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# RELEVANCE OF SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN THE LASTING PLANNING PROCESS OF MUNICIPAL REAL ESTATE STOCK

This paper explains the relevance of stakeholder involvement and the allowance of socio-cultural aspects of sustainability in the lasting planning process at the example of a refurbishment of an urban asylum-seekers hostel.

The process of planning a construction-related action, taking into account the various aspects of sustainability requires substantial re-thinking by all decision-making parties involved. The participation of residents, the involvement of the surroundings, as well as relevant actions from the local sector must gain importance in the near future.

The consequences brought forward as a result of this re-thinking process, on the economical, ecological and social aspects of sustainability need to be presented accordingly and as a result, be clearly visible.

Equally important for a plausible representation of sustainability to decision makers is an evaluation, which is not only specific to building and construction within local goals, but also oriented to sustainability strategies on a national level.

These two requirements are presented within the following document by means of the CLUE-chart. The CLUE-chart defines the elements: *Cause*, *Lack* and *Effect* of a planned action (*Upgrade*). Hereby the various relationships between said elements and their respective stakeholders are shown. Further, this allows derivation of estimated *consequences* and their respective indicators and targets of sustainability on a basis of effects observed.

The elements of the CLUE-chart and their correlation are also explained in the attachment of this paper as a chart.

## **1 Background**

The portrayal of the processes above is based upon an example of the refurbishment of a municipal asylum hostel in the city of Remscheid, Germany. In 2002, a fire caused the near complete destruction of the two upper floors of the four storey building. The first and ground floors were severely damaged as a result of the firewater used by emergency services. As a result, complete renovation and modernisation of the entire building was inevitable.

### ***1.1 Situation of residents and premises***

Ranging from the first to the top floor, the building was inhabited by individuals as well as families. Previously to the fire, individual rooms of various sizes were located on each floor for residents. A communal kitchen was located on each floor, as well as sanitary and laundry installations which could be used by residents of the respective floor. On the ground floor a small area was designated as office space, the remaining areas were unused. This was also the case on the upper floors, where isolated spaces were also left unused.

Most of the adult residents did not use their recreational time optimally (lack of communal association, social networking, sports etc.) Children and adolescents attended public schools and day-care centers during the week. Academic performance however, was mostly poor and a qualified graduation comparatively rare. In many cases, German was not spoken within families. The levels of morbidity within the building were relatively high when compared to other similar facilities within the city. Similarly, the amount of structural and cosmetic damage within the building was higher in comparison to other facilities. Also noticeable, were the frequent incidents in the building including complaints to the police, crime and general disturbance of the peace.

### ***1.2 Previous strategy of modernisation***

The building management department of the city of Remscheid is the responsible party for planning and implementation of the refurbishment. The primary focus of the building management department when renewing a building is to ensure the structural and technical functionality and safety of the building. Defect components are replaced, yet the cause for the defect/damage is often not questioned.

The requirements of the building are often defined by the respective user or authority, which in the case of this example, are the social-services of Remscheid. For example, social-services define the number of apartments and the necessity of meeting rooms for on-site staff. The residents of the building are not included in the planning process by the building management department.

Scarce financial resources, coupled with the obligation to comply with numerous standards and regulations greatly reduce freedom when planning. Motivation to include other divisions of the city when planning is very limited because of the short time frame for construction measures.

## **2 New modernisation strategy goal**

During the refurbishment of the building it is not only necessary to meet the energetic requirements of the structure of the building, but primarily the socio-cultural aspects of the planning process have to be considered and implemented accordingly. While taking sustainability into account, a highly improved standard of living should be created for the

residents. The resulting positive changes regarding residents and their immediate surroundings can be presented to local decision makers plausibly, using the three-pillar model of sustainability.

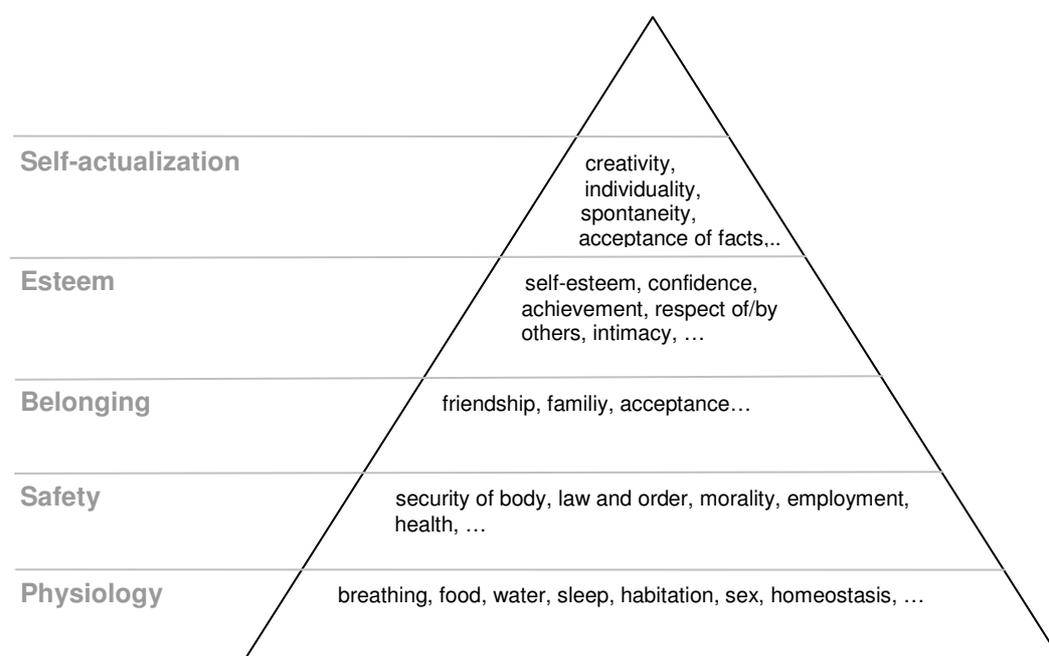
## 2.1 Topics of modernisation strategy

### 2.1.1 Purpose and benefit of a building

Construction is not just erection of a building according to the generally acknowledged rules of technology; much more it symbolizes culture and life itself. Buildings are erected for a specific purpose and to specifically benefit the residents. This specific benefit is often neglected when existing buildings are modernised. Building regulations and technical requirements are fully complied with, yet the changing needs of the residents are hardly questioned at all anymore. The actual purpose and benefit of a building for mankind is no longer a central aspect in many modernisation plans.

An asylum-seekers hostel defines a special purpose of habitation. The word habitation is defined in the constitution of the Republic of Germany in Art.13 Par.1 as follows: "The home is invulnerable." Meaning in other words, the protection of ones private space from government intervention. The definition associates the meaning of a home as a private space as well as one's elementary habitat for development of one's own personality.

In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, habitation is placed at the base of the pyramid in the field of physiology, and according to Maslow<sup>1</sup>, is one of the basic needs of mankind.



**Figure 1:** Maslow`s hierarchy of needs

<sup>1</sup> Abraham Harold Maslow: American psychologist \*1908 †1970.

The core-concept of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is that basic needs must first be satisfied before higher needs can be met. Thus habitation is part of the central base required for the satisfaction of other, higher needs and is an important factor in socialisation<sup>2</sup>.

### *2.1.2 Importance of property for surroundings*

There are many similarities between the needs of mankind and the goals of sustainability. The main task within a sustainable planning process is to create and show synergies between personal needs and local, national and international goals of sustainability.

The consequences of a construction-related action directly affect the inhabitants of said building. Furthermore, many other persons/parties are involved in the planning process as well as working directly with residents. For example, a construction-related action creates consequences for the neighbourhood as well as the urban environment. Which individuals are involved concretely, participating in the creation process of an action is decided on a case-by-case basis.

## **2.2 Participation of stakeholders**

The following stakeholders were involved in the planning process regarding the example of the renewal of the municipal asylum hostel:

- The building management department of the city of Remscheid handled the planning and implementation of the construction-related actions
- Social-services of the city of Remscheid were defined as user of the building, who also set and define requirements for the building to the building management department
- The care association for asylum-seekers, who are responsible for the care and safety of the asylum-seekers as well as the on-site work for said residents
- The residents of the municipal asylum hostels who lived in the building previous to the fire and who have returned to continue living on site.
- The neighbourhood, who are in direct, daily contact with the residents and have their own expectations regarding neighbourly relations

The involvement of stakeholders was carried out with varying intensity. All groups were included in the planning process in a manner of public consultation. Thus, every individual (from within mentioned groups of stakeholders) was granted permission to give input and feedback regarding the renewal process. Ideas and personal wishes could be formulated openly. They were however, to be kept within the guidelines and designs of the building interior as well as the goals of local neighbourhood life. All results were received and compiled by the building management department. The results were highly variable and included personal as well as general needs from groups of people.

The following terms inter alia were brought forward by those involved:

“development, silence, warmth, celebrate, friends, neighbours, chance, design, working, comfort, exist, integration, demographic challenge,<sup>3</sup> ...”

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Maslow, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Schmidt, 2002.

Following the compilation of ideas and wishes of the stakeholders, was a cooperative community project initiative which was run by the building management department. Social-services and the care of asylum-seekers association were the main parties involved in this initiative.

The main goal of said team was to cluster various wishes according to their importance and to rate them according to their levels of sustainability. In order to simplify cluster building, research and comparisons were carried out in advance regarding: local, national and international goals of sustainability. Ranking highly within these goals is, the local Agenda 21, the goal of German national sustainability as well as the EU-strategy for sustainable development. Workgroups gathered information concurrently, regarding which of these indicators contained useful data on file.

Analysis of our research showed that ideas and targets of the different Stakeholders are partly identical with superior sustainability targets. This fact might however not always be evident. The following example shall provide you with an explanation:

During public participation activities, some children wished to establish a part time child-care for aiding them with school exercise in the building. Such request primarily reflects the children's desire to improve their performance in school. Looking to the superior principles as explained above, such improvement of performance in school once it has been achieved might as well have a serious impact on the general sustainability target of „education and culture“. This target of “education and culture” is one out of 21 targets of the indicative report 2008 concerning sustainable development of Germany<sup>4</sup>. The only difference is the specific point of view whilst aiming at the same target.

Explaining their ideas and desires Stakeholders are referring to different persons or groups on the one hand, while on the other hand also looking at different timeframes. The children's desire to improve their performance in school refers to some years, depending on their individual development in their life. From the government's point of view, the target “education and culture” refers to a much longer period of decades or generations.

Based on these findings the ideas and desires have been clustered into two separate areas. Direct Stakeholders, having short-term desires and referring mostly to their own, and indirect Stakeholders, have long term desires reflecting to a larger group of persons.

In our example direct Stakeholders would be the children desiring aid with their school exercises, having the target of improvement of their own school performance within the next few years. Indirect Stakeholders would be those groups which subsequently profit of such children's improvement of school performance. These could e.g. be higher education units, Universities or career training facilities. The government's target is the ongoing improvement of education and qualification referring to the whole population<sup>5</sup>.

Definition and linking together of desires and targets of all involved Stakeholders is one of the main challenges of research for suitable sustainability actions. The correlation between desires and targets of individuals, groups and the government has to be separately elaborated for each planned action.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Statistisches Bundesamt, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Die Bundesregierung, 2008.

### 3 Implementation of planned modernisation strategy

This task is definitely a hard one to achieve, especially for local public authorities. Definition of targets and explanation of possible consequences require a method, usually not used in common facility management systems for buildings. Main problems with implementation may be subsumed under the following three issues:

- Only individually measurable consequences of specific actions may be shown, as social impacts and consequences, respectively the benefit of such actions may not be precisely predictable<sup>6</sup>.
- The specific topics cannot be objectively summarized in normative terms<sup>7</sup>.
- The task concerns numerous different parts of public administration and research areas, and requires therefore a centralized coordination department, most of local public authorities do not have.

To define targets and desires and therefore the benefit for people, it is necessary to reflect all referring circumstances. The planning of building related actions mostly refers to the point of view of one individual. Such narrow perspective restricts proper reflexion of circumstances. During restructuring of public facility management, such narrow perspective has to be overcome.

In the example explained above, reflection is aided by public participation activities. To consequently implement the results of such public involvement local public authorities need an organization structure, currently not existing. The success of developing an organization structure which is able to overcome individual all-day desires in order to improve its competence and stock of knowledge is defined as “social institutionalization”<sup>8</sup>.

#### 3.1 Flexible Theory

The main task of the organization structures as explained above is to develop theories, explaining the consequences of the execution of specific actions. Such theory has to put its main focus on the targets and desires of the different Stakeholders. Hereby the theory defines the connections between individual and common observations, concerning things, facts and processes, based on empiric as well as logical data<sup>9</sup>.

Referring to any description of social and cultural aspects such connection is difficult, as all human relationships are always interactive. Any possible development of human relationships may not be exactly foreseen but only predicted up to a certain point of probability of occurrence. Thus, in order to find a proper solution, flexible theories are necessary. Flexible theories are always adequately re-organized with respect to the inner and outer influence of actions, as well as the specific moment of occurrence of such influences. The resulting repetitive re-organization of such flexible theories may not be negatively evaluated, as it only reflects a natural matter of fact of human and life sciences.

When looking at the consequences of actions many different factors are relevant. As explained, the result of the interaction of such factors is not exactly predictable. There are numerous different possible consequences, which themselves again are interactive. The result of all those interactions, being a predicted reality, may be named as “autopoietic

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Dangschat, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Dangschat, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Schülein, Mikl-Horke, Simsa, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Brockhaus, 2002-2007.

reality"<sup>10</sup>. This form of reality is self-dynamic and therefore always produces new variants, which might also be contradictive to each other.

Consequently, one has to face the problem, that consequences and impacts may not always be exactly defined. Moreover, predicted impacts and targets are only connotative theories. That means, that only the basis of such theory may be exactly defined, whereas the resulting consequences and impacts underlie a steady flow of change. With respect to the process of planning of building actions it therefore has to be a focus of research, which possibilities and alternatives might be relevant in future, in order to be able to correctly describe possible consequences and also react in a more flexible way. It is also of utmost importance to look at the number of different alternatives pro or contra a specific action.

It is a central purpose of any sustainable planning process, to develop theories for the implementation of a sustainable future development, including the detection, definition and analysis of possible alternatives followed by their final evaluation.

In most countries of the EU the execution of such sustainable concepts is defined as an „administration-oriented process“. Accordingly, it is crucial to implement the targets of any sustainable development into a centralized authority within the administrative body<sup>11</sup>. Consequently, administration has to overtake a very important and responsible position.

The following chapters explain the execution of flexible theories in two steps. The first step explains the connections between cause and effect of actions with relation to the direct Stakeholders as defined before. The second step defines (con-) sequences and effects of actions with relation to the indirect Stakeholders, as well as the public sectors economy, ecology and social affairs.

### 3.1.1 Presentation of effects using the CLUE-chart

The effect of any action primarily concerns the *direct Stakeholders*, e.g. the inhabitants of a building. The effect of an action is measurable according to pre-defined targets and the referring indicators. The definition of an action and the referring effect after its execution might then be done using the four main elements: cause, lack, upgrade/action and effect. Usually, facility management is at first confronted with the lack of something. Such lack may e.g. be a defect window or the like. The upgrade/action resulting thereof would then e.g. be the replacement of the defect window. The resulting effect would be a fully functional window. Research for the cause would show the expiry of the (defect) windows lifetime.

Between the elements lack and effect there is a crucial connection:

The effect has to absolutely and securely eliminate the lack (defect window).

This connection is used to review if the upgrade/action has been properly and adequately chosen in order to eliminate the lack. In the example as described before, this would be the case if the research result for the lack is correctly defined as expiry of the window's lifetime. If the upgrade/action is insufficient to eliminate the lack it has been wrongly predicted. This might happen if the correct cause for the lack has not been properly researched. Therefore it is of utmost importance to exactly research the cause and properly describe it in the CLUE-chart.

Of course there is also a connection between the cause and the upgrade/action:

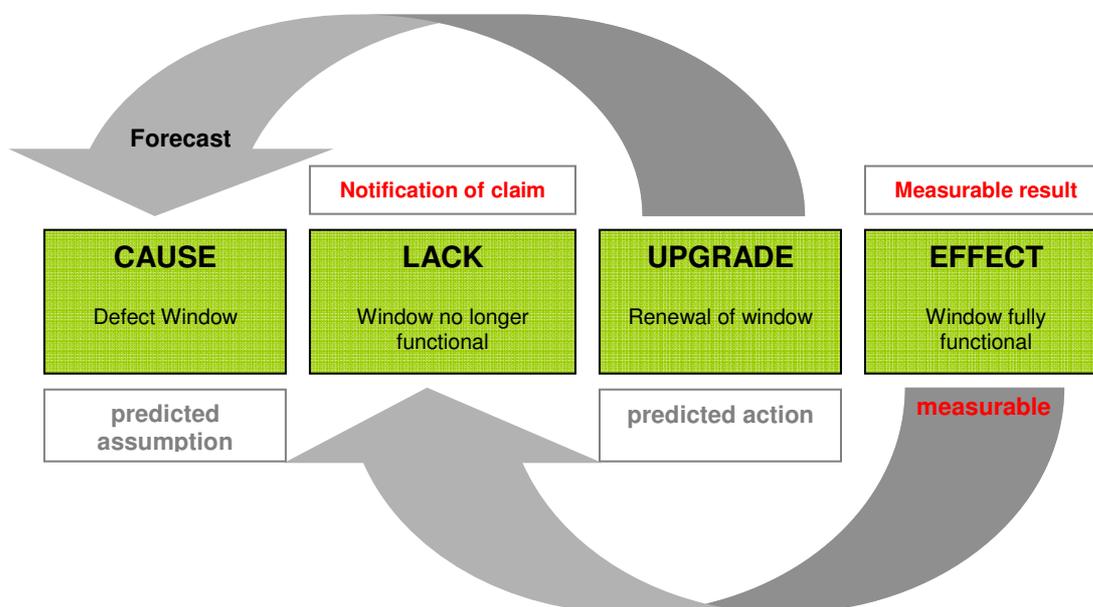
The renewal of the window as upgrade/action has to absolutely and securely eliminate the cause (i.e. the defect window).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Schülein, Mikl-Horke, Simsa, 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Krainer, Trattinig, 2007.

This connection between cause and upgrade/action, as well as the definition of the cause, is – contrary to the connection between lack and effect – only predictable but not exactly measurable.

The following CLUE-chart shows the above example:



**Figure 2:** Description of a building defect in CLUE-chart

Report on damages in public facility management usually works as follows:

Facility management is informed about a specific lack (i.e. defect window). The responsible official assumes a possible and probable cause (i.e. expiry of the window's lifetime) and gives order for the renewal of the defect window, based on this cause (i.e. upgrade/action). The effect of such upgrade/action would be the window being fully functional again. If the window then is fully functional for its whole lifetime again, the official's prediction has been correct. The effect may accordingly only be measurable due to the functionality of the window. If no further reports on damages with respect to the window occur, the upgrade/action shall be defined as correct.

Contrary to this the upgrade/action shall be defined as wrong and based on a wrong cause, if the expected effect does not occur. Usually the effect concerns the direct Stakeholders, in this case the inhabitants of the building. Con- Sequences for indirect Stakeholders might only be defined, after the effect as described before has already occurred.

### 3.1.2 Presentation of Stakeholder Involvement in CLUE-chart

As a matter of fact the official's assumption of the cause that the window is defect as a result of expiry of its lifetime, is always the individual assumption of a single person. Of course there might be numerous different possibilities that could have caused the defect.

Such different cause might be:

The rooms of the building do not have any window shades. During discussions between the inhabitants of the building and social workers it occurred that the inhabitants dislike the missing possibility to darken the rooms. In order to solve this problem, inhabitants use clothing or towels as a substitution of the window shades, placing them between the glass and the window frame. Consequently the window's mechanic is damaged. Revision of confirmed orders by the responsible facility management confirms this cause of damages.

Communication between the involved parties changes the point of view and therefore also the dealing with the cause of damages occurred. Only this involvement of all parties concerned enables public authorities to discover the correct cause of damages. Consequently the participation of different Stakeholders helps avoiding frustrated investments. The exact knowledge of the specific lack also enables public authorities to develop more sustainable upgrades/actions in future.

In this phase of the process, participation of Stakeholders means involvement of persons directly concerning of the respective upgrade/action. Those persons would then be direct Stakeholders of the respective action, as defined before.

### *3.1.3 Depiction of consequences*

Once the effect of a measure has been proven to direct stakeholders, the next step is definition of consequences for indirect stakeholders. When defining consequences, projections are made, relating to various groups of people as well as the consequences for the areas: economy, ecology and various social issues, that may have occurred during the upgrade. Therefore it is important, that the impacts of the effects are shown prior to the upgrade through correlation with the lack.

Mapping of consequences occurs in several steps. The first consequence arises from the onset of the effect.

During the refurbishment of the hostel, the previously unused rooms and spaces were transformed into a special needs and homework-aid area. This gave students the possibility to re-cover their work after school under the supervision of a teaching professional. It was seen with many of the students that grade-point averages increased significantly on final reports. The improved results also had a positive effect on the students' motivation regarding other extra-curricular activities and general behaviour.

### **Primary, Secondary and Tertiary consequences**

The direct impacts seen from the students as a result of the special-needs and homework-aid schemes were an improved grade-point average as well as improved motivation for learning.

As a primary consequence in this case, it can be projected that the chances for a training spot or university acceptance are greatly improved. Similarly, due to improved motivation for learning, students show a noticeable decline in the daily potential for aggression.

In regard to the three pillars of sustainability each of these consequences has effects on economical, ecological and socio-cultural aspects. Improved chances for higher education, coupled with a decline in the potential for aggression, strongly underline the socio-cultural aspects of sustainability. Stemming from the initial projection, both of these consequences are already affecting much more than just the students themselves. The decline in potential for aggression has a positive effect on all the residents of the building, as well as teachers and care-takers and the neighbourhood in general.

While in the initial parts of the CLUE-chart only direct stakeholders were taken into account, the primary consequences were already affecting multiple, larger groups of people. However, both consequences occur only upon existence of a pre-requisite, being that the creation of the special needs and homework-aid groups resulted in true increases in academic performance and that this is the reason for said positive consequences.

Secondary consequences are derived from the primary consequences. Once the occurrence of a primary consequence has been confirmed, secondary consequence(s) will follow suit. If students realise their chances and potentials for a place in higher education, it can be projected that academic performance will increase within the whole area/building.

The decline in potential aggression causes a reduction for the risk of a social focus. The circle of stakeholders affected increases in size yet again in comparison to the positively affected individuals as a result of the primary consequence. Increased academic performance within the hostel does not only bring socio-cultural benefits as economic aspects should also be included in said prognosis. As done previously, the prevention of a social focal point can be counted to the socio-cultural aspects.

Tertiary consequences can similarly be derived from secondary consequences. Prevention of social focal points can have a very strong positive effect on further social and cultural development of the region.

When mapping primary, secondary and tertiary consequences one must bear in mind that the projected assumptions only qualify given that the previous consequences have already occurred. Mapping of consequences becomes increasingly difficult and the consequences themselves become increasingly speculative when the number of projected consequences increases as transparency decreases. However, this form of representation is relatively suitable in order to plausibly present relationships and consequences to decision-makers at an acceptable level of transparency.

### *3.1.4 Definition and Derivation of Indicators and Goals*

Along with the relevance of the projected consequences to the three-pillar model of sustainability, one can also derive political sustainability goals from said consequences. For example, the described consequences also have influence on the goals: „education, employment and crime.”<sup>12</sup> These goals are being tackled on a national government level. When planning a measure, it is important to keep higher goals such as stated above in mind, very early on in the planning phase. Assigning the stakeholders ideas and wishes in short - and long-term requests is partial to this vital concept of early planning. A difficult task within the planning process is the transfer of direct stakeholders' (individuals) wishes to the wishes of indirect stakeholders such as national strategies and goals etc.

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. Die Bundesregierung, 2008.

#### **4 Possibilities of evaluation of measures**

Indicators can be derived from goals. The indicator report of 2008 on the subject of German national sustainability, states that the goal of education is based inter alia upon the indicators of “University entry rate” and “25 year-olds with completed university degree”. Comparable figures also exist at direct stakeholder level. Data analysis regarding local academic performance and status of health of children with a migratory background can, for example, be found in the special issue “Migration in Remscheid – Data and Facts”<sup>13</sup>. This study, commissioned by social-services of the city of Remscheid, was however, not intended for further use in an evaluation of sustainable development at the time.

This shows how important it is to include professional divisions when restructuring a building management department. These divisions are just as well a part of the circle of stakeholders that need to be involved when planning a construction related measure.

As a result, several professional divisions can benefit from the commissioned studies and can work as a team to find ways to make improvements.

The data that is gathered and processed locally in the course of such studies should be oriented according to indicators and figures at national and international levels. If this is done, advances in sustainable development could be compared across all levels. It would also allow a more precise definition of the relevance of the various sustainability goals for certain regions. Doing so would allow a more direct and economical intervention as well as rapid improvement of local misadministration.

In connection it is also important to include various results from the field of urban planning. Urban planning takes existing urban conditions into account as well as close examination of the development of a certain region itself. Complementing these examinations, are studies regarding demographic change. The urban planning concept of the city of Remscheid provides detailed information regarding population projections and thus the urban development of Remscheid<sup>14</sup>.

Difficulties during evaluation of sustainability may arise due to the fact that the time-frame required in order to reach goals differs from stakeholder to stakeholder. Also, it is often difficult, or at times impossible to credit the results of an improvement exclusively to a previously conducted measure. Thus it is important to be aware of these issues beforehand and to take them into account when evaluating measures and consequences.

#### **5 Further measures within reconstruction process**

During the reconstruction process of the urban asylum-seekers` hostel further measures were implemented which are listed in this elaboration for completion of the topic but are not explained further. These are for example:

- Implementation of convention rooms in the formally idle facilities
- Set-up of language courses for learning and improving German language skills
- Re-assembly of the former single rooms to apartments of different size with each bathroom and kitchen

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<sup>13</sup> Cf. Gesellschaft für innovative Sozialforschung und Sozialplanung e.V., 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Büro für Kommunal- und Regionalplanung Essen, 2007.

Effects and targets of these measures are, e.g. an improvement of integration and therefore an enhanced socialisation. On behalf of the change of the single rooms into apartments including sanitary and laundry installations and own kitchens, the inhabitants have the chance to establish responsibility for their private environment.

Apart from the decrease of the number and amount of the damages on the building, the relationship of the inhabitants to each other and to the neighbours improved significantly. The enhanced hygienic situation in the apartments compared to the common use of communal kitchens and sanitary and laundry installations resulted in dramatically decreased sickness rate within the building.

## 6 Summary

For showing up of consequences and use for the relevant stakeholders according to the CLUE-chart, specific knowledge of many scientific disciplines is necessary. This includes for example urban demographic challenge, sociology, migration, and integration. The challenge in setting up a flexible theory does not only contain the development and visualization of the contents from the perspective of a single person but further more receives to understand this challenge as an interface of different departments and research institutions.

The ideal of a sustainable development „requires the co-operation and communication of all civil protagonists according to the creation of basic targets as well as the necessary processes for their implementation.“<sup>15</sup>

Equally important is the input of knowledge about local circumstances. This means for example knowledge about the relevant stakeholders from local politics and administration.

Included in the CLUE-chart model, participation is already considered under various aspects. Due to the involvement of different public administration decision-makers and units, both the administration and the research entities, and the inhabitants and their environment are involved in the planning process.

The concept of the CLUE-chart follows the idea of the targets of the participation process as described further:

“a) the enlargement of the problem aspects and therefore the assistance in improvement the planning targets and administration targets as well as

b) substitution and reactivation of civic engagement in the solution of problems of community, contribution to establishing of new forms of civil-engaged self-organization and there of stabilization and expenditure of local politic cultures.”<sup>16</sup>

As a consequence of this aspect it is necessary that the involvement of the several stakeholders increases the radius of activities/decisions of civil organisations. Also interdisciplinary working procedures have to be reconsidered.

Different aspects of sustainability have to be seen in a tight context to consciousness of responsibility. This new sense of responsibility is not only restricted to the executive participant. The very more important is, to transport this consciousness of responsibility to the involved stakeholders and further generations.

Sustainability is not a static but a dynamic process – and this always means evolution.

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<sup>15</sup> Kopfmüller, 2006.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Dangschat, 2004.

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