

## **IHS promoting Civil Society Participation in Urban Management: challenges ahead**

Andre Herzog and Claudio Acioly

Within the framework of the IULA/FMCU Unity Congress that took place in Rio de Janeiro in May 2001, IHS organised a workshop with its partners in Latin America entitled "Challenges in Civil Society Participation and Urban Management" under the coordination of Andre Herzog and Claudio Acioly. The workshop addressed questions related to ongoing efforts in enhancing good governance and citizenship participation at the local level. Several conceptual issues and practical experiences were debated by Mr. Celso Daniel (Mayor of Santo André), Mr. Alfredo Sirkis (Urban Planning Secretary of Rio and President of IPP), Mr. Jorge Wilhelm (Urban Planning Municipal Secretary of São Paulo), Mr. Carlos Fernandes Andrade (President of IAB-RJ), Mrs Maria Luisa Garnelo (Representing SINPA Bolivia), Mrs. Liliana Miranda (representing FORO Ciudades para la Vida), Mrs. Rosane Lopes (representing IHS Alumni in Brazil) and Emiel Wegelin and Andre Herzog on behalf of IHS.

The workshop showed that cities such as Santo André, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo have undertaken significant steps to institutionalise participation in urban management, increasing not only the effectiveness and efficiency of public policies but fundamentally opening channels for citizens and organised civil society to voice their needs and aspirations. Among several cases, it was highlighted the successful experience with the Favela Bairo Integrated Slum Upgrading in Rio, the Participatory Budgeting and 'Cidade Futuro' in Santo André and the proposal for creating the Sub-Municipalities in São Paulo. It was also discussed IHS advisory initiatives and capacity building programmes in Brazil, Bolivia and Peru which have focused on improving urban management, participatory planning and good governance.

The contributions made by several of the participants showed the challenges in involving civil society in the planning and management of cities. The workshop made evident that there is a need to clarify civil society conceptually emphasizing the role of citizens and organized civil society in urban management. Moreover, the gap between State and civil society highlights the importance of urban practitioners and related organisations. Still many individuals and vulnerable groups have not managed to become active players in the participatory process due to their weak organisational capacity. Furthermore the political nor technical municipal systems are not fully prepared to accept and implement this new concept. Therefore a co-ordinated and continuous effort of all actors pursuing transparency and good governance must focus as well on building local capacities that will overcome resistance and traditions within the public, private and community domains.

The workshop highlighted that participatory approaches must be embedded into a wider governance framework in order to ensure that popular demands are part of the whole urban management process. In addition, the question of sustainability in view of the changing political processes usually found at municipal levels has not been fully answered since most of the experiences are relatively recent and not much research has focused on this issue.

Nevertheless, the processes of urban reform, decentralisation and democratisation that Brazilian cities and many other Latin American cities are currently undergoing represent a unique opportunity for changes in the direction of more transparency, more civil society participation and more opportunities for good governance to flourish. Sharing these experiences and build common knowledge will fundamentally help to establish more effective and efficient public policies. The workshop showed that there is undoubtedly a favourable environment in the region to build synergy, common strategies and concrete actions aiming at strengthening local efforts in enhancing good governance and citizenship participation.

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## **Participatory Budgeting in Santo Andre, Great Sao Paulo Region, Brazil**

More than 100 Brazilian cities are actually implementing the participatory budgeting (Orçamento Participativo or simply OP) as a method of participatory planning that allows residents to actually prioritize and decide jointly with municipal governments where public investments will be allocated in their cities. Many Latin American cities are following this approach after it became a success story.

The OP gained international renown with Porto Alegre, a southern Brazilian city that has been practicing the OP since 1989 uninterruptedly. IHS is carrying out an applied research to look at the OP and its linkage with the strategic planning in Santo Andre. The research started in 2001 and is carried out within the framework of the institutional cooperation IHS-Municipality of Santo Andre and sponsored by the SINPA-Bolivia Project. By the end of 2001 a report will be published in Spanish and English. The project SINPA-Bolivia is managed by Maria Zwanenburg and the OP research is coordinated by Claudio Acioly teamed with Andre Herzog and two counterparts from Bolivia. For information, contact [c.acioly@ihs.nl](mailto:c.acioly@ihs.nl) or [a.herzog@ihs.nl](mailto:a.herzog@ihs.nl).

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