

Trial and Error in Urban Restructuring: Successes and Failures in Organisation, the Netherlands

Drs Anita Kokx

Utrecht University
Urban and Regional Research Centre Utrecht
Faculty of Geosciences
PO Box 80.115
3508 TC Utrecht
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 30 253 44 39
Email: a.kokx@geo.uu.nl

Co-Author: Dr Ellen Van Beckhoven (Stade Advies BV)

ABSTRACT

Nowadays, in The Netherlands various partners are involved in the process of urban renewal. These partners have to cooperate in order to deal with particular issues in particular urban neighbourhoods, such as post WWII estates. However, in practice cooperation between partners not always works the way it is expected. Sectors of local government, housing associations, private parties and residents' organisations can have very different visions about what has to be done in these areas. Besides, differences in work-culture and time-horizons between the partners involved can complicate the process of cooperation. Although processes of urban restructuring can be very dynamic, it is extremely important that partners agree what must be done, when and by whom. In order to create long-term commitment and added value for all partners involved, many specific management competences are needed. Only then, differences in perceptions, cultures and power positions can be overcome. In this paper we investigate which factors contribute to the success or failure of urban restructuring processes and what lessons can be learned. Local stakeholders were asked for their perception about the process of urban restructuring in five estates in The Netherlands. In the interviews, focus was on the organisation of the process and the underlying policy, including the cooperation between the partners involved and the participation of residents. The findings indicate that each process of urban restructuring has its own dynamic, due to differences in relational capacity in place and time. But, cooperation is always featured by a process of trial and error, embedded in his own dynamic context of relations and urban management. Consequently, policies for these estates are affected.

Keywords: urban governance, urban restructuring, The Netherlands