

WUF III Networking Event on 22 June 2006

Public Engagement: The Inclusive Approach

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Conclusion

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are at the end of very interesting and vibrant two hours of short speeches, a lot of questions and discussions. Let me first thank you all for your overwhelming interest and attendance, you and the panellists have made this Networking Event a memorable part of WUF III! Everybody has surely his own summary in mind but perhaps it may be useful for you to know what I am going to tell my research assistants and students at home about the outcome of the last two hours:

Public engagement is centrally focussed on public participation in planning and land management (I would like to remind you that this morning in the Dialogue 2 a participant from Ghana has complained that planning and planners mostly do not refer to land issues and their solution). Public engagement is therefore an essential matter of all planning professionals. The professionals and their partners (not customers only!) citizens should know, how participation or – because some of you have preferred this term – inclusiveness works. To achieve the inclusive approach we do need

1. **Rules** especially for participatory planning processes and for decision making (Who is finally responsible and decides? What are the rights of stakeholders etc.?)
2. **Ethically based commitment** to strengthen participation and **respect** the local cultural framework
3. **Skills** e.g. in methodology, information people, in moderation/media-tion/conflict resolution etc. based on and provided by a profound education (The question this morning was: Are the universities already enough prepared for these modern approaches and philosophies?)
4. **Interdisciplinary** and joint approaches with institutions and in the private sectors and faithful **partnership** and face to face contacts with civil society
5. **Capacity building** (institutions) for empowerment and enabling for active, responsible and accountable participation planning. In Germany, especially in Bavaria there were established so-called Training Centres of village renewal and land development at which citizens together with local government officials and planners can learn building teams, understanding comprehensive planning including alternatives, developing joint visions, overall concepts, goals and measures! Because this concept of capacity building was very successful (the mistrust of people against government can this be removed), the European Union has put it in its policy and funding system.
6. **Open- and Readiness** for continuous **innovation** and **consciousness** and modesty (Bescheidenheit) for **small(er) steps** (incrementalism; the time for too big steps is over!) It is important that we come to action according to the motto of WUF III: From ideas to action! And if something does not work we should be frank to say it and not try to defend and push through the wrong things!

7. **Transparency** and **support** by the indispensable work of continuously guiding media (TV, broadcasting and especially newspapers) according to the timeless truth “life is local”.

Final remark: Although there are some or even a lot of proved methods one should be clear: The right participation depends on the individual situation (culture, people, policies etc.) and has to be applied in a permanent learning process day after day individually.

Thank you again – see you at the WUF IV in China.