

The Role of User Participation on Social Sustainability: A Case Study on Four Residential Areas

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Abstract : The rapid growth of the human population and the environmental degradation associated with increased consumption of resources raises concerns on sustainability. Social sustainability constitutes one of the three dimensions of sustainability together with environmental and economic dimensions. Even though there is not an agreement on what social sustainability consists of, it is a well known fact that it necessitates user participation. The fore, this study aims to observe and analyze the role of user participation on social sustainability. In this paper, the links between user participation and indicators of social sustainability have been searched. In order to achieve this, first of all a literature review on social sustainability has been done; accordingly, the information obtained from researches has been used in the evaluation of the projects conducted in the developing countries considering user participation. These examples are taken as role models with pros and cons for the development of the checklist for the evaluation of the case studies. Furthermore, a case study over the post earthquake residential settlements in Turkey have been conducted. The case study projects are selected considering different building scales (differing number of residential units), scale of the problem (post-earthquake settlements, rehabilitation of shanty dwellings) and the variety of users (differing socio-economic dimensions). Decisionmaking, design, building and usage processes of the selected projects and actors of these processes have been investigated in the context of social sustainability. The cases include: New Gournia Village by Hassan Fathy, Quinta Monroy dwelling units conducted in Chile by Alejandro Aravena and Beyköy and Beriköy projects in Turkey aiming to solve the problem of housing which have appeared after the earthquake happened in 1999 have been investigated. Results of the study possible links between social sustainability indicators and user participation and links between user participation and the peculiarities of place. Results are compared and discussed in order to find possible solutions to form social sustainability through user participation. Results show that social sustainability issues depend on communities' characteristics, socio-economic conditions and user profile but user participation has positive effects on some social sustainability indicators like user satisfaction, a sense of belonging and social stability.

Keywords : housing projects, residential areas, social sustainability, user participation

Conference Title : ICEESD 2016 : International Conference on Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : January 21-22, 2016