



Hungary



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Databasing quality housing initiatives

Most people may think of cities as a constantly evolving entity, expanding upwards or outwards in a growing tendency of improvement and enrichment. In many instances, the exact opposite is more than likely the case.

The progression of inner cities to areas of poverty, overuse and neglect, is one facet that city planners dread. The reason being is that these areas are brought about through a variety of complex, ever-evolving socio-economic factors, nigh on impossible to get to grips with.

To reverse the trend of neglect and impoverishment? rehabilitation? programmes necessarily need to address more than just the physical profile of these areas. If long-term solutions are going to be successful, they must also tackle social reasons for the degradation millions of people worldwide are living in.

An EC funded project, NEHOM attempted to put the theory behind its findings to the test by rehabilitating an area in Budapest. Some of the problems they tackled were related to socio-economic factors. Unemployment and the lack of financially viable skills were two such factors they identified as major contributors to area degradation and decline.

In part, their attempts to combat these trends focused on various factors. One of them involved the creation of jobs in and around the area in which most of the people lived. Another focus attenuated the creation of playground and recreational facilities for the local youth programme initiative. This was highly worthwhile as it provided both positive and creative environmental factors.

Moreover, approximately 15-20% of all Europeans live in conditions that do not positively contribute towards quality of life. As such, a major focus of the project was to assess the means by which housing initiatives could be transferred across European boundaries.

In this regard, they developed certain scientific objectives. One such was the construction of a database of initiatives and neighbourhood practices that have, as a direct result of their successful application, proven beneficial for local areas. Another area of interest was the establishment of national networks in order to assess the feasibility of transferring successful case studies.

The ultimate results of this initiative are to improve the management of all local areas in which poverty and deprivation threaten the quality of life. It also aims to enhance quality areas thereby ensuring they do not decline into worsening conditions. It is hoped that the CD-ROM the project has developed will act both as a research and an administrative tool for citizens and authorities.

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