

Applying Participatory Design for the Reuse of Deserted Community Spaces

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Abstract : The concept of community building started in 1994 in Taiwan. After years of development, it fostered the notion of active local resident participation in community issues as co-operators, instead of minions. Participatory design gives participants more control in the decision-making process, helps to reduce the friction caused by arguments and assists in bringing different parties to consensus. This results in an increase in the efficiency of projects run in the community. Therefore, the participation of local residents is key to the success of community building. This study applied participatory design to develop plans for the reuse of deserted spaces in the community from the first stage of brainstorming for design ideas, making creative models to be employed later, through to the final stage of construction. After conducting a series of participatory designed activities, it aimed to integrate the different opinions of residents, develop a sense of belonging and reach a consensus. Besides this, it also aimed at building the residents' awareness of their responsibilities for the environment and related issues of sustainable development. By reviewing relevant literature and understanding the history of related studies, the study formulated a theory. It took the "2012-2014 Changhua County Community Planner Counseling Program" as a case study to investigate the implementation process of participatory design. Research data are collected by document analysis, participants' observation and in-depth interviews. After examining the three elements of "Design Participation", "Construction Participation", and "Follow-up Maintenance Participation" in the case, the study emerged with a promising conclusion: Maintenance works were carried out better compared to common public works. Besides this, maintenance costs were lower. Moreover, the works that residents were involved in were more creative. Most importantly, the community characteristics could be easily recognized.

Keywords : participatory design, deserted space, community building, reuse

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