was typically traditionally conceived. At both the local and national level, planning in fact requires extended political, economic, and social analysis, and it must be accepted by its beneficiaries. Thus the establishment of an alternative professional research institution such as Co-PLAN, which was unimpeded by "official" planning practices, constituted an innovation that opened up local debates, evoking both support and opposition.



The "gap" between the official planning system and reality

It is critical to analyze and fully understand the traditional paradigm, as many of its elements continue to create a strong resistance to new urban planning practices. Official planning practices of the time were characterized by what Taylor and Williams[3] define as the "traditional paradigm" in urban planning. This was reflected in the following areas: (i) ineffective institutional structures that resulted in powerless implementation mechanisms; (ii) in the scope of planning (i.e., what planning was understood to be about); (iii) in the methodology of planning (i.e., which methods planners use to accomplish their work). In this regard, planning processes are essential, as is the associated sequence of steps and techniques used in planning practices.

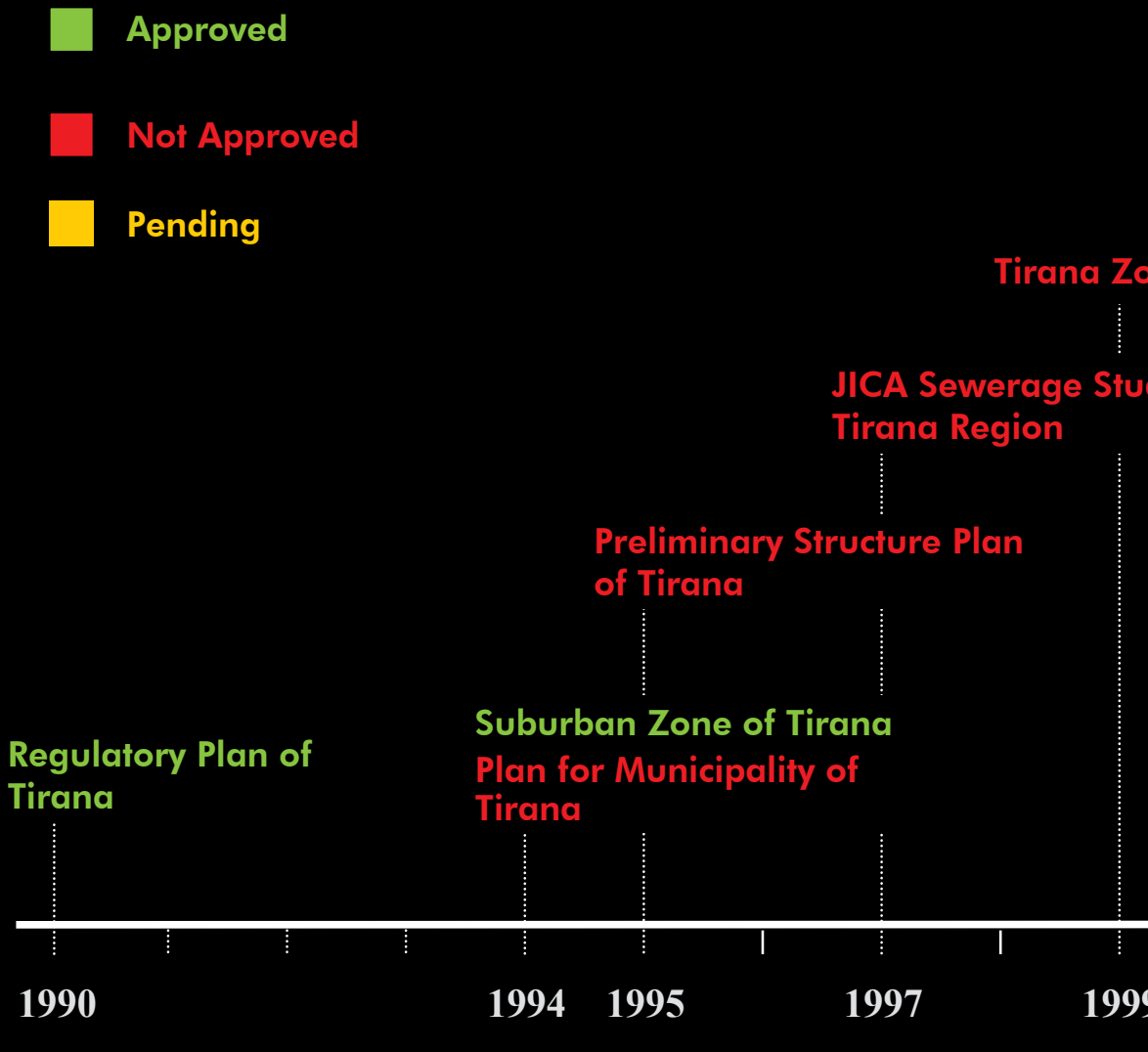
As previously mentioned, the traditional paradigm presupposes the determination of solutions based on a certain understanding of complex data. But, as actual practice has shown, in reality "vagueness" and "imperfection" plague data analysis at all stages of the planning process. The traditional paradigm can thus be considered utopian, because knowledge can never be complete. In fact this notion must be taken into consideration at each step of the planning process. On the other hand, it must be stressed that information collection is expensive and should thus normally be discontinued at precisely the point at which this cost begins to exceed expected benefits of the planning process overall. A typical example is provided by the "Masterplan Model," which official institutions at the time understood as an "instrument" that would automatically bring changes to particular situations. Because data collection was an endless process, within this paradigm, reality was built virtually.

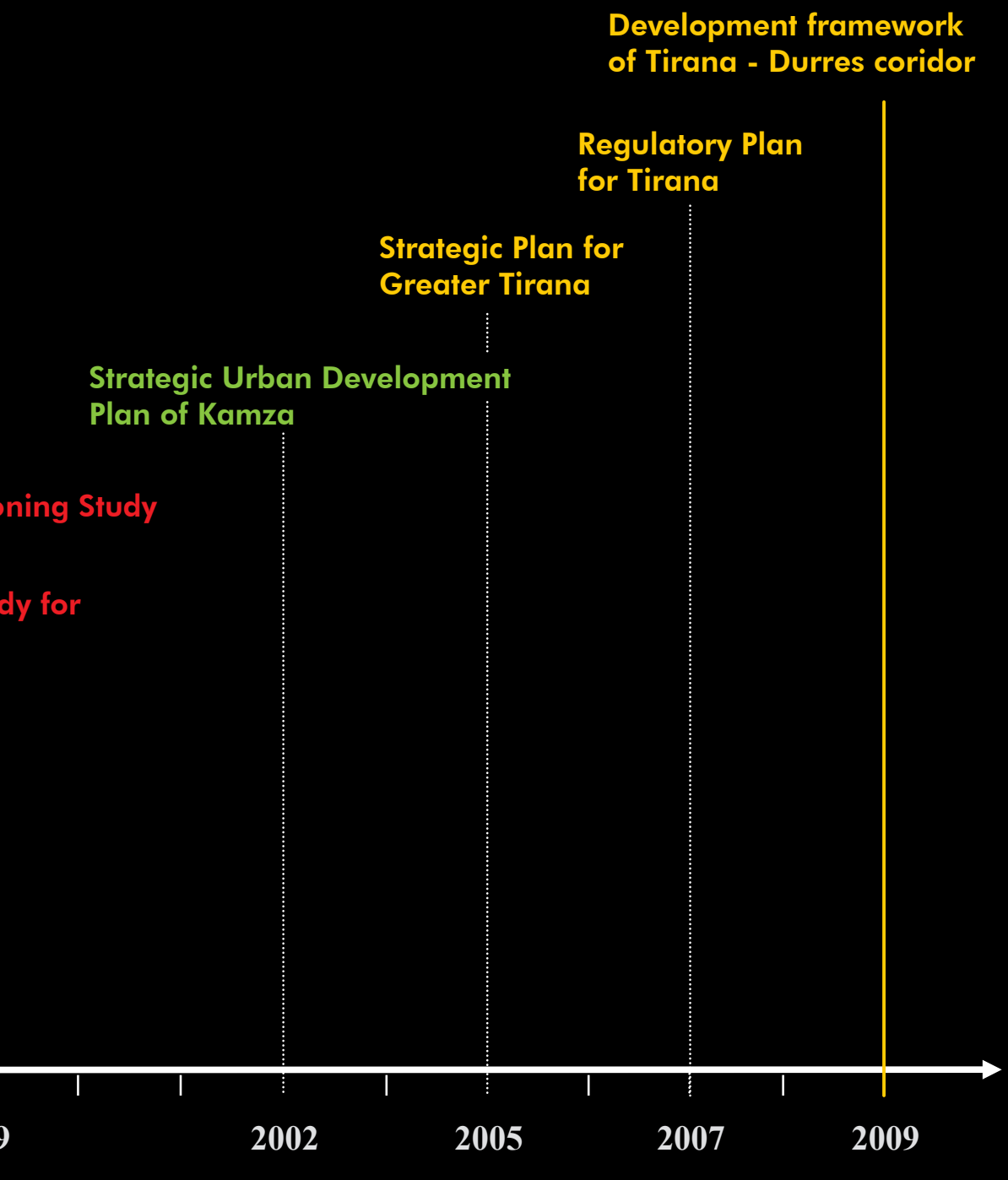
The output from this approach, "the master plan," is a kind of photograph of how the city's basic land use and circulation pattern should look at some future point in time, projecting forward from past trends. This paradigm, which stems from architectural and engineering traditions going back nearly a century, has the following characteristics (Taylor and Williams 1982): (i) Non-realistic long-range emphasis: Project time frames span 20 to 30 year periods, usually with no phasing shown; (ii) Product over process: The traditional approach draws up a static blueprint or map, as a sort of end in itself, emphasizing the plan as a product rather than focusing on setting into motion a dynamic planning process. As with an architect's floor plan of a building, the concept entails a strictly linear methodology for producing city plans, with the city being treated as if it were a single and unified, giant piece of architecture. However, this approach was typically vague as to how the city should reach its planning objectives; iii) Strong physical emphasis: This approach usually limits the scope of its proposals to land use, circulation, and other physical infrastructures and elements that can be mapped; iv) Non-strategic quality: The land-use zoning plan tends to cover every square meter of the urban area with ideal patterns of land use and design, population distribution, and industrialization, even though this is irrelevant and unrealistic; v) Lack of interaction with users: Little attention is given to the needs and concerns of the city's population, especially low-income groups[4].

The situation described in the preceding paragraphs illustrates the sizeable gap between the official planning system and actual reality in Albania. The imposition of blueprint plans in an authoritarian fashion is a rudiment from the past that reinforces

3 John L. Taylor and David G. Williams, 1982 – Urban Planning Practice in Developing Countries, Pergamon Press

4 John L. Taylor and David G. Williams, 1982 – Urban Planning Practice in Developing Countries


Approved
Not Approved
Pending
Tirana Zo
JICA Sewerage Stu
Tirana Region
Preliminary Structure Plan
of Tirana
Suburban Zone of Tirana
Plan for Municipality of
Tirana
Regulatory Plan of
Tirana
1990
1994
1995
1997
199



"The Odyssey" of urban plans in Tirana
Adjusted from J.Driscoll Harvard Center for Urban Development Studies

the institutional gap between those who prepare plans and those who implement them. Those who worked in Albania during this period cannot deny that what has been described above is a traditionalist mentality with strong technocratic tendencies. The National Planning Institute was recognized as the sole government agency responsible for preparing regional and municipal master plans. While the inefficiency and lack of resources of this institute were well known, it was not clear who was responsible for preparing and implementing which type of municipal and regional planning (Nientied 1998). The imposition of "blueprint" plans in an authoritarian way by institutions that no longer had the competencies to do so exacerbated the chaos.

Other trends in urban planning theory

The **incremental planning** model represents an important development. Inspired by authors such as Linblom[5], the theory was developed as a criticism of the rationalist model, which appeared to be unrealistic about the ability of planners to collect "all" the data as a precondition for successful planning. Incremental planning, in contrast, foregrounds the inherent incapacity of planners to foresee all possible effects. According to Linblom and his supporters, planning should be seen as a process of incremental cooperation between different units and agencies. Indeed, such incremental planning may be independent rather than centralized.

Furthermore, according to the incremental planning approach, it is almost impossible for planners to know "all" information before making their decisions. However, planners can continue to obtain information during and after the completion of the decision-making process itself, through continuous feedback that even allows for some "mistakes" to be made. Often this process is called "learning by doing." According to this model, objectives are not achieved based on perfect knowledge, but rather incrementally. The model assumes that the knowledge

5 Ch Lindblom, The science of Muddling Throw, 1959



needed to make planning decisions is often scattered across numerous people and institutions. This is in contrast to the previous centralized data model. Instead of being monopolized by one "super-planning agency," information is held by several agents that can be spread over various governmental departments, the private sector, and interest groups. The model utilizes negotiation as a technique of collecting the scattered knowledge/data that are indispensable for policy-making processes.

Cooperative planning represents another very important trend. This approach represents the most radical "attack" on the technocratic-rationalist models. According to authors such as P. Healey,[6] rationalist planning's emphasis on scientific knowledge excludes other forms of knowledge, such as practical know-how. Such forms of knowledge are not scientifically measurable and cannot be translated into quantitative indicators. While incremental planning represents an improvement as compared to the rationalist model, incremental planning still privileges professional experts. In contrast, cooperative planning is based on local, subjective knowledge of the public in general.

According to Healey, decentralized forms of knowledge should be taken into account in the planning process, and not only expert opinions. Thus proponents of cooperative planning promote institutional situations that encourage community participation, whereby all interest groups, and especially those directly affected by processes at hand, are given a chance to express their opinions. Cooperative planning is thus related to the concept of "citizens' empowerment," which implies public participation in decision-making. Through such participatory practices, arbitrary decision-making can be avoided, and it is possible to increase the sense of responsibility amongst involved parties. Cooperative planning is thus able to incorporate entire types of information that wouldn't be possible to collect within the logic of top-down planning models in which technocrats act in isolation from others.

6 P. Healey, Collaborative Planning, London 1997





Bathore 1
Density 1997



Bathore 1
Density 2002



Source Co-Plan & ULMP

The “Upside Downing”

The “gap” between the officia

"Resistence

Hopes for
the traditional pl

of the Planning System

l planning system and reality

" to change

changing
anning paradigm

Traditional planning:

Urban transformation in Albania, after the `90

PLAN
BUILD INFRASTRUCTURE
BUILD HOUSING
OCCUPY



informal urban development:

OCCUPY
BUILD HOUSING
BUILD INFRASTRUCTURE
PLAN



URBAN EXPLOSION

OUR BELIEVE

OPLE

T



Retrospective "2" – 1998-2003:

The contrast and challenge with the traditional planning system continues!

Shift from the "Roads to Stronger Civil Society" project in Lapraka to initiation of projects in pilot areas of the Municipality of Kamza. Replication of the Kamza model at a higher scale. From community to national territorial policies!

The "Roads to Stronger Civil Society!" Program, initiated as a pilot project in Lapraka, Tirana, is consolidated and scaled up.

The "Roads" model is replicated in Bathore, the largest informal area of the country, located just north of Tirana. The pilot plan applied to an area of 13 ha, which was later expanded to 400 ha. Groups were selected to represent the community by participating in planning processes. These representative groups were subsequently recognized by the Court of Tirana as formal institutions. They led planning processes on the ground, constructing several kilometers of roads and public spaces, as well as a community center featuring a kindergarten, sports, and health care services. Local officials opened an office at the center.

The "Roads" program was followed by a government project, co-financed by the World Bank, known as the "Urban Land Management Program" (ULMP). ULMP allowed for further elaboration of Co-PLAN's planning philosophy at a larger-scale. Albanian experts from the World Bank, Arben Bakllamaja and Sotir Dhamo, as well as foreign experts such as John Driscoll, David Coock, and Toru Konishi, oversaw project implementation.

At this time, Co-PLAN coordinated its activities with those of the World Bank, replicating the pilot planning concept in four other areas of the city. These efforts aimed to inspire public officials to undertake reforms and to design flexible urban development policies. Co-PLAN contributed by conducting several socio-economic surveys that provided baseline data allowing initiation of project implementation. Co-Plan sought to identify and empower local leadership, while improving physical access to the communities. Co-PLAN's CORDAID financed programs synergized the ULMP project in several areas of Kamza and Tirana. Both ULMP and Co-PLAN lobbied the Parliament to approve the very first legal act with regard restitution of properties to historical owners at the Bathore/ Lapraka sites. This paved the way for formalization and legalization of these settlements

The ULMP project utilized a cost-sharing approach that was extended to other cities, including Fier and Librazhd, and proved to be useful in both formal and informal areas. The ULMP program was not merely an engineering project, ultimately encouraging inhabitants to more frequently interact with authorities.

The Dutch development organization NOVIB collaborated on Co-PLAN's CORDAID-supported projects, thereby allowing several development initiatives to be pursued in concert. Projects were implemented in the cities of Elbasan, Krujë, Peshkopi, Fier and Korçë. Thus, the participatory planning approach was applied extensively to formal and informal settlements, including Roma settlements

Co-PLAN and IHS Rotterdam Holland assisted in the design of a Strategic Urban Development Plan for the Kamza Municipality. The Kamza plan was one of the few to be approved at the national level both by local and central government. The plan design process was treated as a capacity building exercise. The Kamza initiative was sustained in the difficult moments of socio-political unrest.

The Kamza initiative had effects beyond the municipality itself. In Tirana and fifteen other major cities in Albania and Kosovo, Co-PLAN facilitated a series of publications, open public forums, trainings, and sensitization campaigns. These efforts were supported by UNDP, UN-Habitat, OSI, ACSF and OSCE, amongst other organizations.

Co-PLAN's success has been at least in part attributable to the organization's commitment to strengthening its own professional capacities. During this time, Co-PLAN attracted internationally trained experts, who often financed their own studies. This led to a core team of 20-25 people including domestic experts like F. Kuçi, R. Toto, A. Gjika, E. Goxhaj, O. Arapi, J. Cila and D. Nikolla, amongst others, and international experts like A. Hartkoorn, S. Kelling, and V. Mercz. The UNDP and World Bank gave Co-PLAN positive professional evaluations, lauding the organization as a positive example of how to build a transparent financial system.

In 2005, Co-PLAN presented a public platform for territory administration and economic formalization to the Parliament and other relevant political actors. This agenda was partially adopted in several legal initiatives undertaken after 2005. In 2004-5, at least ten Co-PLAN experts engaged in public administration or international organizations. Throughout this time, Co-PLAN has maintained its independence and sustainability. If there were a formula for success, it might be seen to lie in the following key words: "sustainability," "local ownership," and "shared values."





Implications for Planning:

The application of the participatory planning model at a larger scale in Tirana and its replication in other cities becomes an argument in favor of the advantage of participatory planning methodology in Albania, in spite of the restrictions and difficulties encountered in project implementation. However, the transition from the community/neighborhood level to the city/municipality scale often requires creativity and adaptations of planning methodologies. At these higher levels, planning becomes more complex, especially when it comes to identifying shared interests between communities and professionals, and between local and central decision-makers. For such high level planning to succeed, planners must muster their negotiation skills.

At this stage, Co-PLAN consolidated a planning strategy that attends to the unique challenges posed at each level of planning. Thus at the community level, participatory planning requires the reorganization of neighborhoods into basic units, comprised of subdivisions of 15-25 households sharing infrastructure and services. This basic unit is where the need for a community compromise as well as the need for planning itself, starts. Considering this, Neighborhood Development Agendas (NDA) were subsequently designed for each neighborhood. Such exercises in community planning encourage consensus. For local authorities, they also allow for political-technical visions to be integrated with overall city development. Furthermore NDAs facilitate the design and approval processes of regulatory/strategic plans, which are becoming increasingly acceptable and implementable to authorities and communities.

At the ***city level***, the participatory planning approach aims to coordinate with central institutions and government. For example, Kamza's Strategic Urban Development Plan was coordinated with planning processes for the greater Tirana region.

This experience shows that, notwithstanding the considerable political and financial support provided for the latest plan, the only part of the plan that was fully approved was participatory planning exercise of the Municipality of Kamza.

Overall, the decentralization process has presented numerous opportunities for participatory planning processes, while simultaneously making the problematic of the local more complex. Even given the practical and political challenges of decentralization, changes to Albanian society since the 1990s have required that development shift focus away from "small scale emergency-type projects" to center instead on "policy and development-type projects."

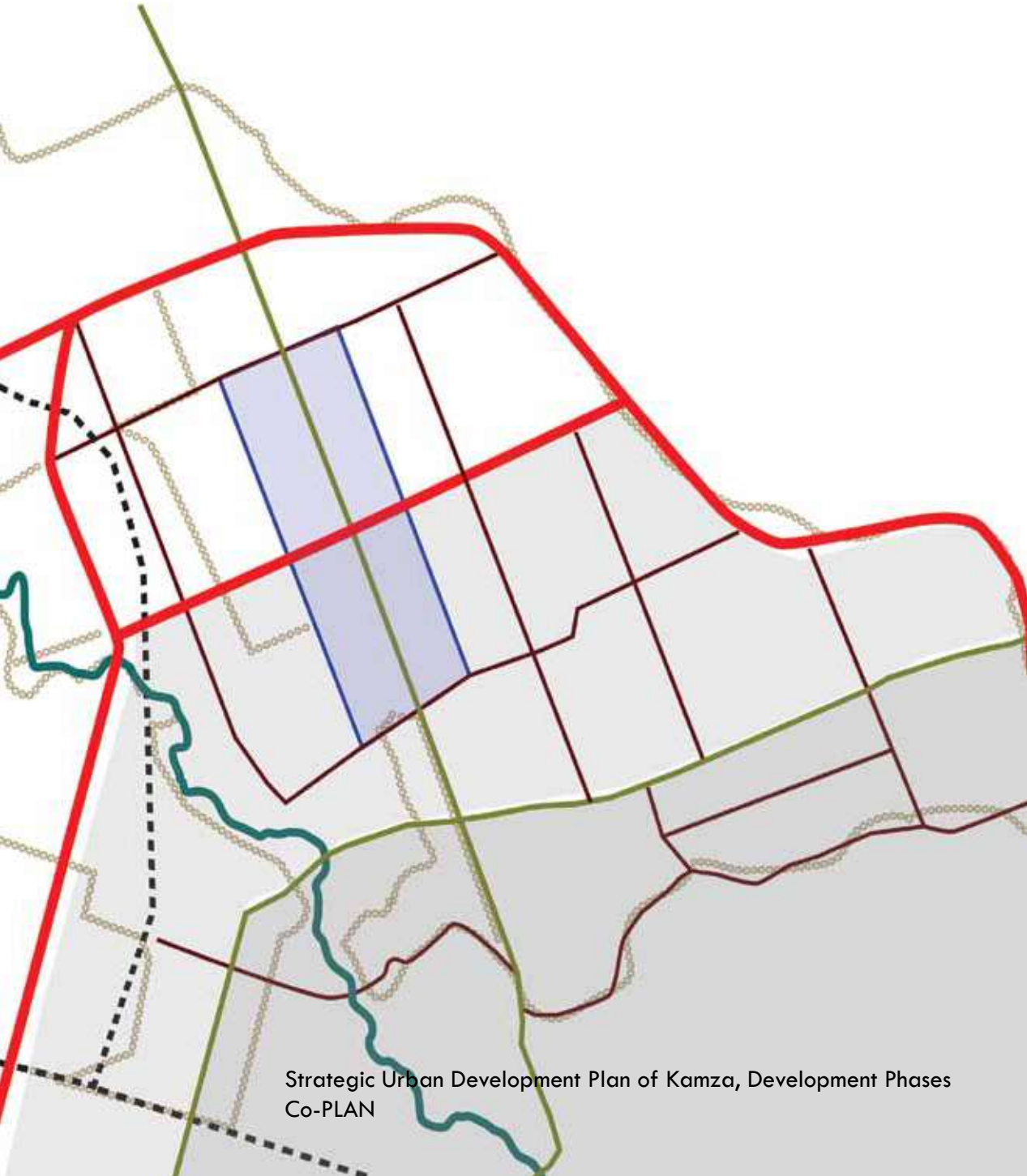
Retrospective "3": 2000-2005

Co-PLAN designed and implemented the "Bridging Partnership" development program.

"Bridging Partnerships" marked a further step in a multi-actor planning practice, and was implemented in situations of both urban expansion and contraction.

The program was supported by CORDAID Holland, in collaboration with a number of other actors such as NOVIB and the Dutch, Austrian, and US governments.

Co-PLAN extended its partnerships and furthered its planning expertise.



Strategic Urban Development Plan of Kamza, Development Phases
Co-PLAN

Implications for planning

The projects of the "1st of Maj" and "Allias" residential neighborhoods Kruja, Peshkopi, and other City Regulatory Plans

With the "1st Maj" and "Alias" neighborhood upgrade projects, which were supported by UNDP and NOVIB, Co-PLAN tested its participatory planning concepts in both "traditional" and informal areas of Tirana in need of urban upgrades. This experience revealed that the participatory planning philosophy works roughly equivalently in both formal and informal areas. However, inhabitants of formal areas are often more reserved. Given both longer-term historical neglect and a general lack of widespread feelings of community, inhabitants of formal areas tend to at least initially distrust participatory planning initiatives. Nonetheless, when a good example is set and transparency is maintained, inhabitants are more likely to become partners for change, even taking on cost-sharing for local projects.

Co-Plan's experience reveals that the more a community is in need or excluded, the more willing it will be to collaborate and actively participate in planning initiatives. In cases involving minority groups such as the Rom, planning processes tend to be more enthusiastically embraced, and overall tend to be more effective because such groups, needing to protect themselves, are often more organized.

Furthermore, Co-PLAN tested participatory planning practices in economically depressed urban areas that nevertheless displayed historic and cultural potential. For example, the Municipality of Kruja was selected for and participated in the "*Strengthening of local governments and citizens' participation*" Program, which was financed by the Dutch Government through VNG (Dutch Association of Municipalities) and supported by AAM (Albanian Association of Municipalities). Experts from Co-PLAN were asked to assist in the development of a feasibility study detailing alternative development schemes for housing, and sought to secure support for approval of the plan.

Co-PLAN worked in other difficult urban economic situations. So, through the Compass project, also supported by the Dutch government and implemented jointly by VNG, SNV, and NOVIB, Co-PLAN assisted the Municipality of Peshkopi in preparing its Urban Regulatory Plan. The Peshkopi experience underlined the fact that urban development processes are not routine, and thus efforts should focus more on process than product. Therefore, the principle of participation might extend from simply "*informing*" community members of a particular process or program, to instances of "*joint decision-making*." In this sense, Co-PLAN has been careful not to view Peshkopi's regulatory plan as a mere technical, information-sharing process, instead conceiving of the project as an exercise in participatory decision making. Peshkopi's plan was supported by a

Citizen's Participation Group, which was responsible for providing necessary information and commenting on proposals. This group served as a kind of "bridge" between the planning team, the residents, and politicians.
The Peshkopi experience revealed that community participation in planning is a time consuming process that sometimes may not be compatible with the demands of technical and political schedules. In addition to securing community participation, it is also crucial to build and leave behind a geographical information and database management system, in order to guarantee local sustainability of the plan and further development.

Other efforts utilizing a similar philosophy of realistic planning have been attempted in the municipalities of *Lushnja, Berat, and Durrës.* In Lushnja and Berat, efforts focused on the process of preparing sound participatory urban analysis and an objective setting (known also as the Terms of Reference for preparing the Urban Regulatory Plan), as the first step towards the formulation of regulatory plans. Experience has shown that preparation of sound urban analysis and objective setting (ToR) is often underestimated and reduced to mere texts and data catalogues that provide neither analysis nor directions for the future. In Lushnja, Berat, and Durrës, Co-PLAN supported municipalities in initiating professional and political discussions of the planning process, as a way to build public consensus on decisions. However, Co-Plan's experience in Lushnja revealed the susceptibility of urban planning processes to unforeseen political developments at the level of local administration. After the local elections, political leadership in Lushnja changed hands, thereby hampering the planning initiative. In contrast, in Berat, which witnessed comparative political stability, the planning process continued to be undertaken. Another initiative that impacted the planning processes in Lushnja, Berat, and Durrës was the involvement of students and staff from the Polytechnic University and Polis University who contributed to planning efforts by conducting field/visual surveys and interviews with local residents. These contributions served to raise local professional capacities and sensitized local populations to issues related to city improvement.

Because participatory processes were utilized at the initial stage of drafting Terms of Reference, the municipal councils of Berat and Lushja consensually approved the documents. These experiences helped both municipalities to later be selected by the Ministry of Public Works and the World Bank as recipients of further assistance in designing regulatory plans under the framework of the *Land Administration and Management Program* (LAMP). In fact, the LAMP project itself built on Co-PLAN's experience with the Enabling Good Urban Governance Program, which is discussed discuss later.

Strategic Urban Development Plan of Kamza, Land Values
Co-PLAN

Co-PLAN also applied its participatory planning approach in the informal area of Këneta, located in the Municipality of Durrës. Këneta accommodates at least 30,000 inhabitants.

Co-Plan's Këneta initiative was supported by the *Austrian Development Agency (ADA)*, and initially focused on pilot area of 50 ha. Efforts centered on planning and structuring the area in preparation for its eventual formalization and integration. Although Co-Plan's experience with the Këneta project was similar to other planning initiatives undertaken elsewhere, this project operated under a new legal regime that initiated the legalization of informal areas. In itself, the project had to develop a new model of how the legalization process could be actually carried out given the new legal framework. Indeed, Co-PLAN's participatory planning approach was again successful, as up to 75% of residents of Këneta supported the formalization process, in comparison to the national average of 50%. Currently, the Këneta project area is the first fully formalized, formerly informal zone, where formalization has been followed by substantial municipal and public investment in infrastructure as a way of integrating the area into the broader city.





Reflections

To conclude this section, the planning processes initiated by Co-PLAN at the neighborhood and city levels have been elaborated and completed. The regulatory plans of Kamza, Kruja, and Peshkopi have been successfully completed and approved, despite the often complex and conflictual political situation. Even so, the continuing success of such initiatives heavily depends on building and maintaining consensus, especially regarding changes to the political and administrative staff.

The real challenge lies in insuring adherence to urban planning decisions over time. In places like Kruja, in order to avoid deviation and misinterpretation in plan implementation, national authorities should more closely monitor the situation. Over time, it will be possible to better judge the relative effectiveness of these processes, and there will be opportunities to fine-tune applied methodologies in order to respond to emergent socio-economic developments.

How, then, should we balance the rational, incremental and participatory planning methodologies? It is important to understand that, in order to achieve results, we need to rediscover local potentials, and remain conscious that urban planning and architecture do not provide a panacea. Instead they are processes that strive to respond to evolving local contexts, thus continuously contributing to the evolution of the city.







Co-PLAN project in the Pilot Area of Keneta
Supported by Austrian Development Agency





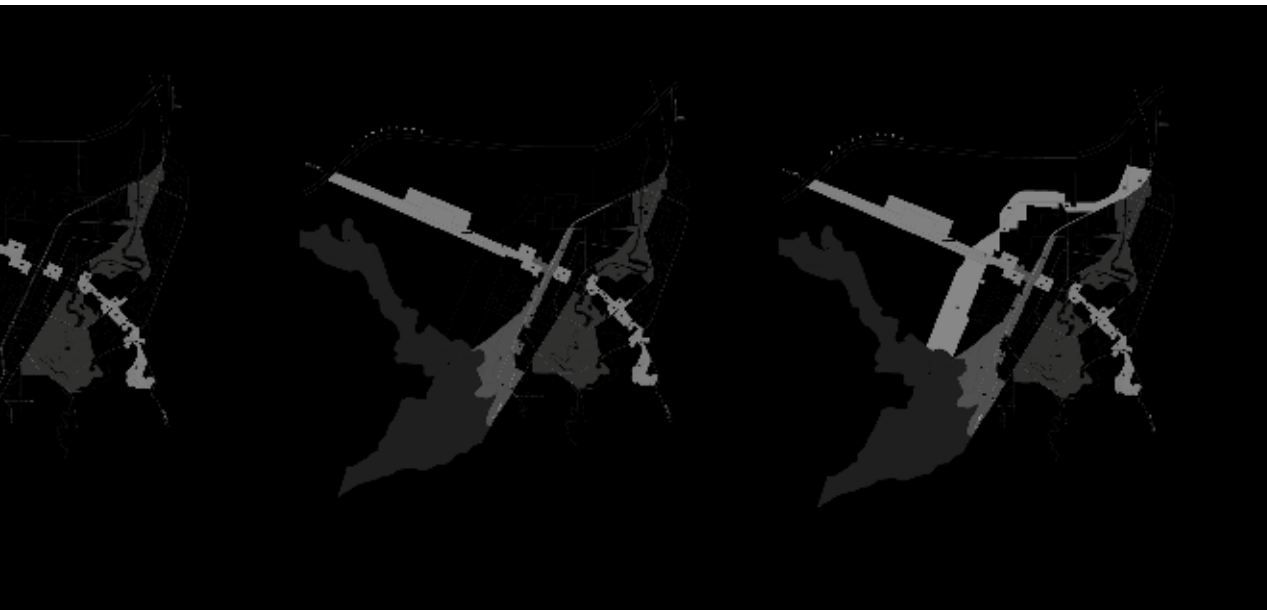
2
The EGUG PROGRAM: Towards Good Urban Governance! (Making Cities Work!)



"From e very early stage, we are taught to break apart problems, to fragment the world. This … makes complex tasks ... more manageable, but we pay a hidden enormous price... We can no longer see the consequences of our actions … When we then try to "see the big picture", we try to reassemble the fragments … but the task is futile – similar to trying to reassemble the fragments of a broken mirror to see a true reflection Thus, after a while we give up trying to see the whole all together "

Peter Senge[7]

7 Peter Senge, The fifth disipline, The art & practice of the learning organization, 1994



Retrospective "4" – 2003-2006

From Neighborhood and City Planning to Urban Governance

Ndërsa Co-PLAN nisi punën me komunitetet në fillim të viteve '90, shoqëria kishte hyrë në një proces ndryshimi radikal. Organizata ishte e re në moshë e praktikë sikurse edhe vetë institucionet publike të demokracisë dhe ekonomisë së tregut. Këto të fundit nuk dinin si të "silleshin" në kushtet e lëvizjes së lirë të popullsisë, të urbanizimit të shpejtë dhe të pronës private. Planifikimi dhe qeverisja urbane ende kuptoheshin vetëm si një plan në letër, i palidhur me realitetin. Kjo përbënte sfidën për të qenë një hap para asaj që ndodhte… për të ndikuar zhvillimet pozitive në fushën e planifikimit urban në vend dhe zhvillimin në përgjithësi.

'EGUG' is the acronym for the Enabling Good Urban Governance project (2003-8), which was supported by the Dutch Government through its Embassy in Tirana. As a word, EGUG does not suggest a definite meaning; in fact, the title of this project was the subject of lively discussions among the staff of Co-PLAN, which debated whether the acronym should be changed or improved. But more so than the title, it was the concept itself that was important. Perhaps the "unusual" nature of the EGUG acronym made the public curious to know what all this "stammering" was about. And so this captivating acronym became a pillar of the project.

The EGUG project grew out of Co-PLAN's accomplishments in its first eight years of existence, The period stretching from 1995-2003 had been difficult, but ultimately "energizing," a journey that set out from the "problematic" areas and communities on the periphery of Tirana, and from there reached into Albania's major cities, raising awareness and enabling stakeholders to work together. The EGUG project built on Co-PLAN's experiences with capacity-building and community-based projects in Laprakë (1995-2000) and its experience with urban planning and economic development in the Municipality of Kamëz (1997–2000), including integrated programs for the building of local capacities (COMPASS).

This new phase required the consolidation of this previous experience as Co-PLAN began to move from the community level to the urban governance level. This required the application of a new planning paradigm that utilized multi-stakeholder planning instruments that engaged local communities and interest groups, as well as local and central authorities.

The first phase of EGUG focused on fifteen municipalities in urgent need of planning and urban management assistance. Initially, EGUG was conceived as a three-year national program to build local capacities in the field of urban planning and urban management. This phase was to serve as a "thermometer" for measuring basic capacity development needs.

To better understand the specific needs of each participating municipality, need assessment surveys were conducted. These assessments identified several areas for which training was needed, such as strategic planning, municipal finance, municipal service provision, and local economic development. Unlike the previous initiatives that had focused on individual participants, EGUG brought together municipal teams composed of

experts in urban planning, development coordination, local finances and public works for training related to strategic planning. This was the first time these municipal employees would receive training and work in a planning context with a multi-disciplinary team. These training sessions provided participants with a conceptual understanding of action and strategic planning processes, and each team returned home with a concrete action plan to be put forward for implementation.

This phase of the project both tested and provided occasion for reflection for Co-PLAN as well as its partners such as the Albanian Association of Municipalities (AAM), the Ministry of Local Government and Decentralization (MPVD), the development team at the Dutch Embassy in Tirana and the Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS), Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Under the auspices of IHS, Brazilian expert Andre Herzog made a major contribution to this project. Most importantly, the teams of participating municipalities came to understand the importance of strategic planning.

Implications for Planning

i)- Although need was evident and increasing, it was still not possible to undertake a nation-wide capacity building program focused on urban planning and management. This was due to the fact that the problems in the field were complex and diverse, at times necessitating attention to priorities other than urban planning. Thus, nation-wide, nation-level capacity building was postponed for a later stage. Instead, comprehensive pilot projects were initiated in select cities. These pilot projects yielded tangible models and represented a concrete step toward good urban governance at the local, regional, and national levels.

ii)- Local leaders sometimes initially thought of off-site training seminars for employees as a waste of time, and thus they remained somewhat hesitant of allowing municipal staff to participate in training seminars. Co-PLAN responded by offering on-the-job training, which allowed for key planning and governance concepts to be embedded in the daily practices of the municipality and realized in concrete products to be used by the municipality. Although this new training method had its benefits, the “classic” classroom-based training approach continued to serve an important function, allowing Co-PLAN to sensitize local governments to urban development- related challenges and solutions, and thus to influence and inform ongoing urban planning and territorial administration reforms within Albania.

iii)- Trainees were trained with the ToT (Training of Trainers) approach. In addition to training a cohort of municipal workers in a particular skill or concept, ToT sessions also teach participants how, back in the workplace, to teach fellow-workers these same skills and/or concepts. The success of such initiatives thus depended not only on the initiative, perseverance, and reliability of trainees, but above all, on the degree to which the workplace (and particularly the leadership therein) was receptive to new ideas. For this reason, it was critical for Co-PLAN to continue supporting municipal staff that participated in training seminars in their much more complex, daily work environments.

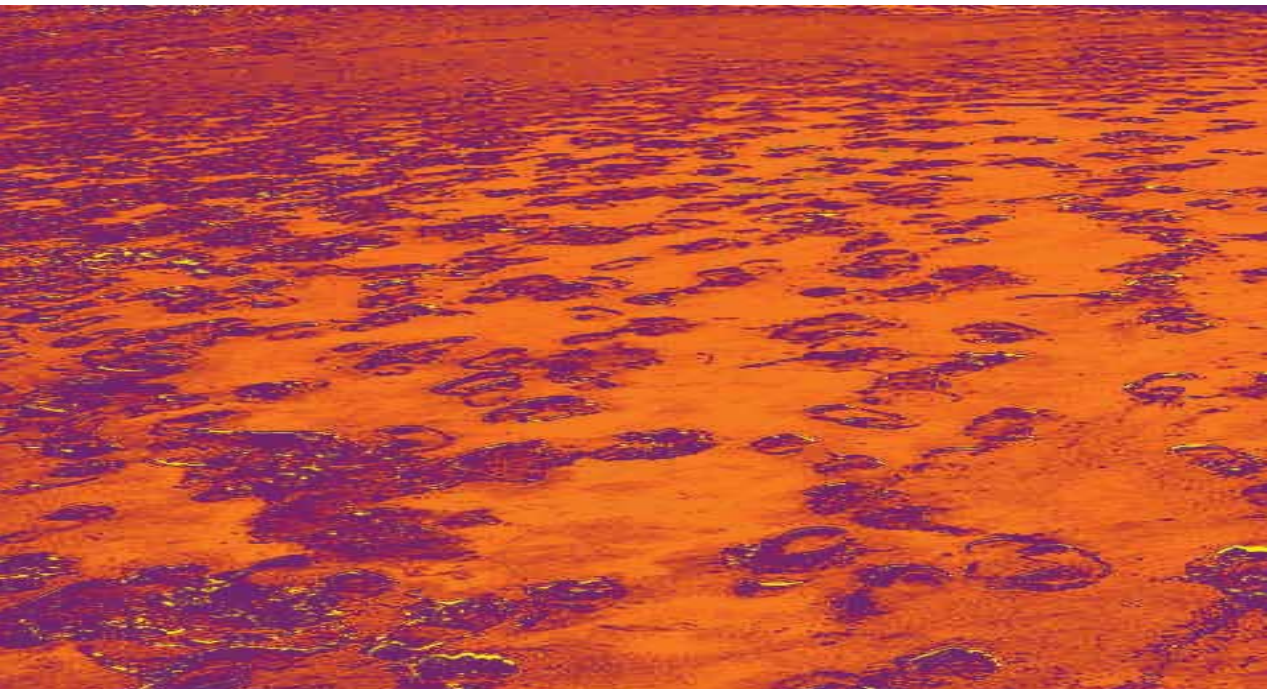
Looking back on the experience and lessons of the first phase of EGUG, Co-PLAN and its partners carefully considered the philosophy, approach, and objectives for the second phase of the project (EGUG-2). In particular, for the Dutch Embassy it was important that the second phase be as realistic as possible with clear and measurable outcomes. For Co-PLAN, this meant encouraging good governance through the development and dissemination of instruments aimed at consolidating democratic processes and sustainable socio-economic development. It was thus critical for representatives from Co-PLAN to do more than merely lecture; it was also necessary to participate in the work place to ensure that goals were being met. Municipal staff members benefiting from EGUG 2 had to show openness to new ideas and commitment to sustaining reforms.

EGUG II – A "Lab" for Developing Instruments

Will we be able to leave a trace?

When can we call a place a "city?" The architecture and urban theorist Aymonino[8] characterizes the city as a specific sort of place in which significant energy and capital is accumulated and concentrated. This consolidation of capital and social energies produces a situation in which the city can provide opportunities above and beyond mere fulfillment of basic needs. It is this move beyond basic need-fulfillment that leaves traces on the city.

8 C. Aymonino, Il significato della citta, Marsiglio Editori, 2000



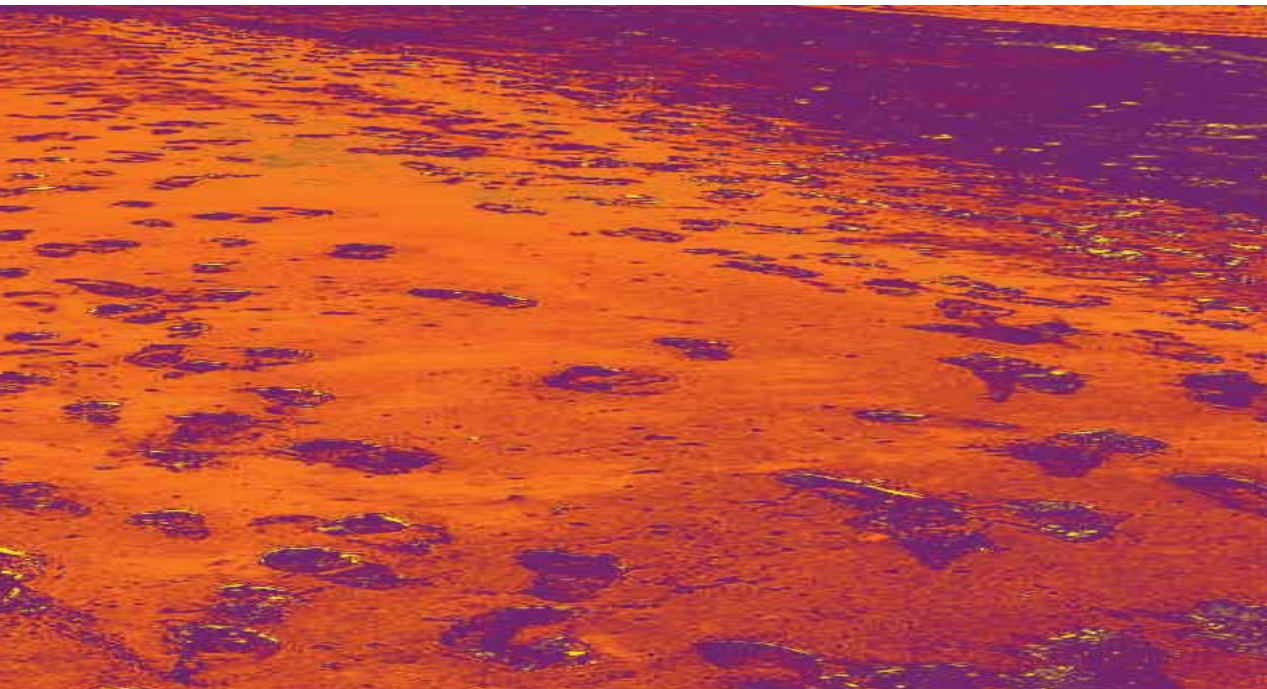
The following excerpts were typical of discussion amongst citizens participating in EGUG-2:

The city will be expanded with a new residential zone... The hills of Radostina are very adequate... Many inhabitants of Fier have their eyes on it [Radostina]... We have many requests for villas... They will all have pools too... The money comes from their children who have immigrated... We want streets with wide sidewalks, with a lot of palms, as our summer is very hot... We will transform it into a coastal city...

The new highway should "embrace" the city and not divide it... but at the same time it should not be distant because people will forget about us... So the city will appear to the travelers with its "new look"... commercial centers, transport nodes... greenhouses... The new road can't pass from there because it is an archaeological site... We will build up an E-City...

Ages ago our mothers washed their clothes in the Gjanica river... We will make the river clean again as it was... with parks along the sides, jogging and cycling paths... Athens did not have something more... our roads are straight and regular too... This area will have buildings of up to twelve stories...

We should also consider a University Campus... But our commercial center will be the biggest in the Balkans... The center will be for pedestrians only and the traffic will be regulated with small ring roads... The theatre will be paved with marble, while the municipality will be rebuilt... Our mosque is the biggest one after the one in Shkodra... The silhouette of the city will be seen from the highway... We will have also a zoo...



The city will be expanded with a new residential zone... The hi

inhabitants of Fier have their eyes on it [Radostina]...

have pools too... The money comes from their children who hav

with a lot of palms as our summer is very hot... V

coastal city...

The new highway should "embrace" the ci

be distant because people will forget about us... So the ci

with its "new look"... commercial centr

from there because it is an archaeological site... We will bui

Ages ago our mothers washed their clothes in the Gjanica river... We will m

parks along the sides, jogging and

more... our roads are straight and regul

buildings of up to 12 stor

We should also consider a Unive

biggest in the Balkans... The centre will be for pedes

with small ring roads... The theatre

while the municipality will

one after the one in Shkodra... The silhouette

We will have also a zoo...

lls of Radostina are very adequate... Many
. We have many requests for villas... They will all
e immigrated... We want streets with wide sidewalks,

Ve will transform it into a

ity and not divide it... but at the same time it should not

ty will appear to the travellers

es, transport nodes... greenhouses... The new road can't pass
ld up an E-City...

ake the river clean again as it was... with
cycling paths... Athens did not have something

ar too... This area will have

ies...

rsity Campus... But our commercial centre will be the
strians only and the traffic will be regulated

will be paved with marble,

be rebuilt... Our mosque is the biggest
of the city will be seen from the highway...

Retrospective "5" – 2004-2006

A competition was held to select two partner municipalities as beneficiaries of EGUG 2. The program avoided supply-driven development assistance, and the selection committee sought highly committed partners. Thus, applicant municipalities had to prepare proposals articulating what type of support they were looking for and why. Applicants had to show how the priority areas for support linked up with daily problems in the municipality and other ongoing or previous development projects being undertaken within the municipality. Moreover, the municipality had to show how its objectives aligned with the priorities of the newly elected leadership, as EGUG 2 began soon after local elections were held in 2003. To ensure credibility and accountability, a multi-stakeholder team carried out the selection process. Proposals were evaluated against pre-defined criteria and were further assessed through field visits to each municipality. The preparatory work undertaken by each municipality ensured local ownership from the outset of the program. Out of a pool of fifteen applicants, the municipalities of Fier and Elbasan were ultimately selected as partner municipalities.

Beyond the heretofore… Dilemmas before the start

Setting out from the priorities of EGUG 2, change was to be achieved not so much through the product itself but rather through the process through which each and every individual product would be prepared. The process had to affect not only the quality of the product, but also the mentality of the people involved in it.

At the time of EGUG 2, local authorities had grown tired of what they perceived as an excess of donor-driven projects, especially those that centered on training and that seemed to treat the beneficiaries as subjects with "limited intelligence," thereby discouraging enthusiastic support from local authorities and thus undermining project impact. EGUG 2's methodology thus emphasized on-the-job training related to strategic planning processes. And yet, already at this point, numerous strategic plans had been prepared in Albania at both the local and regional level. What innovation, then, could EGUG-2 bring? What would be its added value? Moreover, how would this process be coordinated with other processes and the overall management of the municipality?

The challenge, then, was to determine the best way of getting beneficiaries involved and invested in planning priorities. The following factors thus had to be reviewed and considered:

Interest and support tend to be low when projects impose priorities rather than responding to the priorities of beneficiaries.

Ideally, the local counterpart should become a partner, rather than remaining a simple beneficiary. As a partner, the local actor must demonstrate interest and initiative to engage in multi-stakeholder processes.

When beneficiaries participate in defining project objectives, they feel like owners of the project and become committed to its implementation. The beneficiary should feel in control of the process, with technical assistance provided by development organizations playing a supporting role.

The local leadership itself should be part of the process. For local leaders to feel invested, they must understand how the project contributes to their ongoing programs and commitments in the community.

"Experiencing" problems together: this means that project teams should be concerned not only with technical expertise, but should also spend as much time as necessary in the municipality in order to understand local needs. To this end, the EGUG team would need to operate within the pre-existing frameworks of local administrations, ultimately aiming to connect with the city both professionally and socially.

The genuineness of processes: This happens when citizens feel both that they benefit from making concrete contributions to planning projects they care about. After the experience of the 1990s in Albania, it was extremely difficult to get people back into genuine community processes.

Creativity: This was to be found in establishment of professional standards that went beyond "atrophying" routine and inherited practices. Innovations had to be embedded into the daily work of the municipality without causing major tension between leadership introducing change and municipal staff resistant to it.

Alternative planning – "Drawing" Outside the Lines

Implications for Planning

Overall, EGUG-2 (2004-2006) aimed to establish good urban governance models that: i). supported target municipalities (Fier and Elbasan) in formulating and implementing strategic development plans; ii). resulted in concrete urban improvement projects; and iii). disseminate these models and experiences through a web site, print publications, conferences, and round table sessions.

EGUG-2 was designed to be comprehensive and aimed to involve all stakeholders in reforming urban planning and management, while helping local governments to improve their municipal administration. Co-PLAN, IHS-Rotterdam, the Albanian Association of Municipalities (AAM) and the Ministry for Local Governance worked together to ensure that EGUG 2 was realistic and could be implemented.

Co-PLAN assigned special teams of experts to work in each municipality. They were embedded in Task-Force teams that each municipality had established for designing and implementing the strategic planning process. These Task-force teams reached out to different actors in the city through the establishment of various thematic groups. And while the participatory processes of EGUG-2 were long and complex, they never became bureaucratic.

The strategic planning process was the foundation for the entire project, as municipal staff were shown the benefits of participating in a new planning paradigm that aimed to be inclusive and multi-dimensional. Strategic planning processes in both locales culminated in the organization of **City Forums** at which citizens and key stakeholders discussed, debated, and ultimately voted on a number of competing visions for the future of city development. These forums resulted in the formulation of four thematic areas to be attended to in further development strategies and concrete plans of action: i) urban development, ii) local economic development, iii) environment and sustainable development, iv) education and culture.

In order to extend outreach and make the process visible to citizens, several **Public Exhibitions** were organized to promote strategies and development plans through different visual and graphic materials. One exhibition featured a youth drawing competition with the theme "My City, My home."

In both cities (Fier and Elbasan), the respective City Development Strategy and Urban Regulatory Plan were prepared in concert. Whereas the City Development Strategy provided a vision and overall direction, the Urban Regulatory Plan showed how this vision could be spatially articulated. Both involved participatory and analytic processes that called for rigor, consensus, sustainability, and realism.

City festivities

Co-Plan believes that cities are made by the energy of their people. Based on this belief, planning philosophies must inspire both citizens and municipal leaders and staff. All too often, this dimension is ignored in planning processes, even though such local participation and investment is critical to the progress and quality of individual development projects. Everyone feels like they have something to say about their city, and so the goal for Co-PLAN was to make community members feel like their opinions and views on matters were valued. To this end, professionals should help citizens channel their energies in a positive way to the benefit of their city. Indeed, there are untapped reserves of such energy in Albanian cities that can be unleashed and professionally guided. This positive energy was articulated in the slogans that each city devised for its individual strategy: "I love my city" for Elbasan and "My city, my home" for Fier.

Based on this belief EGUG-2 carried out its philosophy at the city level by introducing the concept of place-making and inspiring citizens to love their city.

The preparation of the City Development Strategy called for a careful assessment of the current situation, formulation of an inclusive vision, setting realistic objectives and designing concrete projects to be included into the municipal budget or submitted for support. The City Development Strategy was a technical document but it nevertheless managed to inspire, as its ideas were well received by all citizens.

Again on TV...
On an almost daily basis, there were local television reports on city development strategy processes. Posters and leaflets were distributed throughout Fier and Elbasan. Citizens were familiar with the TV spots about their city's strategy. Each strategy had its own face: for Elbasan, a little girl; and for Fier, a little boy. Both spots featured an image of the respective child's face looking at the city from above, dreaming about the "Most Beautiful City in the World."

Extract from the "Development Strategy of Elbasan," 2006. "I love My City: To know the city means to walk through it in time, to feel its structure through its historical urban layers, to be involved in its atmosphere through knowing the human souls that build it each day, to be part of its economic life by influencing its values and use of natural resources, to enter into its heart and discover the core of its existence and its transformation. Knowing the city is a continuous process. In fact, it never ends. It is important for this process of knowing to be dynamic and for us as citizens to be proactive toward the city throughout this process. So, to enter deep inside the facts, to feel their breadth, to discover their causes, to analyze their reasons, to understand and forecast their consequences and, ultimately, to understand underlying tendencies and possible scenarios for development.

Plans, not "plans": With the initiation of EGUG-2, Co-PLAN benefited from its prior experience inspiring local communities to confront difficult urban circumstances. For that reason, the core issue for EGUG 2 in assisting municipalities to prepare Urban Regulatory Plans was how to manage different dreams of citizens. By using creative processes and instruments, Co-PLAN tried not to lose sight of the human element of urban planning.

Plan as instrument: Rather than being a rigid, stand-alone document, the urban regulatory plan prepared under EGUG 2 was to be developed as part of the City Development Strategy, providing instruments for the active transformation of the city.

The city as a dream: The dreams and aspirations of everyday people are frequently perceived as having nothing to do with the concerns of urban planners, who all too often do not take into account these aspirations when formulating their vision of the city. This is why the planning processes in Fier and Elbasan began with conversations aimed at envisioning a future for the city, on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis. It was important for people to understand that the city could be beautiful if they looked at it as a beautiful thing. The city would be made not by outsiders but by its own citizens. At this stage, the positive aspects of each city were identified, thus providing a foundation from which to imagine and project future improvements. In this way, citizens' dreams would unleash a positive energy, ultimately becoming mere dreams no longer, as these dreams directly inspired and served as instruments of development.

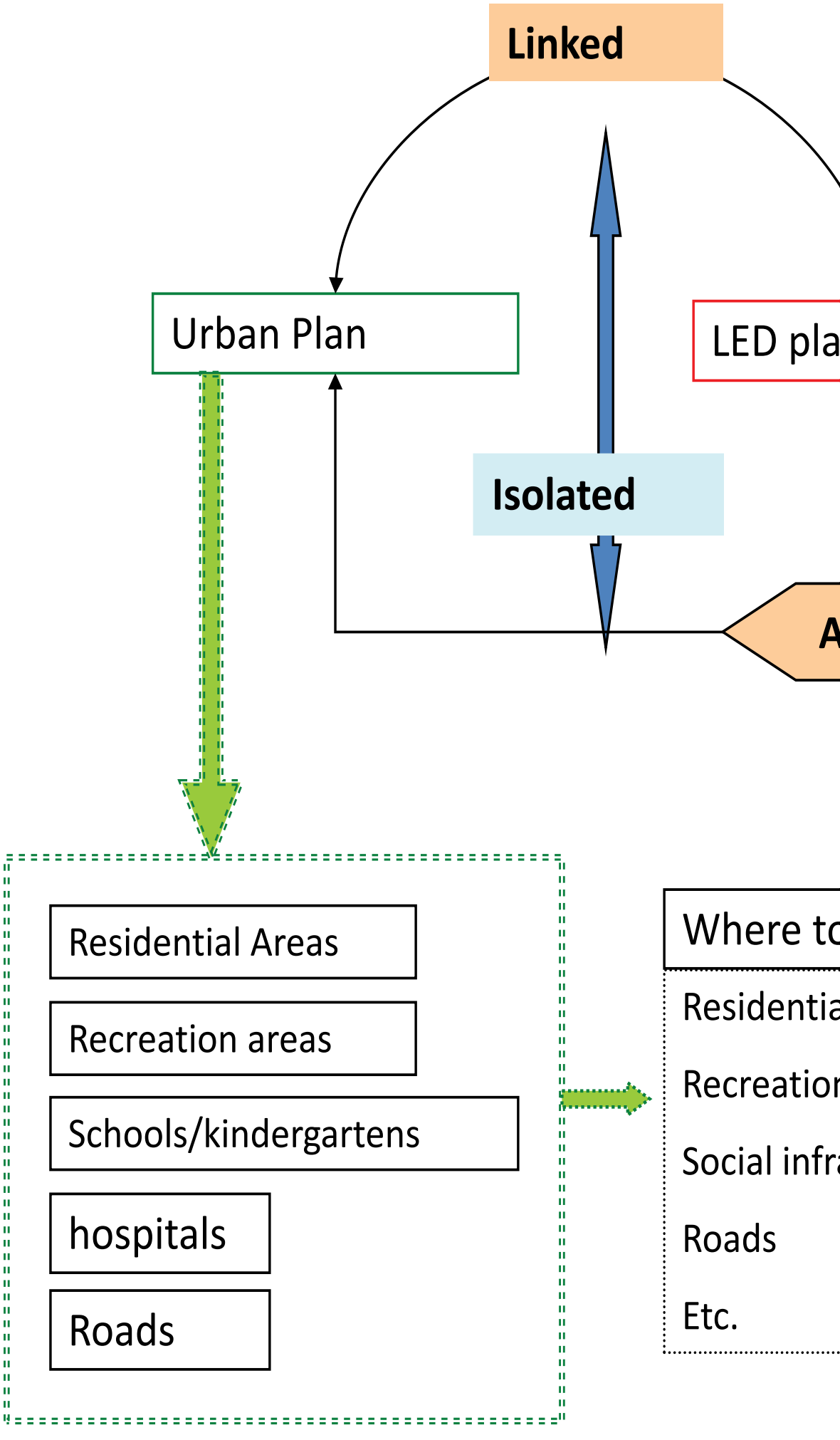
Reading the situation positively: In both Fier and Elbasan, the Urban Regulatory Plan had to be not just a product in itself, but a prerequisite of urban transformation. From this viewpoint, Co-PLAN began to focus on actual everyday people as its primary target, as they often develop "parallel systems" to escape rules and regulations. The goal was to encourage people to view their city in a positive light, not as a place to be exploited, but as a common home to be cared for.

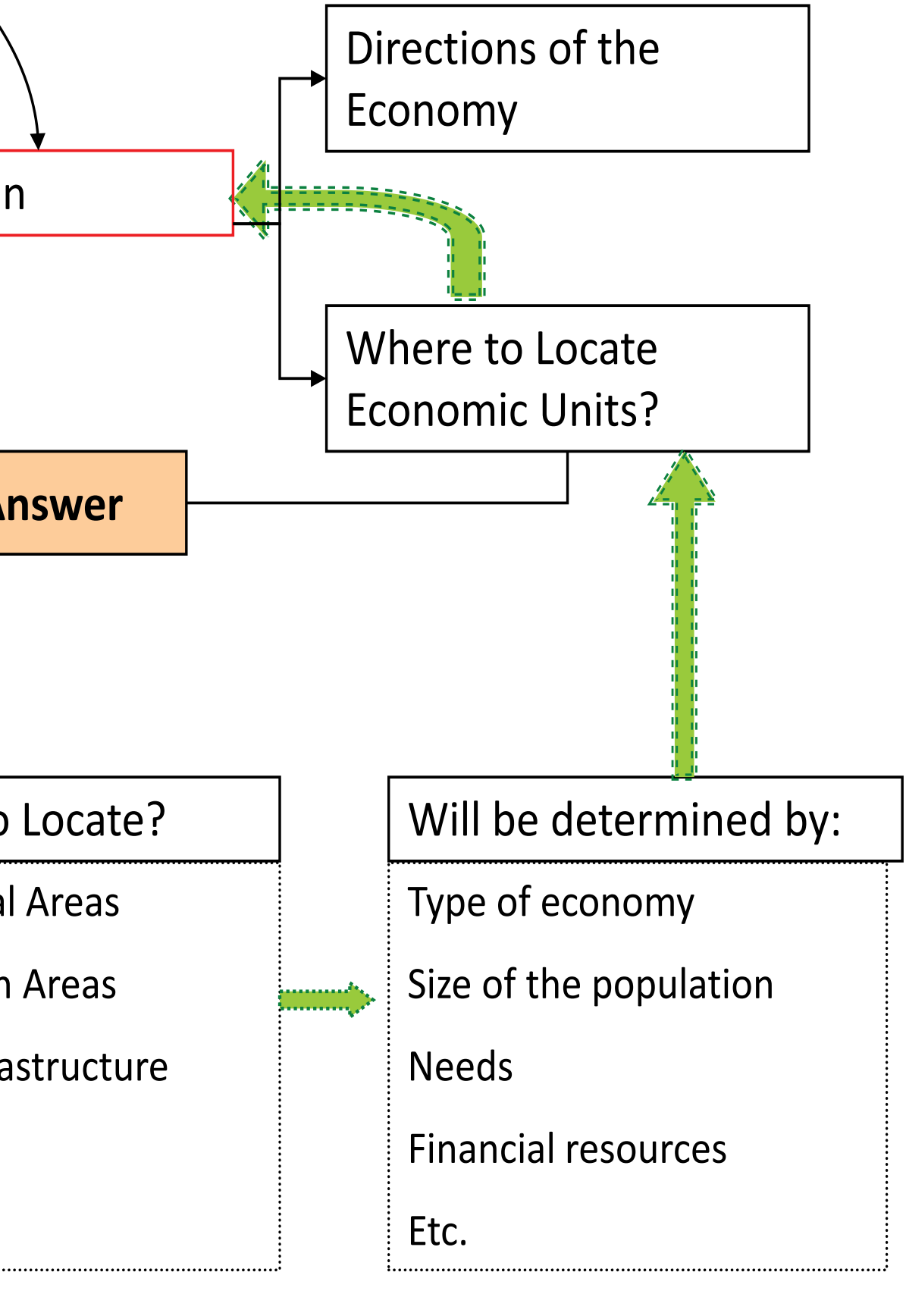
...It's a living organism – In order to read the city carefully and sensitively, it must be analytically composed and decomposed in terms of physical-territorial, socio-historical, thematic, functional, and typological-morphological dimensions, which enables us to discover the city's identity and social and spatial texture. No place, not even the most degraded, does not bear within it the key to its own solution, and this key is to be found through a careful reading and analysis of the place.



Pershtatur nga posterat për sensibilizimin e pjesmarrjes qytetare gjatë hartimit të Planeve Rregulluese të qyteteve Fier dhe Elbasan Burimi Co-Plan


Love My City


Linked
Urban Plan
LED pla
Isolated
A
Residential Areas
Recreation areas
Schools/kindergartens
hospitals
Roads
Where to
Residentia
Recreation
Social infra
Roads
Etc.


Directions of the Economy
n
Where to Locate Economic Units?
nswer
o Locate?
l Areas
n Areas
astructure
Will be determined by:
Type of economy
Size of the population
Needs
Financial resources
Etc.

It's a living organism. In o

carefully and sensitively

composed and decomp

physical-territorial, s

thematic, functional,

morphological dimensio

discover the city's ide

texture. No place, not even th

bear within it the key to its ow

solution, and this key is to b

reading and analysis o



rder to read the city

y, it must be analytically

posed in terms of

socio-historical,

and typological-

ns, which enables us to

ntity and social and spatial

e most degraded, does not

yn

e found through a careful

of the place.



Concept For Regulatory Plan of Fier
Co-Plan



"I love My City: to know t

in time, to feel its structure thr

ers, to be involved in its

knowing the human so

day, to be part of its economic

use of natural resources, to enter

the core of its exist

Knowing the city is a continu

he city means to walk through it

ough its historical urban lay-

atmosphere through

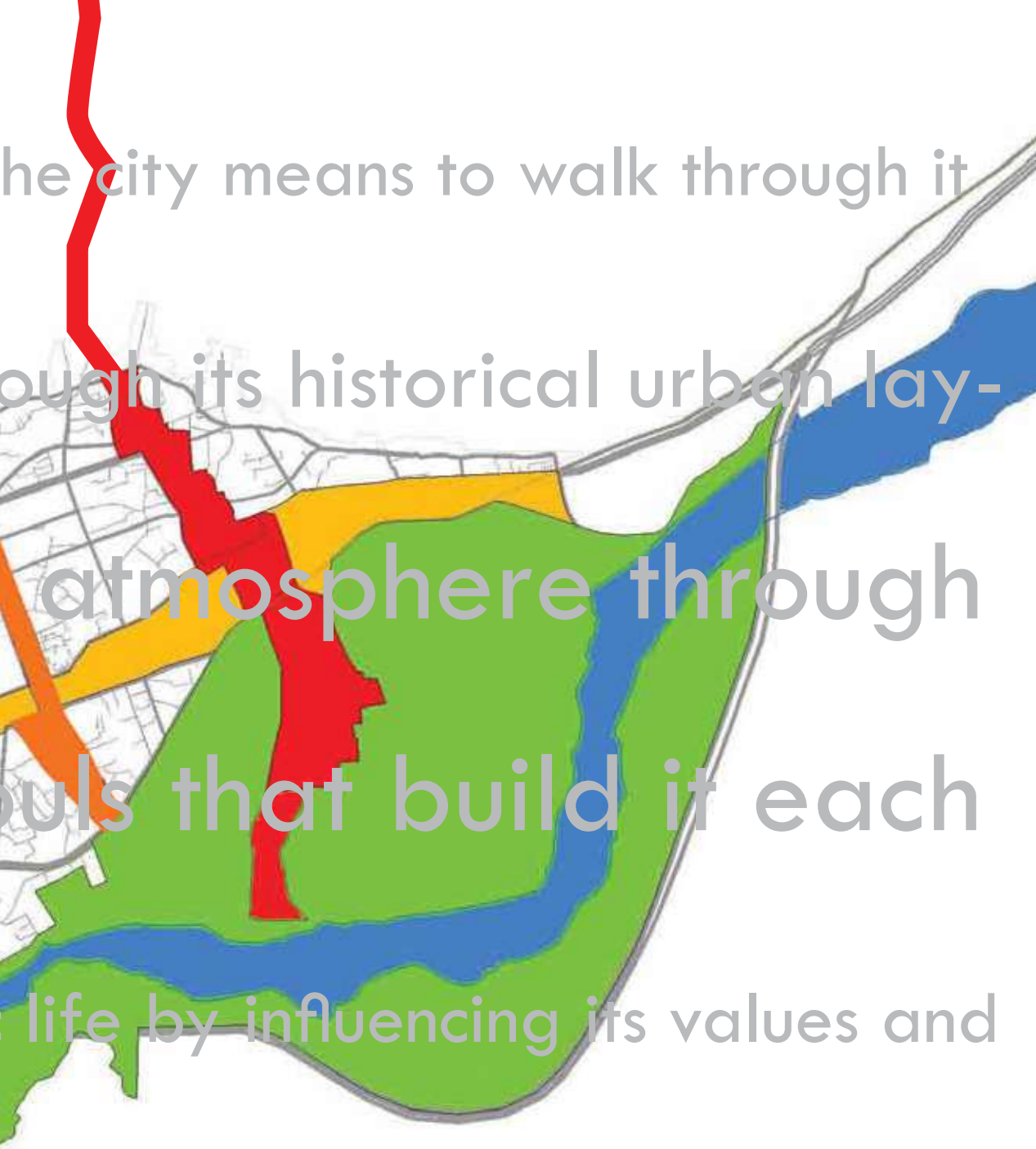
uls that build it each

life by influencing its values and

into its heart and discover

rence and its transformation.

ous process.



Concept for Regulatory Plan of Elbasan
Co-Plan

Excerpts from meetings envisioning the future of the municipality of Fier, May 2005
If most of us today are questioning whether one day we will be able to see in reality the city we are trying to envision, this depends on:

- Our ability to create partnerships and build up capacities
- Our ability to use the plan as an interactive platform (between the government, business, and society in general)
- Our ability to put together in a realistic way principles and approaches that integrate values and needs
- Our ability to "escape" from routine and redundant practices that have been used in the past to build up the city
- Our ability to rediscover the hidden beauty of our city, the nature and inner world of the place, to see the unseen and to understand the city in its complexity.
- Our ability to conceive of planning as performance, as participation, as an inclusive "concert" that helps the city to be inspired and developed.
- Our ability to understand that the city is composed of people. Problems can be solved when we remain conscious that each of us can both positively and negatively influence the making of the dream city.

Until now, not many cities have had such an opportunity to discuss their future and to invite the citizens to collaborate in the formulation of what can be considered as the constitution of the city.

Excerpts from the explanatory text of urban regulatory plans of Fier and Elbasan , April 2006

The PLAN as part of the "citizen's love for the city"
The regulatory plan presented in the following materials is nothing more than the "translation" of the vision, strategy, and objectives of the city development strategy drawn up together with citizens of Fier through an extensive participatory process.

The PLAN as a framework that brings together space, investment, and institutions
The experience of recent years suggests that planning methodologies must move beyond mere spatial concerns. Further urban and environmental degradation can only be stopped by combining urban, economic and environmental measures, which, materialized in concrete interventions in specific territories of the city, create stable and balanced urban situations.

New urban physiognomies were created as a result of these interventions, designed to minimally impact the environment, and spatially positioned to consolidate the organic structure of the territory. These new models encouraged socio-economic interactions that, in themselves, are essential to functioning urban territory. The process of analysis and consultation during the preparation of the plan identified the "gravitational nodes and axes" of the city as elements of catalytic importance due to the transformative influence they can exercise on other parts of the territory. From this perspective, changes to the city are the result of improvements that come from the involvement of vital and "life-giving" elements.

The PLAN as management instrument
The plan aims to be not just a simple technical document but rather an instrument that stimulates and influences positive socio-economic changes in the city. Public participation and engagement of local and central institutions during the formulation of the plan makes it easy to involve these institutions in project implementation, thus increasing chances for success. To this end, the regulatory plan has been translated into an action plan.

The PLAN as an instrument that induces development
This plan has been conceived as an instrument that "creates possibilities" and not "obstacles," except in cases where short-term obstacles create greater opportunities in the future. One of the main tasks of each plan is to encourage investment, especially by the private sector, in order to boost the local economy and create jobs and business opportunities as a means of revitalizing and bringing growth to the city.

From drafting to implementation: It should not be thought that after the approval of a regulatory plan, the process is over. One drawback of the planning system stems from the strict separation of the formulation and implementation phases of the project. In fact, these phases are continuous.

Thus, in the case of EGUG 2, in parallel with the planning process, **priority improvement projects** were identified. These priority projects focused on a range of objectives, from establishing municipal **information management systems** to paving streets and installing streetlamps to greening public spaces.

It was a continuous challenge to provide the necessary skilled human resources for plan implementation and to modernize municipal management systems. These specific challenges are expressions of a more general challenge confronting Albanian society as it emancipates itself, namely, the need to try new methods and solutions. These needs are directly related to the current state of whole governmental administration in Albania and the necessity of getting rid of old mentalities. To contribute to this effort and disseminate the EGUG 2 experience nationally, a **Knowledge Dissemination** platform was developed. This platform enabled the dissemination of hard and electronic documents as well as the organization of national and regional conferences.

Co-PLAN's experience with EGUG-2 pointed to some key findings about the prerequisites of effective urban development plan/strategy implementation:

1 – Instead of complicating problems to the point of making them unsolvable, principles of participatory urban governance emphasizing **simplicity** should be promoted, without, however, passing to the other extreme of making them **banally** reductive.

2 – Beneficiaries and local actors must feel a sense of project **ownership**, for the duration of the project. Beginning with project formulation, project implementation including capacity building and on the job assistance. Concluding with post-project evaluations and continuing monitoring of the situation. Furthermore, people should be encouraged to think optimistically and should be taught that their dreams can be achieved.

3 – Plans must be formulated not as mere management instruments or technical documents. Instead, each plan must include guidelines for implementation. Furthermore, the implementation of the plan must be supported by **secondary instruments** such as:

- Training and on-the-job assistance, through which planning and urban governance instruments can be understood and interpreted by the local administration and its leadership.

- Formulation of detailed partial urban plans known as **local area development plans** for different parts of the city. The static, classical model of "partial detailed studies" was not used in the preparation of local area development plans, as this approach prematurely goes into architectonic details, which have almost no possibility of actually being applied. Instead, local area development plans were prepared according to the English "*design-briefs*" or French "*Urban Designs*" approaches, which allow for flexibility and adaptability for potential local actors and developers. The core issue here is how local governments can become key actors in proposed development projects that *de facto* enable them to execute the approved plan or strategy, by ensuring a healthy balance between private and public interests.

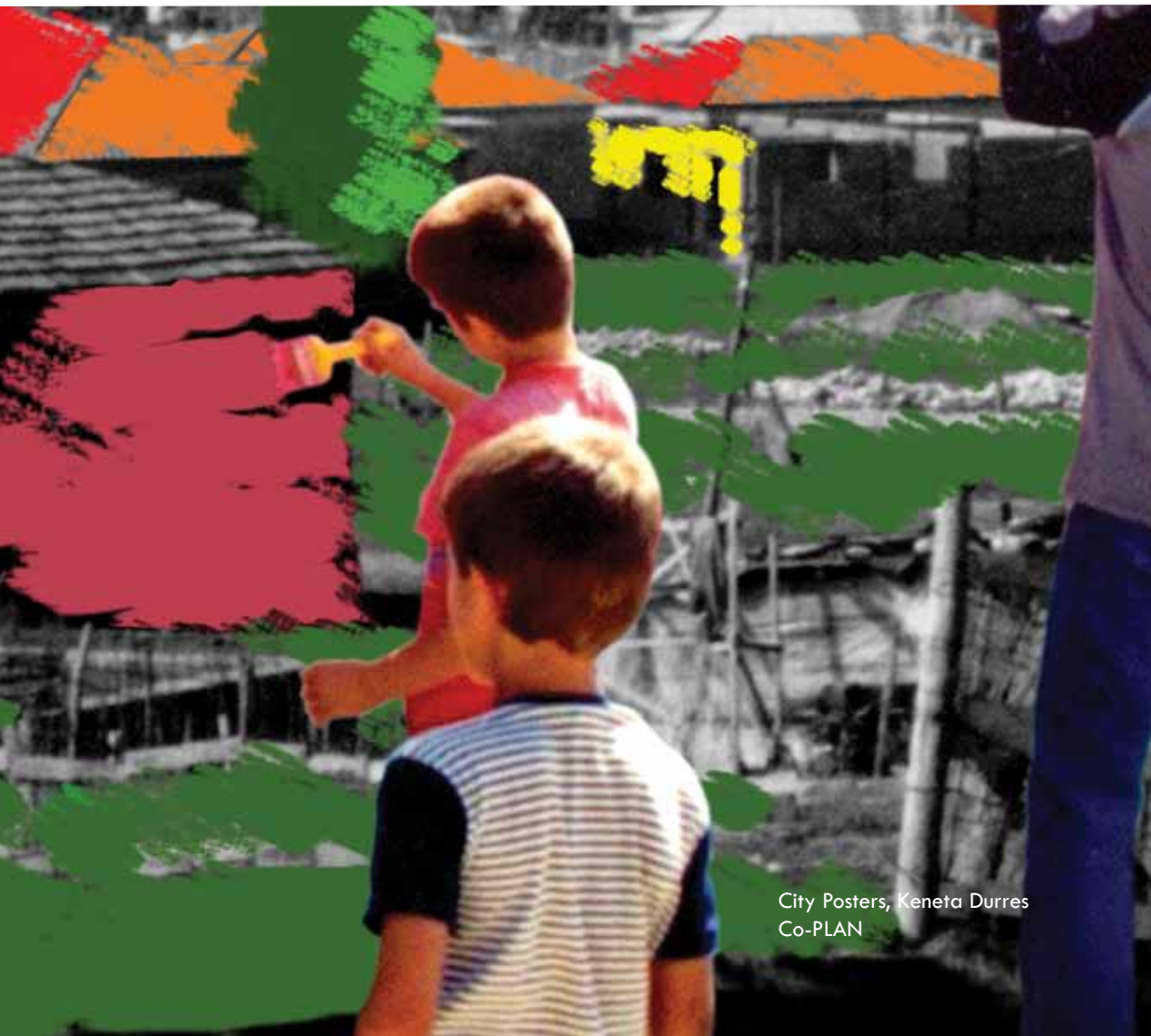
4 – Development organizations must participate in the implementation of the project **in practice**, and not only through "**theoretical assistance.**" Strategic and urban planning processes must be harmonized with participatory budgeting processes. This opens up municipal governance to local citizens and stakeholders, thereby preventing isolated decision-making and politicization of development processes.



"A Rocket without a Pilot?!" – The EGUG-2 extension

Often it is difficult to calculate precisely when a project will end, but this is not the case for city-level projects, which continue as long as the city continues to transform, with one project following another, and so on. In practice, it often happens that the end of technical assistance marks the "end" of the project. Continuing transmission of knowledge is critical if such a project is not to come to such an "end." At the end of EGUG, Co-PLAN was faced with the question of what, in practice, would happen with the conclusion of the project. It became clear that an intermediate, transitional period would be necessary.

By the end of EGUG-2, several specific differences in outcomes were noted between the Fier and Elbasan projects. The critical difference stemmed from a well-known "symptom" of Albanian society, namely, the political use of urban planning instruments. While the planning processes and methodologies undertaken in both cities were contemporaneous and comparable, Fier's project was considered to be more successful than that of Elbasan because of the continuity of political leadership in Fier. Indeed, continuity in political leadership, including municipal staff, is a critical component of effective and sustainable investment in the Albanian context. Fier is the only city in Albania that has both a City Development Strategy and an Urban



City Posters, Keneta Durres
Co-PLAN

Regulatory Plan approved by all relevant government bodies at the local and central level; a plan that the municipality is implementing in order to transform the city in accordance with the visions of the populace into one of the most important cities in the west of Albania. In this case, processes developed in the planning phase continue to have positive effects for local authorities and the community.

In contrast, in the case of Elbasan, a change in political leadership led to an endless deferral of approval of the regulatory plan. Even though the new leadership had been involved in preparing the plan, it would seem that Albanian politicians still do not feel averse to using regulatory plans as a means of political pressure. However, like in other cases in Albania, though not legally enshrined, the urban regulatory plan of Elbasan is, in practice, treated as an "informal plan," which in the absence of a development framework, is used to make decisions related to city investments.

We must recall that at the close of EGUG-2 in 2006, there were numerous strategies prepared by international organizations being proposed and implemented in Albania. Most of these strategies were oriented to regional-level concerns, and none was credible at the local level. This was mainly due to the high levels of abstraction and lack of specificity in these plans. Consequently, in order to translate these otherwise well-intentioned initiatives into concrete results, Co-PLAN worked together with municipalities to implement city development strategies and regulatory plans for annual and mid-term budgeting. In this context, substantial effort was put into embedding the city development strategy into municipal management processes and into analyzing the municipality's revenues with a view of finding additional sources. So, the city development strategy was not a static document; to the contrary, through their respective coordination-development offices, the municipalities built up mechanisms to monitor, evaluate, and review their respective City Development Strategy, based on local dynamics.

By undertaking new ways of going about things, both municipalities (and especially Fier) became more reliable investment partners. For instance, the municipality of Fier developed new relationships with the business community, as projects were developed and implemented based on principles of public-private partnership. Although still at the feasibility study phase, Fier's proposed project to construct bus terminals is clearly indicative of the municipality's efforts to capitalize on its regulatory and enabling role in order to attract private capital while offering public services with mutual benefits. This development marks an important step for the municipality as it begins to assert itself in a proactive rather than passive role in the development process. Development approaches in this vein require that skilled human resources understand why development financing and implementation cannot be undertaken according to traditional methods whereby the state provides all project funding. Instead, the entirety of the city's potential must be harnessed.

Overall, the EGUG project, based on the experience of Co-PLAN and its partners, prompted local authorities to consider ways of overcoming complex planning and administrative situations beyond the ordinary logic of "reactive emergency." EGUG provided a strategic approach through which citizens' visions and dreams were connected with real public and private financing opportunities. For Co-PLAN, EGUG was a school in itself that helped consolidate a **new planning methodology** centered on integrating realistic planning instruments and principles that, undertaken incrementally, result in good governance and community participation.

However, more time and monitoring will be needed in order to better understand the effects of this project.

Products of the planning processes undertaken through EGUG:

First – Formulation of a City Development Strategy through a broad citywide consultation process.

Second – Translation of the City Development Strategy into an Urban Regulatory Plan. While the City Development Strategy helped identify and articulate local wishes and ways of fulfilling them, these "dreams" were ultimately to be realized in and through the urban regulatory plan. Pursuing these two processes in conjunction ensures better chances for good governance.

Third – Strategic decision-making and management require the creation of Integrated Information Management Systems, for both municipal and territorial management. The database for the Information System is periodically updated, thereby allowing for better information management within the municipality, as, for example, in the case of "One Stop Shop" service provisions.

Fourth – Use participatory budgeting (in collaboration with the World Bank) to harmonize long-term planning goals and daily needs of the communities. Such participatory budgeting involves public debates and, eventually, consensual agreement on final priority projects to be presented to the Municipal Council.

Five – Co-financing of concrete projects by the municipality in order to better implement the City Development Strategy.

Six – Connection of City Development Strategy, detailed plans and GIS with municipal finances through Capital Investment Plans, which enable the translation of the development vision into concrete projects implemented in accordance with the fiscal capacities of the municipality.

Seven – Supporting of Public Private Partnership (PPP) schemes in order to encourage provision of public services through private means. PPPs mobilize material and financial resources in the implementation of urban projects, such that participants get what they deserve out of the project. The challenge here lies in effectively negotiating and balancing interests such that both public and private stakeholders feel that the process is sufficiently transparent.









"Design Briefs" project for the bus terminalin in the town of Fier (node e Patosit)
This design has served to begin the process of cooperation between the municipality and private investors, Source Co-Plan

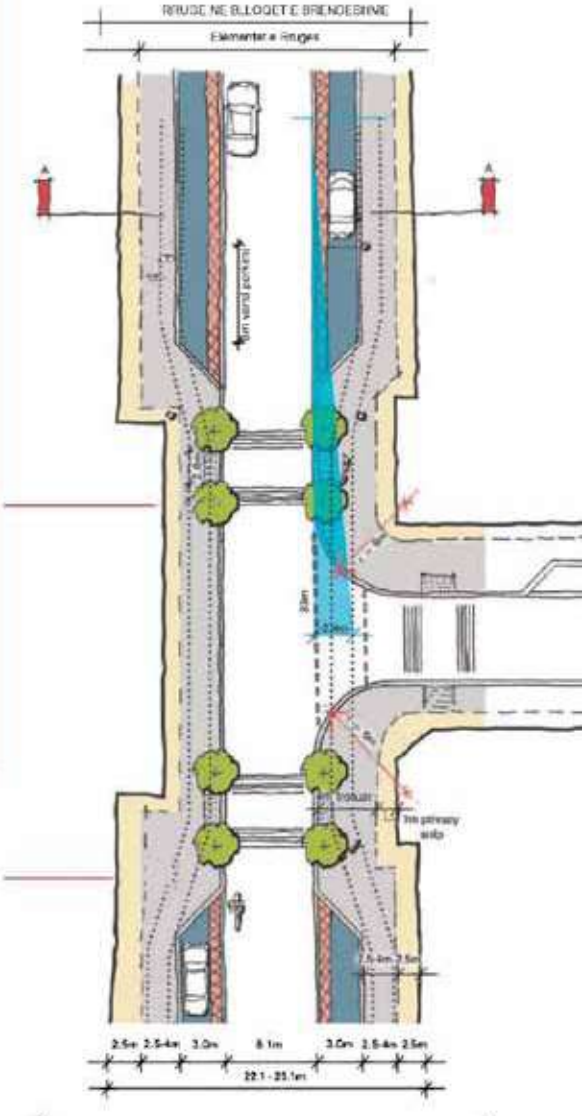
Karakteristikat e bllokut:

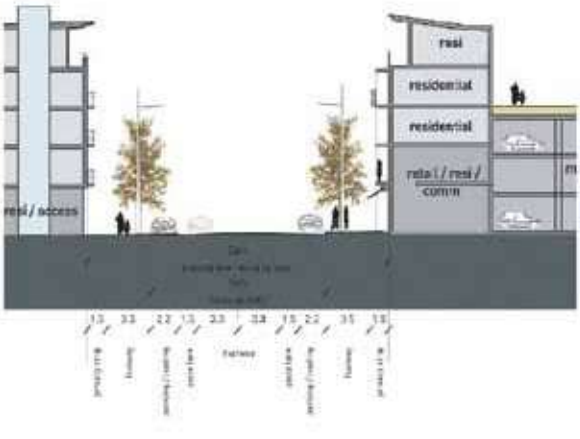
Krijimi i oborreve të brendshme midis bllo-qeve të banimit për të krijuar një hapësirë komunitare të mbrojtur nga zhurmat dhe pluhuri.

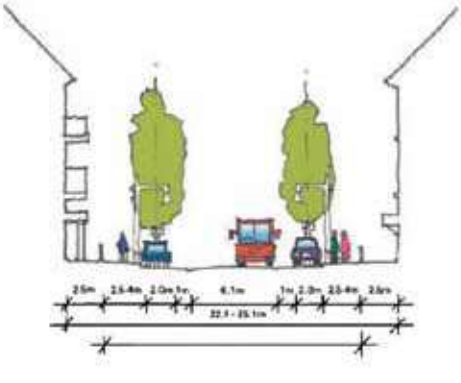
Rrugë të brendshme që u japin prioritet këm-bësorëve dhe biçikletave ndërkohë që lehtë-sojnë qarkullimin e automjeteve. Kryqëzime të ngritura që funksionojnë si kurriz rruge janë një nga masat e uljes së shpejtësisë së makinave.

Parkime në rrugë të kombinuar me parkime në oborret e brendshme.

Lartësia e objekteve ulet në drejtim të periferisë së zonës.







Shembull i një profili rruge i ngjashëm me atë që mund të aplikohet në brendësi të blloqeve të banimit





"Design-Briefs", residential area in Fier

Looking beyond barriers...

The following is a "timeline" of urban developments in Albania after the 1990s, seen from the perspective of Co-PLAN. These sequences were used to depict urban developments in Albania and the evolution of Co-PLAN on the occasion of the organization's tenth anniversary.

Occurrence:
First, negative territorial transformations through "mushrooming" uncontrolled informal urban constructions.

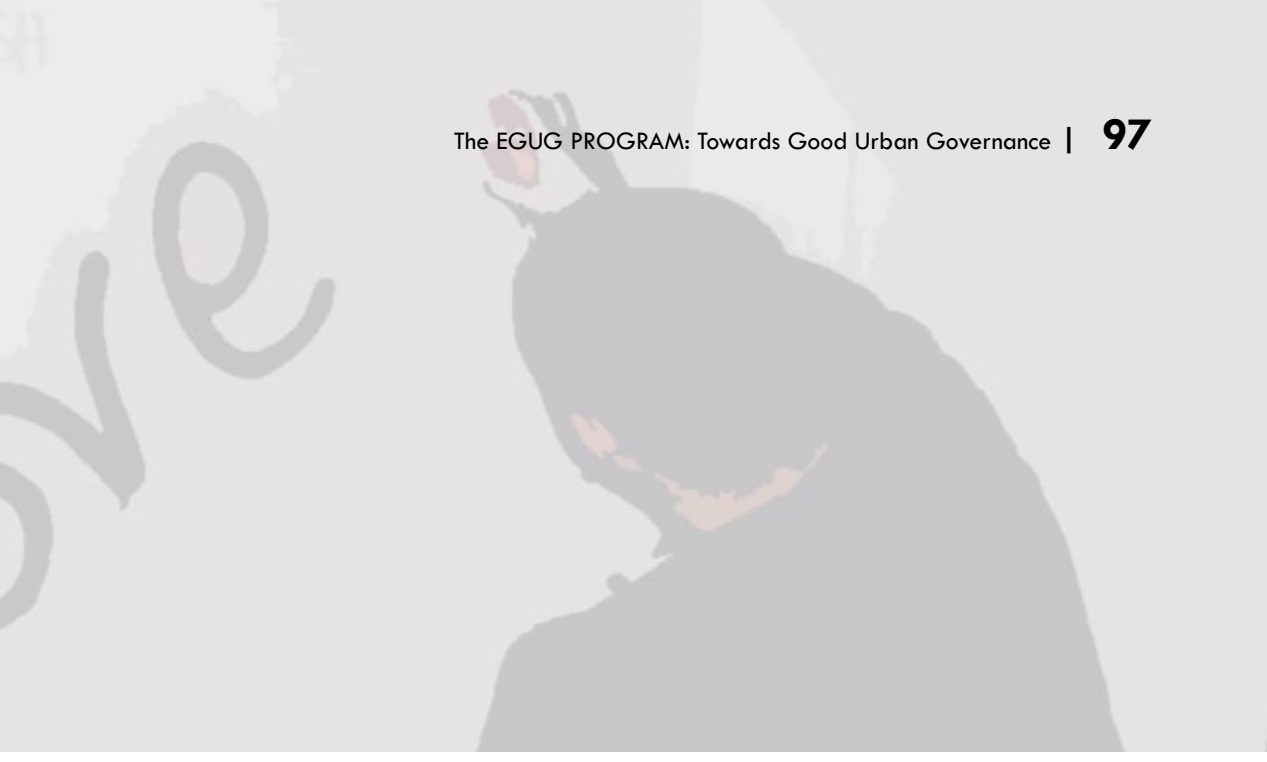
Confrontation:
Co-PLAN attempts to provide orientation within the chaos and to understand and intervene in the situation.
Impact:
First projects are initiated, yielding signs of positive change. Community-Based Organizations that work to improve the area are established.

Looking beyond barriers:
Setting out from the degraded suburbs, the ultimate aim is to achieve a "livable city" and good urban governance.

Dreams of a Livable City

Within five years of the beginning of EGUG in 2003, Albanian society had reached a more developed level. Thus, Co-PLAN and the municipalities reviewed and tried to adopt the instruments they developed within EGUG. Consequently, more actors were needed for continuous, successful implementation of the City Development Strategy.

Extract from the City Development Strategy of Elbasan. "I Love My City: The good products of a city are achieved through voluntary and genuine engagement of those who make, live, and enjoy the city. And these are its inhabitants. However, commitments need to be supported by clear well-structured processes, led by patience, intelligence and wisdom"

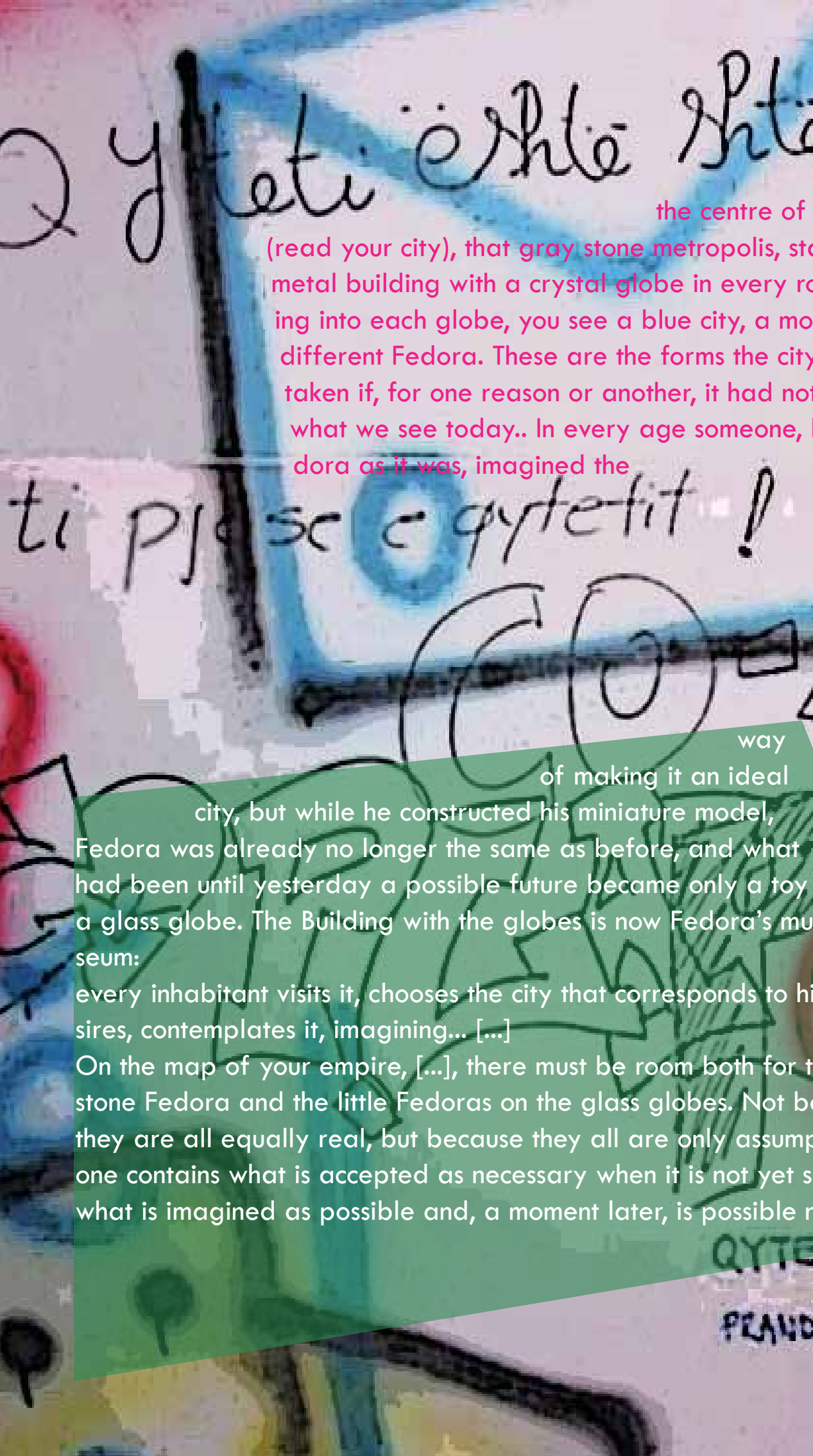


"In the center of Fedora (read your city), that gray stone metropolis, stands a metal building with a crystal globe in every room. Looking into each globe, you see a blue city, a model of a different Fedora. These are the forms the city could have taken if, for one reason or another, it had not become what we see today. In every age someone, looking at Fedora as it was, imagined the way of making it an ideal city, but while he constructed his miniature model, Fedora was already no longer the same as before, and what had been until yesterday a possible future became only a toy in a glass globe.

The Building with the globes is now Fedora's museum: every inhabitant visits it, chooses the city that corresponds to his desires, contemplates it, imagining... [...]
On the map of your empire, [...], there must be room both for the big, stone Fedora and the little Fedoras on the glass globes. Not because they are all equally real, but because they all are only assumptions. The one contains what is accepted as necessary when it is not yet so; the others what is imagined as possible and, a moment later, is possible no longer[9]*."*

Italo Calvino

9 Calvino, I. Cities and the Sky, Invisible Cities



the centre of
(read your city), that gray stone metropolis, sta
metal building with a crystal globe in every ro
ing into each globe, you see a blue city, a mo
different Fedora. These are the forms the city
taken if, for one reason or another, it had not
what we see today.. In every age someone, l
dora as it was, imagined the

way
of making it an ideal
city, but while he constructed his miniature model,
Fedora was already no longer the same as before, and what
had been until yesterday a possible future became only a toy
a glass globe. The Building with the globes is now Fedora's mu
seum:
every inhabitant visits it, chooses the city that corresponds to hi
sires, contemplates it, imagining... [...]
On the map of your empire, [...], there must be room both for t
stone Fedora and the little Fedoras on the glass globes. Not be
they are all equally real, but because they all are only assump
one contains what is accepted as necessary when it is not yet s
what is imagined as possible and, a moment later, is possible n

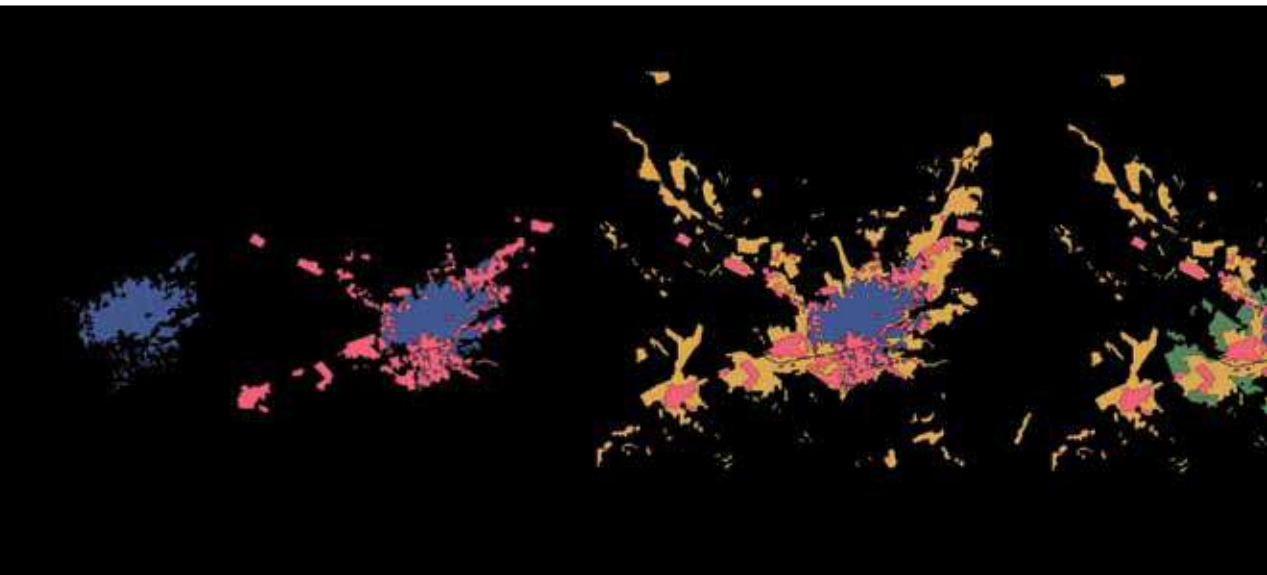
In
Fedora
ands a
oom. Look-
del of a
y could have
t become
looking at Fe-

in
-
is de-
he big
ecause
otions. The
o; the others
no longer.

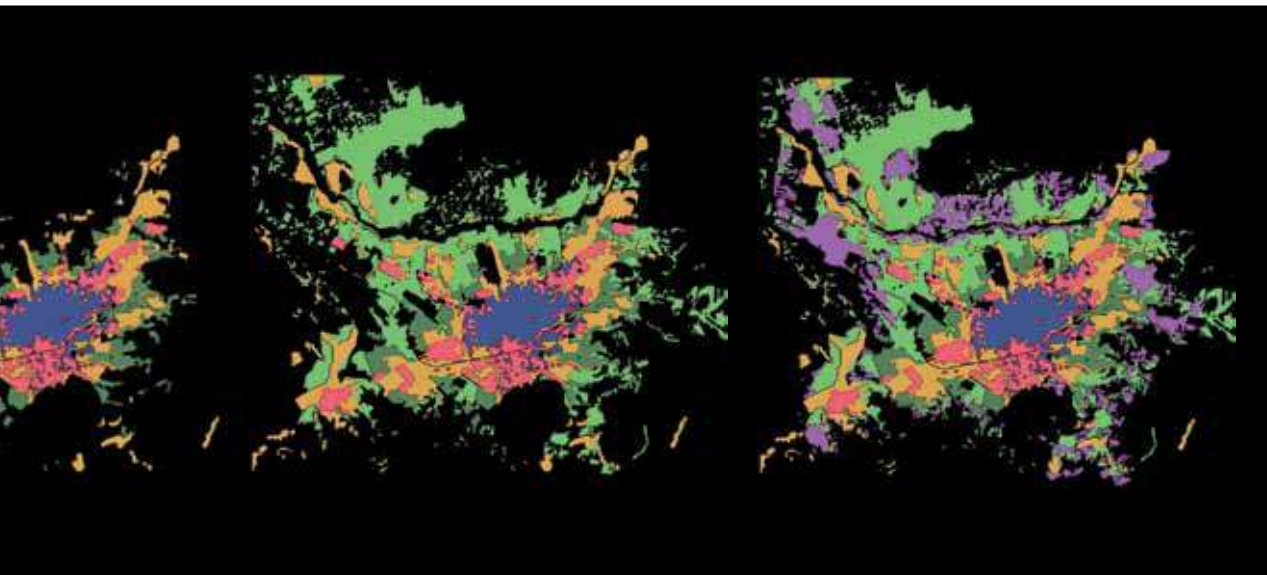


Grafitis, Exibition on the 10'th aniversary of Co-PLAN

3
Post-EGUG Reflection…



There is thus a question that confronts us all: based on the current state of human society, what form will future human settlements take? As Castells says, space is a social expression.



While not without broad similarities, the history of human settlements varied according to context. What happened in Albania beginning in the early 1990s is a well-known phenomenon in the history of urban development. Rapid urbanization has transpired in many other countries at a particular stage of national development. For example, during the 18th and 19th centuries, rapid urbanization occurred in Europe and North America because of the industrial revolution. Since then London, Paris, and New York have been permanent magnets for a better life. During the 19th century the population of Manchester grew eight times over from 75,000 to 600,000 inhabitants. London experienced six-fold growth, from 1 million to 6.5 million inhabitants. Paris witnessed similar though comparatively more modest growth in the first stage. Such expansions usually lacked infrastructure, services, and open spaces (Frampton).[10]

During this period, the depth and rapidity of urban expansion constituted a crisis for traditional planning instruments of control and development. This stimulated a new era of reflection, and new hypotheses emerged related to the new models of social and physical developments. Often the new planning instruments were connected to issues of economic programming, regional planning, new research techniques, and urban analysis. By the end of the 19th century, a tendency could be observed to control the shape and growth of the city, especially in relation to traffic, green areas, and residential and industrial areas.

For Europe, this was the era in which urban concentration was supplanted by deconcentration: the end of the compact city. The traditional compact city gave way to continuously expanding metropolitan regions in which both newly expanded areas and the traditional urban core became interconnected with workplaces by new public transportation systems. This means that the compact city that emerged in Europe over the previous 500 years was completely transformed over the course of the last century as a result of the interaction between technical and socio-economical forces.[11]

To understand the dynamics of urban development, one might refer to the figures: in 1900, only one in ten people worldwide (160 million people) lived in cities. Nowadays, there are more than 3 billion people living in cities, which is half of the world's population. Over the last century, the world population has grown from 1.6 to 6 billion inhabitants. This quadrupling of the global population was accompanied by a twenty-fold increase in the urban population[12] (W Fornos; D Thirunarayanapuran).

Contemporarily, human society is going through new structural transformations, with new processes and spatial forms being generated. But many metropolitan areas in the world today are in crisis. Cities are losing their borders and are becoming spatially and socially fragmented. Moreover, the contemporary urban boom is largely occurring in developing countries. Though not without its positive aspects, this rapid growth is adversely affecting the global environment.

From a spatial point of view, suburbanization is the phenomenon that most characteristically reflects the contemporary paradox of spatial and social fragmentation in cities throughout the world: compact urban cores surrounded by something like a "second city" that is not integrated with the first. This urban expansion into formerly green spaces has largely transpired since World War II and is increasingly posing problems even in European cities because such unchecked

10 Frampton, K. (1993) Storia dell'Architettura Moderna, terza edizione; (Zanichelli Editore s.p.a, Bologna)

11 Frampton, K. (1993) Storia dell' Architettura Moderna, terza edizione; (Zanichelli Editore s.p.a, Bologna)

12 W Fornos; D Thirunarayanapuran, H Burdet, Population and the urban future, 1999

expansion results in "non functional" space (UNCE).[13] In these conditions, the priority for 21st century urban planning lies in supporting the global agenda for sustainable development and social equity for all people. There is thus a question that confronts us all: based on the current state of human society, what form will future human settlements take? As Castells says, *space is a social expression*.

The current urban expansion that cities in Albania and across the world are witnessing is not entirely unprecedented in the history of urbanization. Notwithstanding important differences in socio-historical context, large-scale rural to urban migration in Albania in the 1990s was not unlike waves of urban migration that occurred in 19th century metropolises. Currently, we can say that more than half of Albanians have chosen to dwell in the city. While current trends are still evolving, our cities nevertheless urgently require new visions.

National reflections:

The influence of public policy on spatial planning in Albania
Po në Shqipëri a është menduar ndonjëherë për vizione zhvillimi mbi bazën e modeleve të caktuara? A mundet vërtet njeriu të drejtojë qytetin përmes hartimit të planeve?

Is it possible to shape and direct the city, based on preliminary visions or plans? What about Albania? Are there thoughts and visions about that? The post-EGUG period served as a time of reflection. Having promoted performance-oriented planning in Albania from 1995 to 2005, Co-PLAN was now in a position to articulate more mature judgments on planning at the national level. We present here some of the critical issues Co-PLAN began to pursue at the national scale.

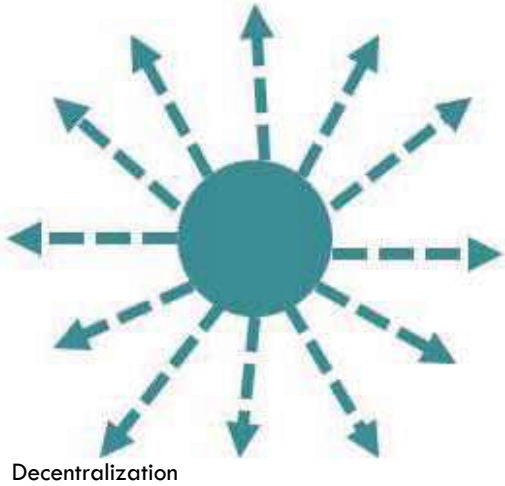
From chaos to energy at the national scale – For Co-PLAN, the primary dilemma has been the following: How can the enthusiasm and energy associated with urban growth in Albania's larger cities be best managed, when urban expansion is often viewed as bringing about chaos? On the other hand, how can hope and synergy be generated in Albania's shrinking, socio-economically depressed cities? And to add to these difficult questions, the contemporary situation is made even more complex by the need to regenerate and revitalize economic and tourist zones, while simultaneously protecting Albanian historical and cultural heritage.

A national platform to reform planning systems – In consolidating its methodology, Co-PLAN recognized the need to sensitize the Albanian public to the necessity of regional governance reform. This necessity has become especially clear in the last decade, and will become even more critical as Albania works toward EU integration.
One of the main causes of failure in spatial planning has been a lack of clarity about the proper role of regional government, as an intermediate level of governance with its own rights, competencies, and instruments This has contributed to disorganized local initiatives and explains the fact that Albania has historically lacked a national territorial policy in the form of a National Spatial Plan. In this context, it is necessary to reformulate the public in order to reform both urban planning in general and specific urban planning projects in particular.

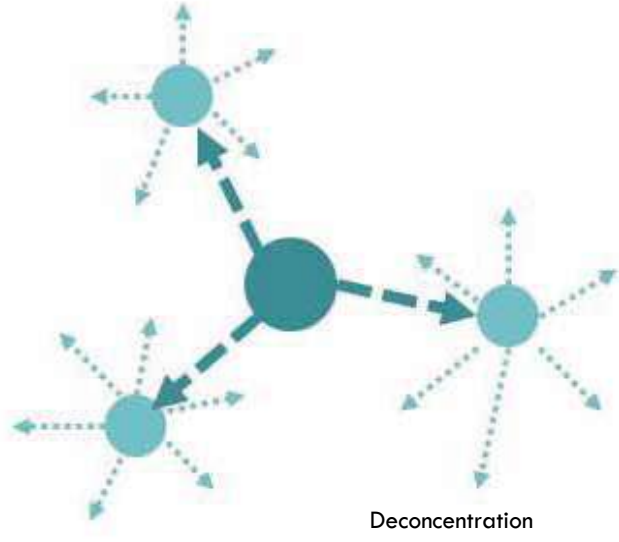
13 UNCE, 10th conference on Urban and Regional Research

In 2005, Co-PLAN proposed to the parliamentary political parties a Platform for planning and administration of the national territory. Parts of the platform are now being debated in the public political sphere. This debate centers on several legal initiatives enacted by Parliament since 2005 related to land issues and formalization of the economy. It is worth noting that this is the first time such matters have been publicly discussed, previously having been treated as taboo.

A Regional and National Vision of Polycentrism - In rethinking the matter of governmental hierarchies, Co-PLAN has come to advocate a "re-composition" of the national territory into new entities, based off water-shed areas, natural resources, historic access and relations, economies of scale, regional competitive advantages, and spatial equity. This emphasis offers a more sensible approach to territorial planning. Planning should be used as an instrument to alleviate social and political tensions and moderate and manage the negative side effects of urbanization such as environmental damage.



Decentralization



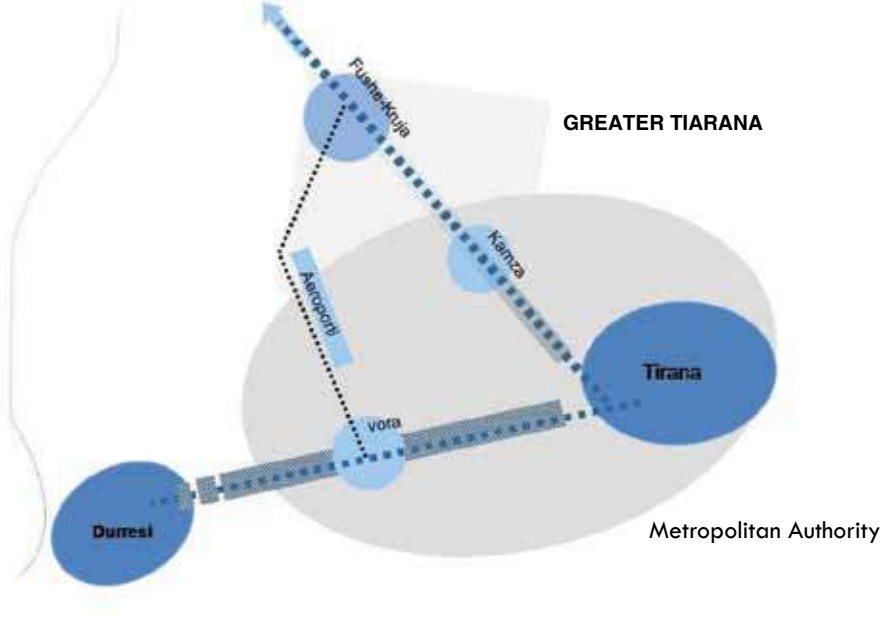
Deconcentration

With several regions of Albania facing difficult times, Co-PLAN considers polycentrism to be a crucial tool of empowerment through which these afflicted regions can be given an opportunity to compete fairly with their own specificities and advantages. It is thus critical to understand and identify the specific contributions these areas can make at the national and regional level. This means promoting "competition" based on a logic of "complementation." At present, the EU[14] considers polycentrism as a promising alternative that provides a new rationale for spatial planning and that promotes and combines competition, innovation, and growth. This consideration is a result of the influence of cities and urban areas, with more balanced models of spatial development, softening the negative effects of high population density and center-periphery disparities.

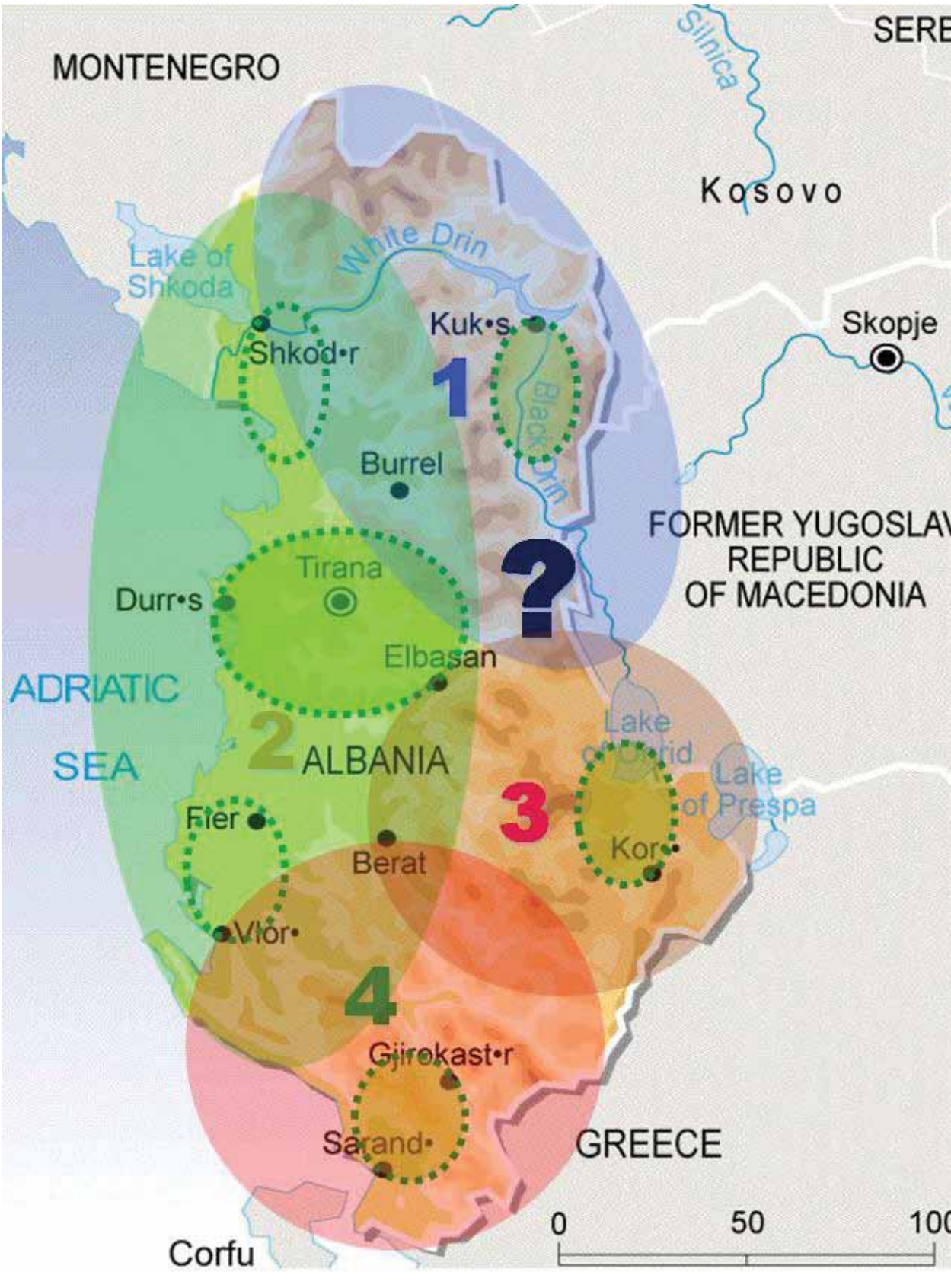
14 The concept of polycentric urbanism is discussed in EU's "Perspective of European spatial development" planning document. According to the EU, polycentric urbanism is a primary instrument for achieving social and economic cohesion in the European Union and beyond.

Consolidation of democratic and market reforms – It often happens that certain segments of the political establishment and public administration fear changes to the *status quo*. This has been the case in Albania. These segments – consciously or unconsciously – tend to create barriers that thoroughly "suffocate" all reform initiatives.

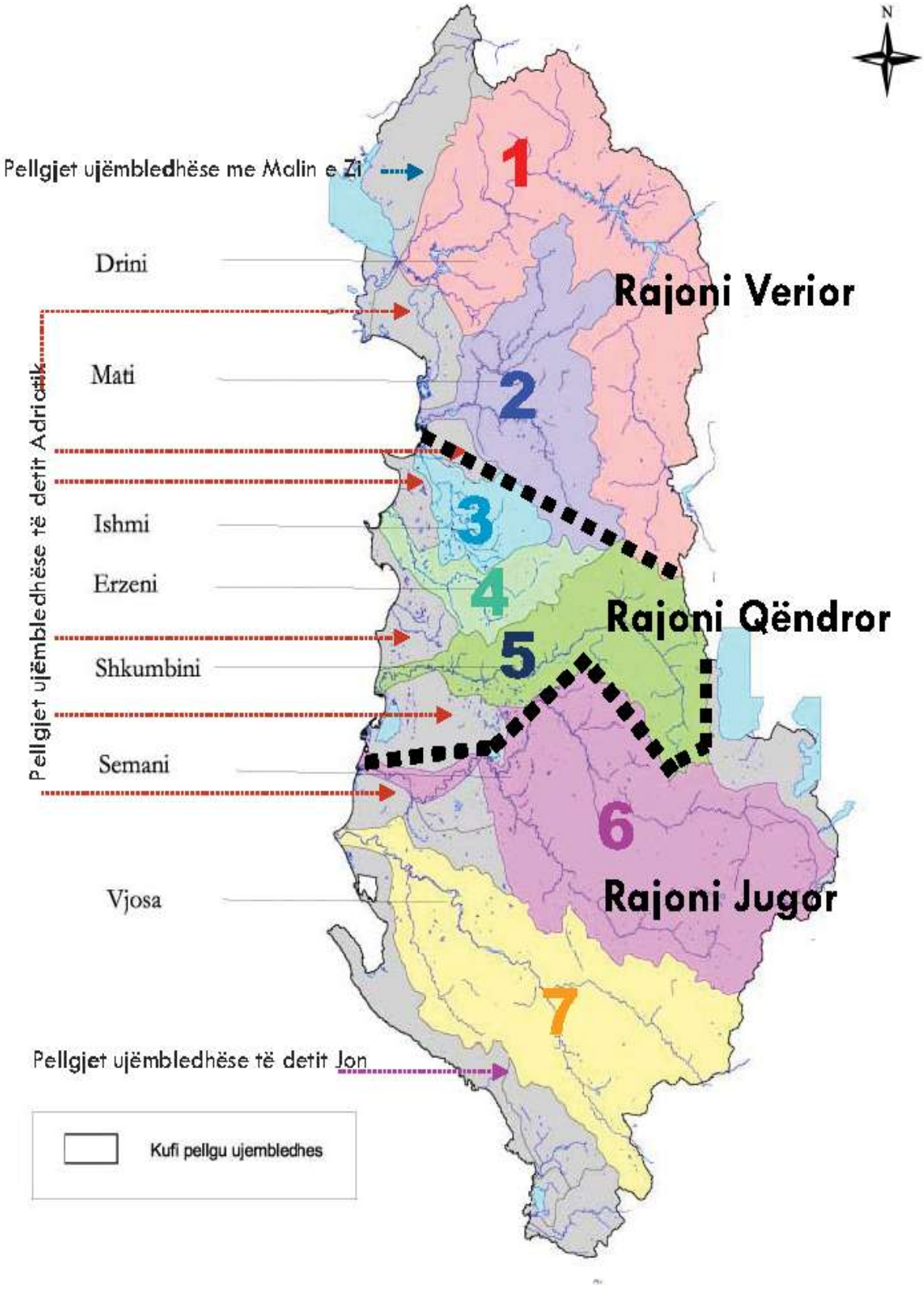
This situation stimulated Co-PLAN and other non-governmental organizations to participate in the Program for the Consolidation of Democracy and Market Economy in Albania, at the Office of the Albanian Prime Minister (2005-2007) with the assistance of UNDP and ILD, Institute for Liberty and Democracy, Lima-Peru (directed by the well-known economist Hernando De Soto). Such professional efforts succeeded in diagnosing certain politically delicate issues that have discouraged the modern development of Albania. This document actually serves as a foundation for high-level decision making processes in Albania.



Notwithstanding such progress, spatial planning and territorial administration remain a problematic un-reformed sector. Indeed, despite its designs to reform precisely this sector, the *Land Administration and Management Program* (LAMP), initiated by the World Bank in 2004, has largely failed to reach its goals. Even though LAMP was designed by experts from the World Bank and was based lessons of the ULMP and EGUG projects, its actual implementation deviated its intended philosophy and principles. The project was hindered by insufficient administrative capacities and political interference by "interested" actors in the Albanian media who stood to benefit from the preservation of the status quo. It seems that extra-legal interests in alliance with certain political segments, aimed to keep urban planning and management under their own control, and even the "diplomacy" of the World Bank proved to be powerless. With the desire of these segments to maintain control of sectors of the economy and assets, and with the still-lingering question of property restitution under the new system of ownership, efforts toward total transparency in such matters have stagnated and corruption has continued. This state of affairs threatens the entire planning system and is costly for society. In the face of such issues, in addition to considering planning issues, Co-PLAN has begun to focus on reform of regional authority structures and regional development.



Regions according to EU principles

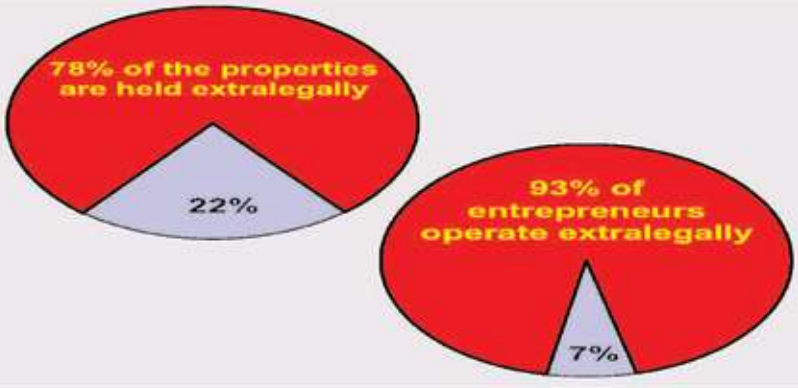


Regions according to watershed areas

The Platform for regionalization of Albania (2005)

DEAD CAPITA

THE VAST MAJORITY OF ALBANIANS ARE KEPT OUTSIDE THE LEGAL ECONOMY



OPE

1. Rea
   a. T
   b. T
   c. T
   d. T
      l
2. Bu
   a. A
   b. D
      s
   c. A
   d. D

MOST ALBANIAN REAL ESTATE IS

Types of Urban Extralegality in Albania



Extralegal Occupation
Squatter settlement in Kamza



Extralegal Extension
Undeclared construction



Extralegal Constructions: Dwellings
Unlicensed and built against zoning, urban planning, and construction regulations



Transactions with Extralegal Property
Rental of extralegal land



Social Housing
Unregistered and less contractual restrictions



Extralegal Constructions: Businesses
Unlicensed and built against zoning and urban planning regulations, thus cannot be registered



Subdivided Land
State-owned land subdivided and sold by squatters



Unregistered Transactions
Constructions financed through extralegal credit and sold with insecure pre-sale contracts



Unconsolidated Records
Building and land are registered in separate records

THE EXTRALEGAL ECONOMY

Business



Partnerships registered as sole proprietorships due to exceedingly restrictive costs



Residence attestation or *vertetim* issued by a *krye plak*, a Bathore community leader, used as extralegal ID



Extralegal accounting books outside the law

THE VALUE OF EXTRALEGAL ASSETS IN ALBANIA EXCEEDS US$ 18.5 BILLION

US$ 18.5 billion of assets *in the extralegal economy is:*

- **2.5 times** greater than the total value of remittances sent by Albanians working abroad between 1993 and 2005
- **5 times** greater than the official development assistance and official aid between 1993 and 2005
- **11 times** greater than the amount of foreign direct investment between 1993 and 2005

THE COSTS

PRCA	Centr
	Regio
Private Hired Licensed Topograp	
Regional Council	Office Prote
IPRO	Local
Municipality	Archiv
Forest Directorate	
Ministry of Public Works	Centr
Notary Public	
Applicant	

L IN ALBANIA

ERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF EXTRALEGALITY IN ALBANIA

al estate assets where:

- The land occupied is legally disputed
- The dwelling was built without the consent of authorities
- The acquisition was not registered according to law
- The law forbids the fungibility of the property by restricting sales, eases, mortgages, etc.

siness assets that:

- Are not incorporated or legally registered
- Do not have limited liability, asset partitioning, or perpetual succession
- Are outside the tax record system
- Do not have all licenses and permits required by law

S IN THE EXTRALEGAL ECONOMY

Map of Central Cadastral Zone in Tirana – Validation of Extralegal Typologies



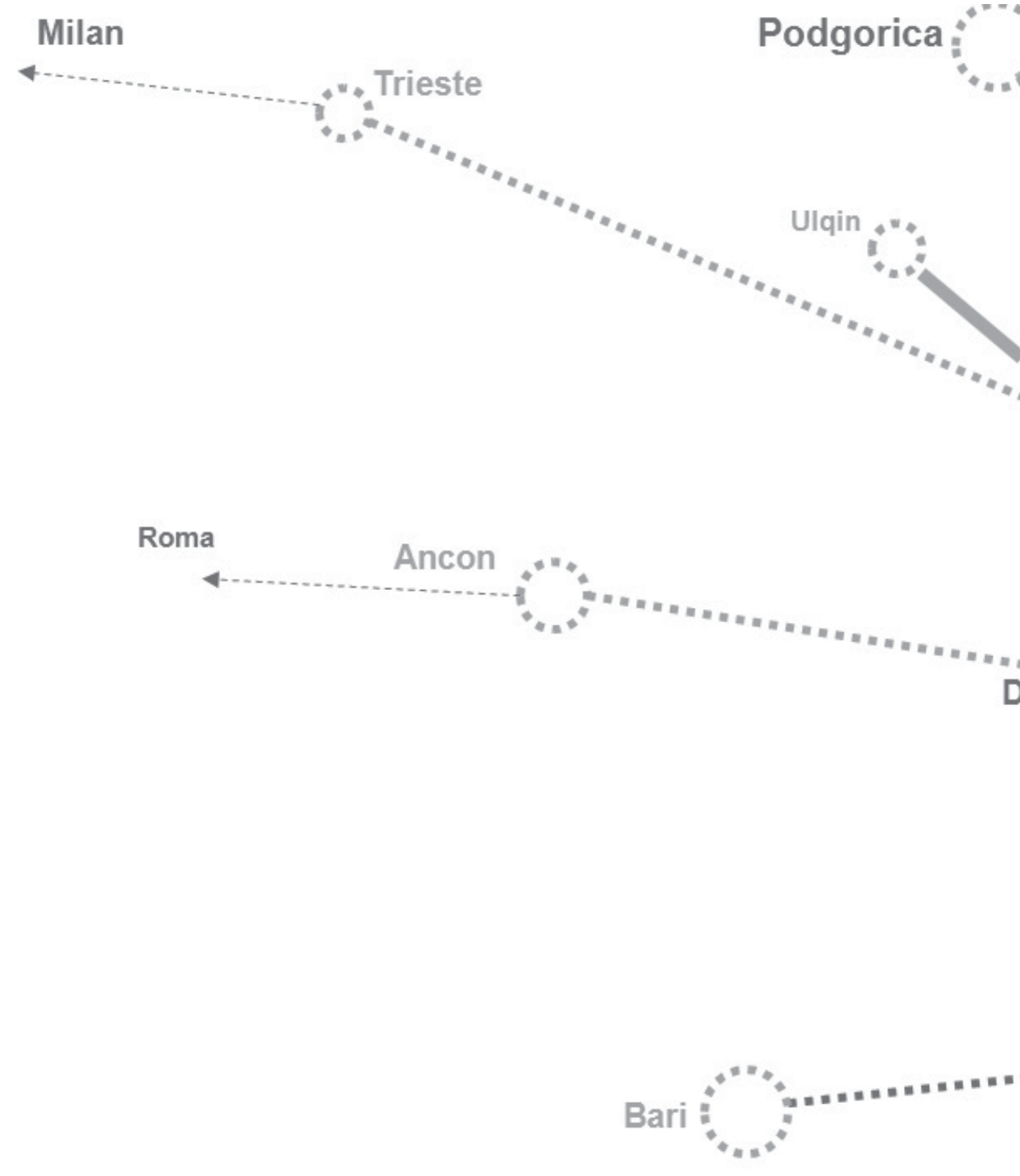
Y HAS ITS OWN INSTITUTIONS

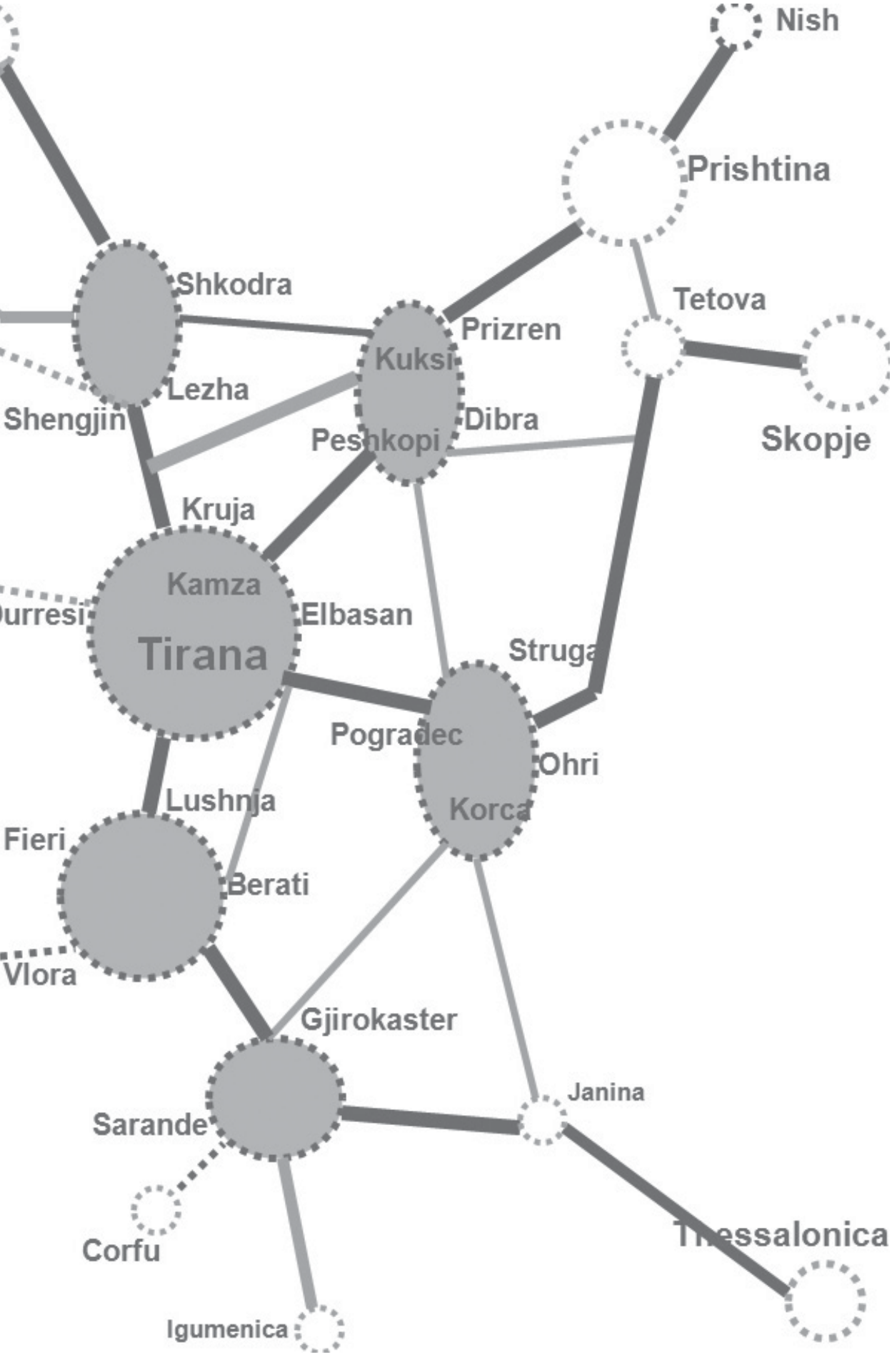


S OF ENTERING AND OPERATING IN THE LEGAL ECONOMY

PROCEDURE TO CLAIM RESTITUTION AT THE PROPERTY RESTITUTION AND COMPENSATION AGENCY IN TIRANA




Milan
Podgorica
Trieste
Ulqin
Roma
Ancon
Bari



Conceptual Scheme of the main urban centers and the strategic spatial links
The Platform for regionalization of Albania (2005)

In this way Co-PLAN has practically expanded its mission from piloting grassroots actions at the community/local level to effecting change at the national level, which in itself is very much in need of policy analysis. Thanks to its philosophy, Co-PLAN had accumulated a wealth of knowledge about the different levels of urban governance, from neighborhood to a central level, in Albania. Influenced by it social mission and idealism, Co-PLAN works to translate this knowledge into policy discussion and alternatives for development of the country. Co-PLAN was supported in these efforts the Open Society Foundation (OSI) in Budapest.

Though it began in the US, the global economic crisis is also indirectly affecting countries like Albania. It is becoming increasingly clear that the boom in the construction sector in Albania cannot continue at the pace it has maintained in recent years. At best, the construction boom will last no more than a few years longer. Paradoxically, Albania's modest banking system and extensive informal economy somehow partially insulated Albania from the economic crisis. Strangely, however, now with the housing and construction market in significant decline, the prices for apartments, shops and are remaining steady. Meanwhile, the rental market is flourishing. It would thus seem that construction activity is concentrated in a limited number of large companies, often with close political connections. Unfortunately, this situation inhibits the pace of reform at a time in which the need for reform is even more urgent.

Given Albania's specific circumstances, Co-PLAN continues to work in two main directions: i) "expanding horizontally" by contributing to urban planning in both growing and shrinking cities; ii) "extending vertically" by affecting national level matters and promoting national spatial planning and policies. This is no easy task, given that communities are fed up with planning and institutions remain weak.

Sustainable development – The environment provides the foundation for life and territorial transformation. We must not forget to take into account resource planning as we go about making livable cities. Although the environmental movement in Albania is becoming stronger, environmental planning and energy-related matters are not yet fully on the radar screen. This is because Albanian society is rushing to undertake developmental goals without proper societal consciousness of the environmental implications and the trade-offs between short term and long-term development. This is why Co-PLAN has attended to environmental matters in its professional and research agenda. Working in collaboration with several municipalities and communes (Fieri, Kamza, Fushë-Arrëzi, and Guri i Zi), Co-PLAN helped to introduce solid waste management systems and new models and environmental standards at the local level. But in working on environmental issues at the local level, the need for planning has become apparent yet again. Co-PLAN has been supported in this effort by CORDAID, the Dutch Embassy in Tirana, the EU, and recently, the Albanian government.

Developing further planning instruments: Regulatory plans

Planning for "shrinking" cities - Co-PLAN has not only applied its planning principles in large, growing cities, but also in small, shrinking towns, bringing a regional perspective to bear on the latter. Over the last decade, there has been a growing concern for regions of the country facing economic depression and population loss. With regard to Albania's large, growing cities, efforts must remain centered on managing urban energies, while with regard to Albania's small and shrinking cities, efforts must focus on stimulating hope and fostering local advantages that are complementary at the regional level. This means that local specificities are crucial and must be reflected in planning approaches, and they must be part of an interactive polycentric development perspective at the regional scale. However, due

to historical regional disparities, northeast Albania faces more complex problems. Under such circumstances, a national vision on regional balances is desperately needed, and planning could possibly take the form of an organized process of population resettlement into more efficient urban systems, although with high costs in the initial stages.

Through the Swiss funded program *Decentralization and Local Development Program* (DLDP) (Implemented by Intercooperation), Co-PLAN has supported six local government units in Northern Albania (Koplik, Vau i Dejës, Pukë, Fushë-Arrëz, Dajç-Bregu i Bunës, Gur i Zi) develop local development plans, territorial planning instruments and improve their financial management. Through the USAID-supported *Local Government Program in Albania,* similar support was provided to Kukës, Librazhd, and Fushë-Krujë. In these projects, Co-PLAN built on its previous experience with EGUG to specify local contexts, analyze relevant institutions and their needs, create information systems for planning and, crucially, to take the necessary time to get to know the "genetic codes" of the living settlements. This "code" is rooted in the territorial and regional situation that is found beyond the administrative boundaries of the city. Regeneration of these areas cannot be undertaken by each area independent of the others, instead requiring regional coordination, which is key to regenerating these areas in accordance with visions for a better future.

The planning experience of Fushë-Kruja is in some ways similar to that of Kamza. Fushe-Kruja is also characterized by rapid population growth and construction-material production, while it is strategically located at the node that connects the Tirana-Durrës corridor with the north of the country. Despite high levels of informality, with its public transit system, sports center, and wholesale facilities, Fushë-Kruja can be made to complement the Tirana-Durrës center if sensible regional planning and development are effectively undertaken.
In the case of the *General Regulatory Plan of Librazhd,* despite political differences existing between the regional institutions (client) and the local municipality of Librazhd (beneficiary), the planning product has been broadly accepted by residents and officially approved by authorities. The plan envisions Librazhd as a hub for services for the surrounding network of urban settlements that complement and support each other. The degree to which plan implementation will succeed depends on the degree to which local and regional government cooperate. This project was carried out in cooperation with POLIS University.

In comparison, Co-PLAN's involvement with the urban analysis phase of the *Tirana Urban Regulatory Plan* is a unique case. Due to disagreements between Co-PLAN and the international studio hired by the Municipality of Tirana with the support of the World Bank about the future of urban development in Tirana, Co-PLAN withdrew from the formulation phase after successfully completing the urban analysis phase. Ultimately, this experience reconfirmed that, at worst, personalized planning processes tend to fail or, and at best, personalized planning processes produce controversial planning products and attitudes that make theses politically unusable and socially contestable. Due to the fact that the Tirana plan was not coordinated with broader policy orientations and the international studio only considered planning within the city boundaries, the urban plan that was ultimately produced failed to take into consideration previous regional planning efforts (i.e., the *Strategic Plan for the Greater Tirana Area*), and it was thus was unable to effectively deal with crucial matters like public infrastructure and transport, social and physical integration, distribution of centralities, services, and development. Thus, it is understandable that implementation of detailed plans like the one for Tirana's central square become difficult to implement. The outcome of the Tirana Regulatory Plan shows that planning efforts produce unfeasible results when international assistance is locked into contractual relationships and is not tailored to address the local context.

From all of this, we can conclude that:

The “shrinking” situation has not so much to do with the physical aspects of development but with socio-economic depression and the lack of synergy. The planning process remains evasive, and its negative effects are spurring further population migration to major urban areas. This situation is further exacerbated by the non-presence of authorities.

When discrepancies arise between local and regional visions, as in the case of Shkodër-Lezhë Regional Plan, the role of the Region in pursuing regional projects can be hampered by an absence of legally binding implementing instruments. The coordinative role of planning at the regional scale has failed because the region as an administrative unit of local governance has remained unclear and weak. Regional plans will remain meaningless until regional authorities are effectively established.

The “frightening” absence of technical and political capacities at the local level is due to the flight of professionals to larger cities, making urban planning and management nearly impossible in certain areas of Albania. Local planning is also made difficult by the fact that local authorities face no consequences for failing to fulfill minimal decentralization criteria.

Presently, Albania’s small, socialist-modernist “new towns” are sustained almost entirely by “injections” from the public sector. Thus, a provocative question presents itself: How much and for how long can Albanian society pay for past and present mistakes? How will these communities be handled? Is it more reasonable to encourage resettlement towards efficient and productive urban centers or to continue this strategy of endless injections? This dilemma becomes even more urgent when we take into account the need for qualitative services such as health care and education, which make the “injection” approach totally unrealistic.

Beyond the plan - For Co-PLAN, planning means not simply to “plan” but above all to implement and achieve concrete, tangible results. So, how can we move from plan to implementation? In answering this question, Co-PLAN formulated a philosophy of performance- oriented plans. To this end, Co-PLAN was involved in strengthening local finances and restructuring tax procedures for nine local government units under the LGPA project. Several participatory Capital Investments Plans were designed to facilitate an active role for these municipalities in guiding transformation processes. But without the involvement of the private sector and its partnership with local authorities, appropriate urban development will remain almost impossible. This logic is true also for public services such as schools, cultural centers, transportation terminals, city markets, and so on. However, local authorities must take the lead in such processes by promoting these concepts. In Fier, attempts are underway to construct a new bus terminal, and in Kukës a new city-market is being envisioned.

The Consolidation of Knowledge for Change – Based on its accumulated expertise and values, from 2006 onward, Co-PLAN supported the establishment of POLIS University. POLIS is an alternative school specializing in Architecture and Spatial Planning. The University is bringing fresh ideas to Albanian architecture and a critical mass of experts is being trained, a crucial step in establishing meaningful urban planning reform in Albania. Nowadays, Co-PLAN joins the scientific research institute of the university, bringing its “field experience” to bear on academic processes. A variety of practices – from political lobbying and public sensitization via open professional forums to specialized publications -- have been transferred from Co-PLAN to POLIS. Thus, Co-PLAN’s role is to respond to the segments not interested in reform of the planning system as a long-term tactic.

The need for national policies – In the post World War II era, Albania was one of the few European countries to not adopt a national spatial development policy, notwithstanding the centralization policies of the socialist era. Despite the changes that have transpired since the 1990s, the situation has remained much the same. This to some degree explains the current chaotic situation of in/formal developments in the country. This means that planning competencies must be organized at different levels.

i) *The Local Level of urban planning and urban governance* - This includes Municipalities and Communes, whose representatives are elected by direct voting. Planning competencies at this level of governance might be further decentralized, including the design, approval, and implementation of local development plans.

ii) *The Intermediate Level of territory planning* – This implies actions that are undertaken by Regions (Counties) appointed by elected local mayors, and is considered as the second level of local governance. But, intermediate level planning requires more clarity on what we mean by Region and of what the appropriate tasks for this unit consist. The process of EU integration has made this matter even more urgent, and establishing effective intermediate level governance and planning is crucial for guaranteeing development coordination between institutions and efficient service provision.

iii) *The Central/National Level* – This is represented by the *Central Government,* which drafts planning legislation and standards, and monitors and controls the implementation of development on the basis of the *National Policies Document* and the *National Spatial Development Plan*.

Co-PLAN recommends that reform set out from a set of essential principles to guide change:

1) Albania needs a *reform of public administration* based on the new administrative-territorial division of the country and the new competencies of its respective territorial units.
2) *Reform of territorial legislation* based on the EU policies and directives. The "legislative package" should stimulate decentralization and regionalization by increasing the level of monitoring, coordination, and information exchange.
3) *The improvement of territorial policy-making and decision-making,* based on professional argumentation and an integrated information management system.

But what concrete steps must be taken to reach these objectives?
According to Co-PLAN, *a first step* would be the reorganization of the Ministry responsible for territorial planning and development. This institution must have its own structures for analysis and prognosis, design of policies and monitoring/control of their implementation. In this context, *the decentralization* of planning levels means that the Municipalities and the Communes have the freedom to design, approve, and implement local urban regulatory plans, local plans of economic development and partial detailed plans. On the other hand, *Regions* may draw up regional/spatial/strategic plans on land, the economy, and resources. Regions are assumed to coordinate and balance local developments and consensually resolve potential conflicts. The Central Government should maintain the competencies of designing legislation on national policies and spatial plan.
A second step might lie in the upgrading of academic and research institutions in matters related to planning, including a national policy of capacity building in the planning sector. This process should be informed by the experiences of other countries, and the scholarly literature on urban planning should be brought to bear on the situation.

Planning for "shrin

there has been a growing concern

facing economic depression

Albania's large, growing cities, effo

managing urban energie

Albania's small and shrinking c

stimulating hope and fosterin

are complementary at the region



king” cities. Over the last decade,

n for regions of the country

n and population loss. With regard to

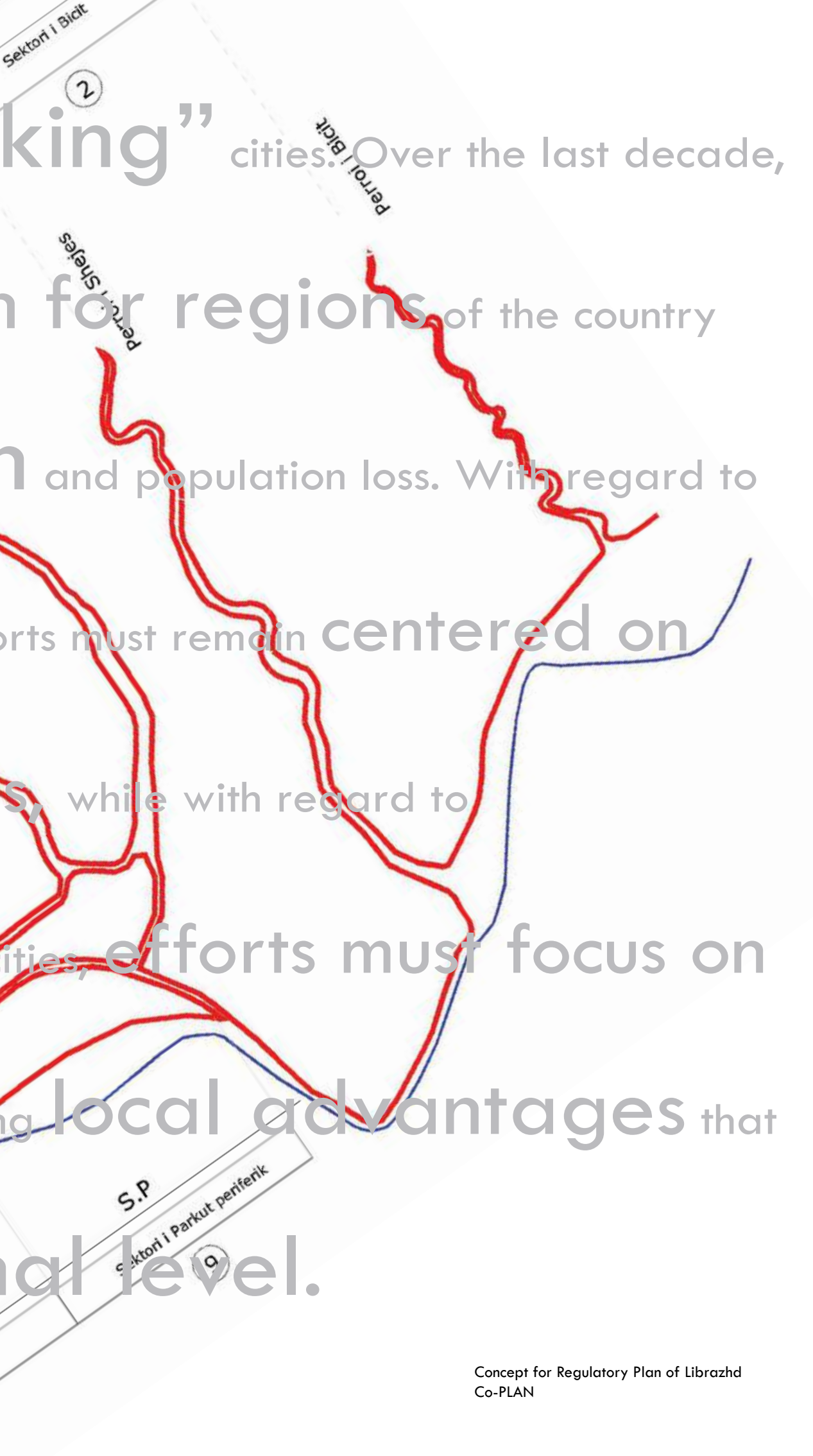
orts must remain centered on

s, while with regard to

ities, efforts must focus on

ng local advantages that

nal level.



Concept for Regulatory Plan of Librazhd
Co-PLAN



A *third step* might lie in the establishment and consolidation of *professional associations and orders*, including the regulation of professions.

Finally, geographical data could be productively integrated with other useful data and information to encourage good governance. A data base system might be built on decentralization principles with different levels of accessibility according to the level of governance. Such reform also requires understanding and support from broader society, interest groups, and civil society actors.

Epilogue

In the early 1990s, with the support of a Dutch development organization (Cordaid), a few young Albanian professionals successfully piloted the first experience of participatory planning in Tirana. Despite initial skepticism from officials and local professionals, these experiences were disseminated and replicated in the ensuing years, scaling up from neighborhoods to cities and national levels.
Starting from the informal settlements, the methodology evolved to include so called formal areas and city centers. Co-PLAN's achievements were recognized first by international organizations and local communities, and later, by local and central authorities.

One of the highlights of Co-PLAN's experience over the past fifteen years has been the Enabling Good Urban Governance Program. EGUG led to the implementation of comprehensive planning approaches in two major Albanian cities.





As an organization, Co-PLAN has further consolidated and grown, undertaking a sustainable, capacity building strategy. Today, several Co-PLAN experts are also engaged in public and private institutions and international agencies. But the organization remains stable in terms of human capacities, finances and ideas.

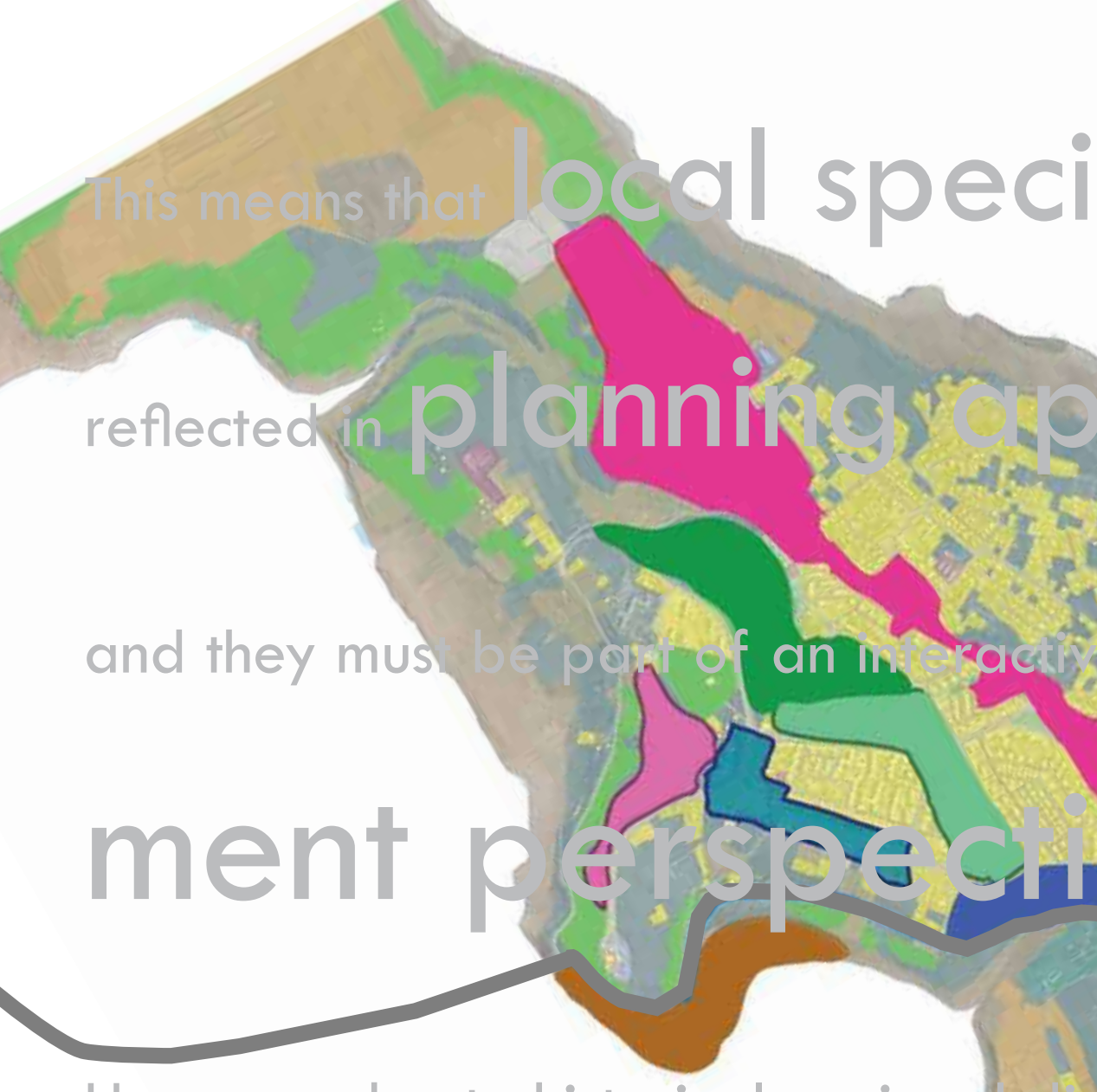
Co-PLAN proposed to the Parliament of Albania a platform on territorial planning and development opening up way for a political debate. Some of these ideas have already been adopted in official legal initiatives of Parliament and Government.

Co-PLAN's multidimensional efforts to collaborate with authorities and donors have served as the basis of the organization's strategy to transform ideas into actions. An alternative school of planning has been established, aiming to create a critical mass of expertise in favor of new ideas and positive changes for urban planning in Albania.

However, if there has been success, it has not been easily achieved. Prejudices, skepticism, and even pressure have been always present. In such an atmosphere, "the key" for Co-PLAN has been its own clear positioning as the supporter of local community interests.

But the challenge of consolidating and expanding the planning methodology continues…





This means that local speci

reflected in planning ap

and they must be part of an interactiv

ment perspecti

However, due to historical regional dis

faces more complex problems.

Under such circumstances,

regional balances is

ficities are crucial and must be

proaches,

e polycentric develop-

ve at the regional scale.

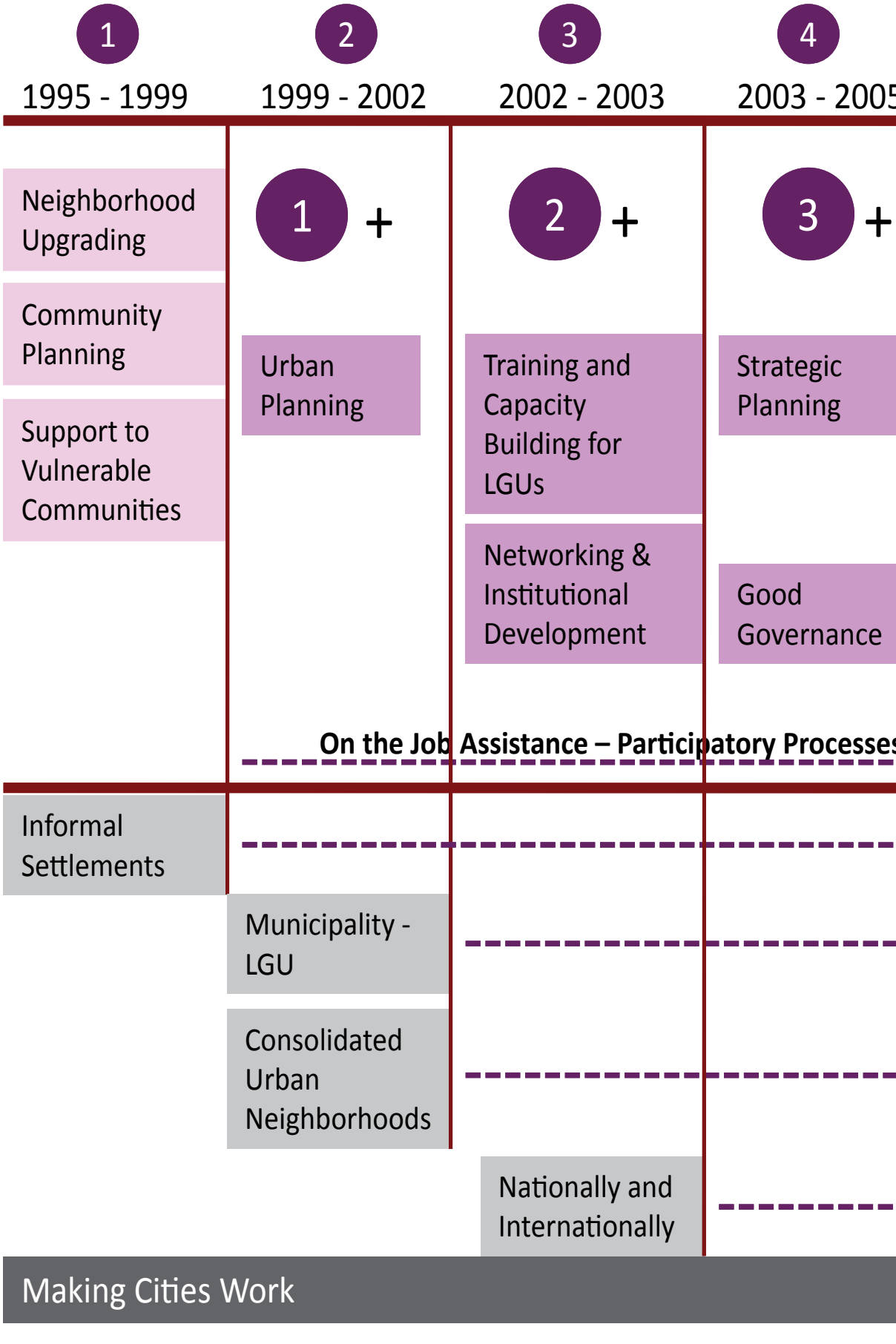
parities, northeast Albania

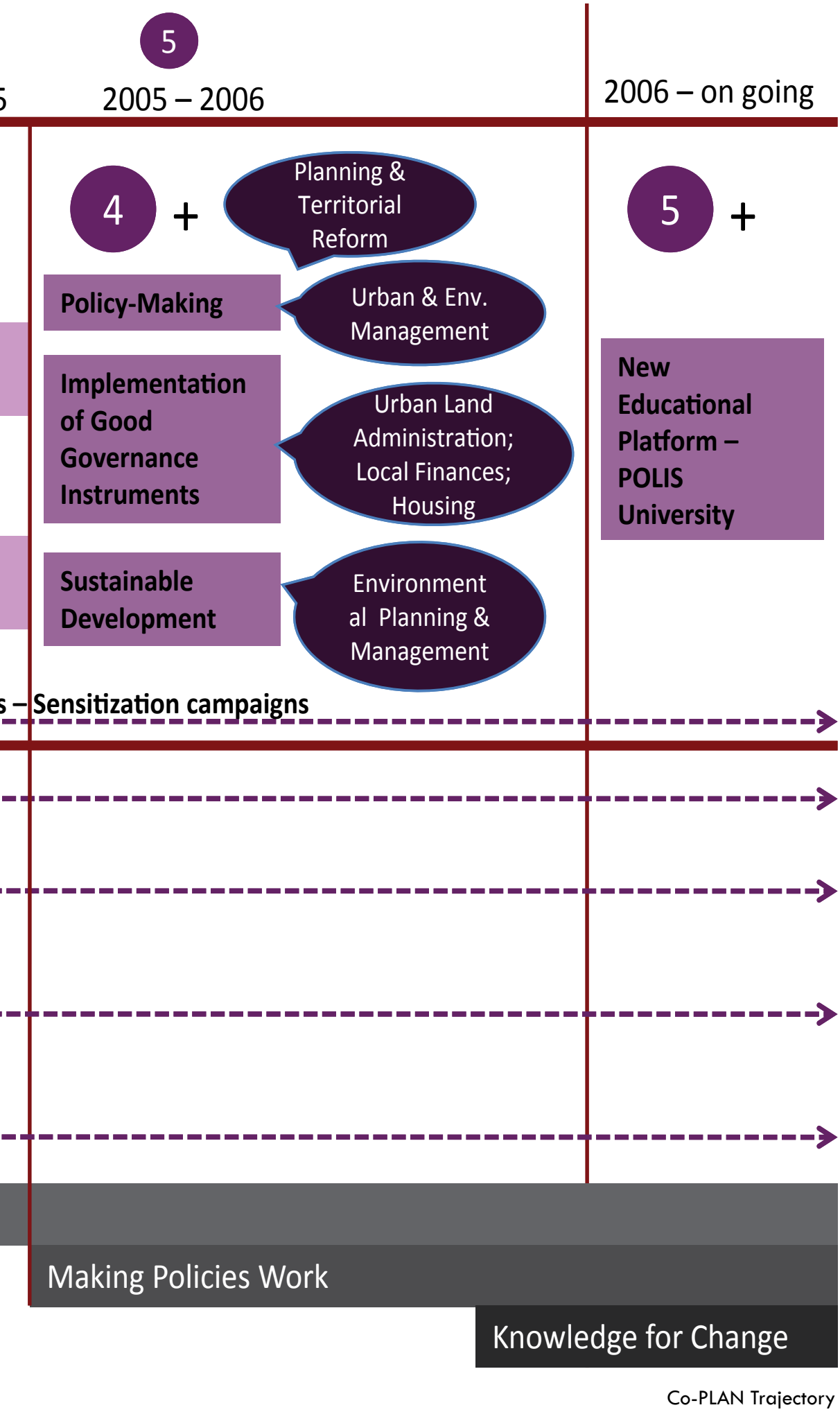
a national vision on

desperately needed.

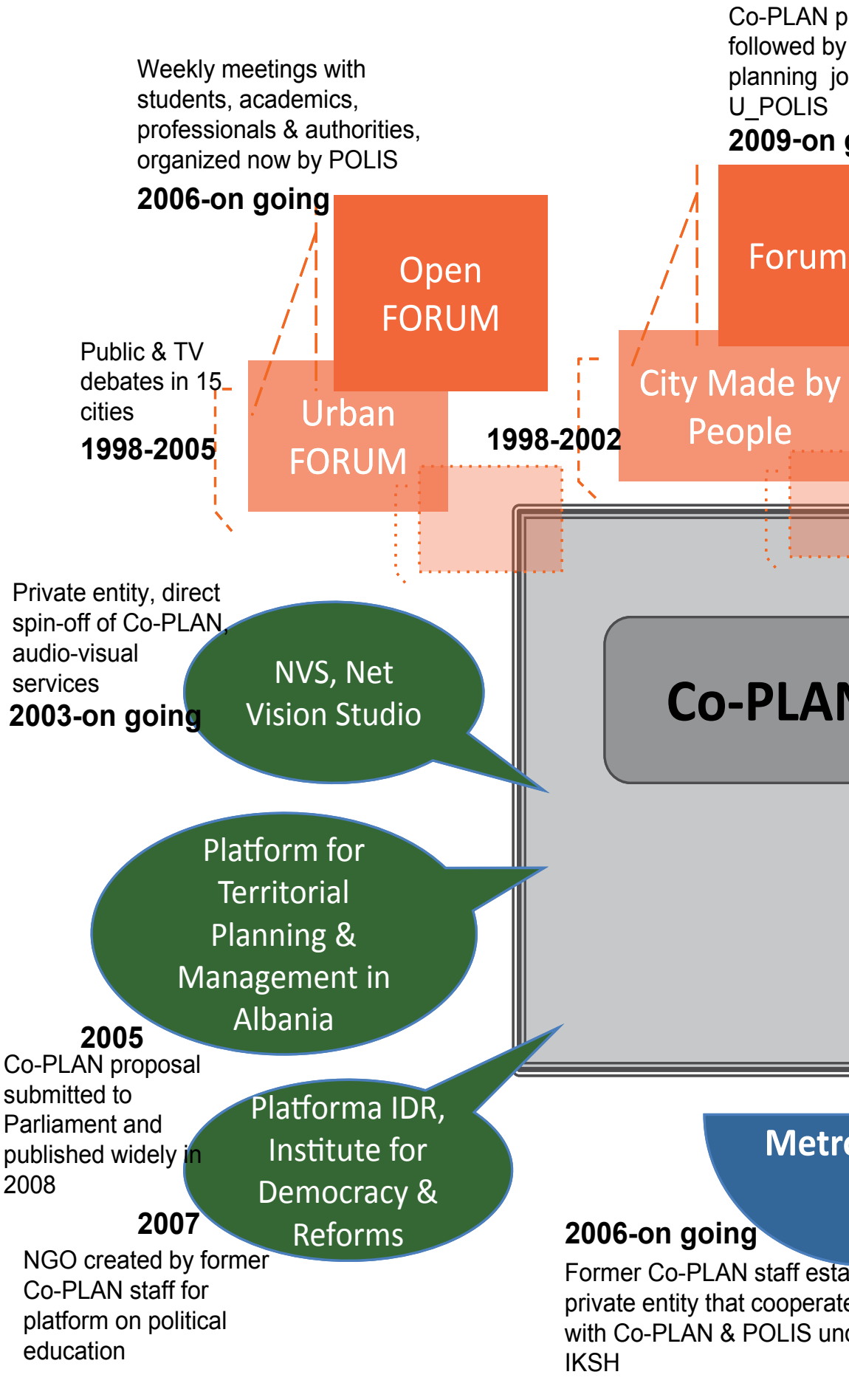


Concept for Regulatory Plan of Kukes
Co-PLAN


1
2
3
4
1995 - 1999
1999 - 2002
2002 - 2003
2003 - 2005
Neighborhood Upgrading
Community Planning
Support to Vulnerable Communities
1 +
2 +
3 +
Urban Planning
Training and Capacity Building for LGUs
Strategic Planning
Networking & Institutional Development
Good Governance
On the Job Assistance – Participatory Processes
Informal Settlements
Municipality - LGU
Consolidated Urban Neighborhoods
Nationally and Internationally
Making Cities Work



Co-PLAN Trajectory


Co-PLAN p
followed by
planning jo
U_POLIS
2009-on
Weekly meetings with students, academics, professionals & authorities, organized now by POLIS
2006-on going
Open FORUM
Forum
Public & TV debates in 15 cities
1998-2005
Urban FORUM
1998-2002
City Made by People
Private entity, direct spin-off of Co-PLAN, audio-visual services
2003-on going
NVS, Net Vision Studio
Co-PLAN
Platform for Territorial Planning & Management in Albania
2005
Co-PLAN proposal submitted to Parliament and published widely in 2008
Platforma IDR, Institute for Democracy & Reforms
2007
NGO created by former Co-PLAN staff for platform on political education
Metr
2006-on going
Former Co-PLAN staff esta
private entity that cooperate
with Co-PLAN & POLIS und
IKSH

eriodical
arch and city
urnal of

going

A+P

NGO, direct spin-off of Co-PLAN, provides training in ID/OS

2003-on going

NET, Network for Exchange & Training

National annual award of Co-PLAN on social responsibility, 4 categories: governance, media, civil society, business

2002-on going

Leadership Award

N

2006-on going

Direct spin-off of Co-PLAN, architecture & Planning

Co-PLAN Bibliopolis

IKSH_ POLIS, Scientific & Research Institute

o_POLIS

U_POLIS

blish
es
der

Former Co-PLAN staff establish a specialized private university in Architecture & Planning

2006-on going

