

DAY 2 – HOMETASK

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I. Identify a form of public participation which is present in your home/residence/chosen city

In my hometown of Bogotá, Colombia, there is a form of public participation in the Ciudad Salitre neighborhood through a community newspaper. This newspaper allows members of the public to write and share information about events, security concerns, maintenance requests, and urban nature initiatives. Regarding urban and natural contexts, it is common to read about inquiries from neighbors and governmental responses to problems such as aggressive tree cutting, water body contamination, unwanted trash disposal, illegal constructions, and more.

For instance, in 2019, local authorities approved the construction of a residential complex in a protected area. However, when this situation was shared in the newspaper, the neighbors of Salitre protested on the streets, and as a result, the project was canceled.

II. Which are the advantages and disadvantages of public participation, related to urban nature planning and management.

The advantages of public participation in urban nature planning and management are significant. It creates a space for communication where diverse ideas, perspectives, and expert knowledge can be shared and considered. This allows communities, authorities, and investors to discuss and understand different points of view and real constraints, leading to informed decision-making. In addition, if all stakeholders are adequately informed and can participate, there is a higher likelihood that projects will be completed on time.

However, the diversity of stakeholders participating in the consultative process can also be a disadvantage. It may be challenging to reach a common point of agreement due to differences in perceptions and backgrounds, leading to delays or no execution of projects.

Moreover, individuals may fight for their interests, leading to the sabotage of discussion spaces and the execution of proposed projects. For instance, in Bogotá, the construction of a significant highway was stopped because a particular citizen opposed the project, citing potential damage to his view. Although the request was initially denied, the citizen introduced a protected crab species into his surroundings and is now arguing that it should be considered a protected area. This example highlights how personal interests can override communal needs, making public participation dangerous.

III. What are the tools which can be used to enhance public participation in urban nature planning and management. It can be used exemplified from your home/residence/chosen city

In today's world, where information is publicly available, and access to geospatial solutions is becoming more common, there are various tools that can be used to enhance public participation in urban nature planning and management. One of the effective tools is online surveys and dashboards that enable people to submit their inquiries or requests with accurate location information, allowing governments and investors to respond quickly.

There are several initiatives that have been implemented in my country using these tools, including:

1. Trees surveying and planting
2. Reporting on illegal trash disposal points
3. Requesting public facilities such as parks, shadow areas, and water disposal points

With surveys and dashboards, communities can not only provide information on their requests but also track the management given by the relevant stakeholders. This allows for greater transparency and accountability in urban nature planning and management.

Short Evaluation - Feedback

The second class was good. I liked the number of examples and applications that were explained. The fact that from the beginning the session topics are explained makes it easy to follow the class.

Thank you.