

A Study on the Citizen Participation in the Process of Village Renewal-the German Experience

Chien-Zer Liu*

Abstract

Keywords: rural development, village renewal, citizen participation, German experience

Village renewal is a highly complicated and difficult task as well as a protracted and heavy job. We need to have long-term patience instead of expecting obvious results in a short period of time. A process of meticulous study and proper planning are required to meet various demands from villagers on village development. Therefore, how to “arouse people”, integrate village resources with people’s force and implement “citizen participation” in rural planning is the key to the success of village renewal. Village renewal is expected to meet the changes of the social and economic structure according to multi-polar roles of the rural village, making the rural working environment, community development, villager space in everyday life as well as social and cultural activities meet the demands of villagers and the changing society on the rural village.

In summarize, the rural features and values of folk culture can be understood and affirmed through the extension of citizen participation and the plan for village renewal. In this way, the unique rural vitality and vigor can continue and that villagers can recognize their “hometowns” and attach their affections to them once again, making villagers feel honored with their villages and take pride in living in them.

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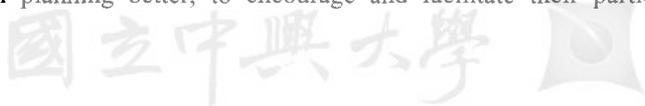
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I. Introduction

Citizens are the main players in village renewal. With respect to rural planning work implementation, village development concept formation, village renewal plan-making and important-decision participation, and timely as well as active citizen participation are keys to successful village renewal. Village residents have a clear understanding of local affairs and, therefore, they must express their opinions on future village development, working condition, living space and environmental improvement, social and local cultural requirements and historic objects. Furthermore, they must also put forward their thoughts and ideas and carry out discussions with rural planning experts. Then, through planning and construction, the dreams of villagers can be realized. Encouraging villagers to take part in discussions about village renewal, communication and exchange of ideas, then considering the opinions, hopes and dreams of villagers in the process of planning are the basis of village planning and is so called “citizen participation.” Citizen’s participation is an important bottom-to-top link in the village renewal process.

However, how should “villagers” “participate” in village renewal? How can they express their opinions on the future development of their village? What is the process or steps for “citizens participation”? What is the “understanding of” village renewal for villagers? How can their understanding be improved, and how can they be assisted to understand rural planning better, to encourage and facilitate their participation in village



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renewal? The above issues are worth further investigating.

Village renewal in Germany has been undergoing a very long history. Villagers have been participating in the mechanism throughout village renewal right bottom-up stream with many experiences from the development. Therefore, it is essential to explore the process of German villagers participation and experiences as reference for our country in rural planning.

This research is intended to explain the connotation of village renewal in Germany, education of villagers as well as the steps and content of villagers' participation, in order to understand how Germany gets to know various demands of villagers on rural development and how to satisfy these demands in an extensive way. Consideration is given to the mechanism marked by the coordination between the grass-root level and the high level. On the other hand, "participation of villagers" is expected to promote inter-reaction and exchanges between villagers and planners of rural development as well as ability of discussion, so as to enhance the results of villagers' participation and rural planning. "Though those standing higher can be fore-sighted, they may not have a very clear understanding of local problems at the grass-root level."¹ The mechanism with coordination right from the grass-root level to the high level is the most important factor for the success of village renewal.

II. Understanding the Meaning and Connotation of Village Renewal as the Prerequisite of Citizen Participation

A. The Meaning of Village Renewal

Village Renewal refers to various measures conducive to regulate and entire development of village communities in order to improve production conditions and living environment of

¹ Magel, H., 10-Punkte-Programm, für eine offensive "Dorf- und Landentwicklung in Taiwan", München, 29. April 1997.

villagers with existing basis and conditions. It is not only a process of the construction of rural public utilities, renewal of residential apartments, improvement of life and development of economy for satisfying different demands of villagers and the changing society on rural areas, but also an emphasis on rural culture, traditions and features for maintaining a peaceful rural society and their unique styles.²

Therefore, village renewal lies in the reinforcement of the features and connotations of rural areas as well as the promotion of their harmonious development. It should be a bridge between modernization and tradition in the process of rural development. Village renewal enables rural areas to adapt to the needs of economic development in this changing society. While maintaining rural traditions and flavors as well as their unique styles, it also enables villagers to enjoy modernized working conditions and living environment, hence further blessing “hometowns” with healthy and vigorous atmospheres.

Traditional village is a place for agricultural production and the life of farmers. Villages are the area of many buildings together in rural areas. Due to the development of society and economy as well as the improvement of agricultural structure, the previous form of rural residences based on agricultural production can no longer meet the needs of the development of rural modernization. It is essential to carry out village renewal and renovation of rural residences, in order to adapt to the changes of the pattern of agricultural production and the needs for elevating the living standards for modernization. With the suggestions and guidance of specialized personnel, changes of rural buildings and rural communities are expected to proceed in a planned, regulated and systematic way in coordination with rural scenery, unique styles and buildings of local features.

Based on those mentioned above, the main objectives for village renewal are as follows:

- a. Re-establishing new data on land-register and the ownership of land in order to promote land utilization in the rural village.
- b. Improving rural life, residences and working conditions through the renovation of rural residences and public investment.

² Liu, C. Z., “The Village Renewal in Germany and Its Implications for Taiwan.”, *The Journal of Agricultural Economics Semiannual Publication*, No. 69, December 2000, p.1.

- c. Coordinating with modernized farming, management and the timetable of everyday life, adapting to the needs of developing rural tourism and leisurely activities, renovating villager residences and renewing buildings, in order to meet the needs of rural development in the future.
- d. Preserving natural resources, scenery and ecologic environment as well as maintaining innate features and traditional styles of the rural village, in order to reinforce villager approval of and attachment to their hometowns (Heimat).
- e. Making overall construction and villager employment meet the needs of future development and reduce the number of villagers leaving for cities.

B. The Connotation of Village Renewal

Due to the rapid development of economy, agricultural production is gradually declining, in addition to quite low revenue and immigration of rural population to cities. Aging and waning rural village is gradually losing its productivity, vitality and attraction. Along with the change of the economic structure in rural society, present-day rural village is not only confronting problems with agricultural production and low income, but also more problems with various strata of life, including society, culture, environment and substantial construction, etc. Therefore, the entire village renewal has become an important direction of agricultural policies.

a. Village renewal and balanced development between urban and rural areas

It is true that low income of farmers and insufficient employment in rural areas are the main reasons for a large number of villagers leaving for cities. However, the increasing difference between rural and urban in their development, relatively backward rural construction, inadequate public utilities, undesirable working conditions and living environment are important factors for lots of villagers (young employees in particular)migrating into cities.

In order to meet the needs of development for rural modernization, land utilization in the rural village should take the following aspects into consideration:

- The needs for the development of industrial modernization include the needs for the equipment of agricultural production and the development of small industries and businesses in the rural village.
- The needs for expanding land construction in the rural village include needs for village renewal and land used by young farmers preferring to live in villages.
- The needs for the land used by rural public utilities include afforested areas, squares, parks and sports fields in the rural village.
- The needs for preserving rural scenery and natural resources include habitats of wild plants and animals as well as naturalization of rivers and streams.

Village renewal not only requires a fore-sighted renewal plan for the development of rural communities with squares and lanes marked by safety, peace, convenience and attraction, but also unique flavors and styles. Clarification of the ownership of land and the re-establishment of new land-register and data on property-right can ensure the rights and interests of those owning the land and buildings. The expansion of the land used by rural communities, can also coordinate the land consolidation, making land previously with ambiguous boundary and vague ownership in irregular bits and pieces into regular one to be used for construction. Besides, necessary public utilities are needed to enhance the value of land utilization.

Those mentioned above indicate the important points of how to reinforce the construction of public utility, the renovation of rural residences, the improvement of working conditions, living environment and village renewal. The direction for striving to renew rural communities includes the renovation and renewal of rural residences, the building of basic public utilities for leisure in villages, the establishment of squares, lanes, sports fields, play-grounds for children, parks and afforested areas, the development and improvement of roads with rural features leading to the outside as well as afforestation, etc. Only by doing so, can rural construction, life and employment of villagers be adapted to

future development and that the number of villagers moving to cities be reduced. With rural problems solved, problems with urban development can be settled readily and that the objective for the balanced development of rural and urban areas can be reached.

b. Village Renewal and the Improvement of Agricultural Structure

The development of industry and commerce has increased the employment opportunities for villagers. Besides, the improvement of techniques for agricultural production and the elevation of productivity are gradually reducing the amount of farm work. On the other hand, for farmers still engaged in agricultural production, their productivity has been further enhanced along with the progress of modernization, reduction of workload and successful introduction of mechanized equipment in replacement of laborers having moved to cities. In order to meet the needs of agricultural development, it is necessary to coordinate with agricultural modernization and seek for sustainable development of agriculture in the process of structure-change by setting up and renewing public farming utilities in rural communities such as production-marketing groups, distribution grounds, sheds for farm-machines and centers for farm-tool maintenance as well as the renovation of rural buildings and villager residences needed by management modernization of farms.

Village renewal is aimed at solving problems with agricultural production and rural life when agricultural structure is undergoing changes. For example, the renovation of villager residences can change the purposes of rural buildings for re-utilization so as to endow old and historic houses with new vitality and fresh functions as well as maintain and preserve cultural relics and scenery in the rural village. Apart from reinforcing the construction of public utilities, renewing and renovating villager residences, improving the living quality of villages and enhancing the welfare of villagers, efforts should also be made to coordinate with modernized farming and management. On the one hand, village renewal serves to improve lanes and streets within rural communities and their roads leading to the outside. On the other hand, land consolidation within rural communities and making an overall plan for rural communities development serve to make up for the

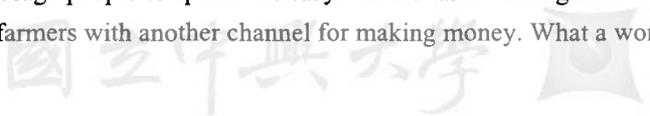
insufficiency of land used by public utilities within villages and inadequacy of parks and afforested areas. Moreover, necessary public agricultural utilities should be built to meet the needs of modernized rural life and agricultural development and to enhance productivity and competitiveness of agriculture.

c. Creating Attraction of Residence and Leisure in the Rural Village

The traditional role of rural village chiefly is served as a community for the work and residence of villagers. The arrangement of villages and forms of residence also coordinate with agricultural production. Along with the social-economic development as well as the change of agricultural structure, the role and structure of agriculture are also gradually changing. Now, rural village is not only the place for agricultural production and residence for villagers, but also a living space for the majority of non-agricultural population.

Due to continuous reduction of agricultural population in modernized society, the number of industries suitable for the rural village is gradually increasing, such as arts and handicrafts as well as industry and commerce with local features. As a result, villagers can live in villages without doing farm-work and that rural village has become the venue for offering many employment opportunities to villagers and the place for educational training and facilities of social welfare. Rural village not only produces grain and raw materials, but also provides scenery and beautiful natural environment and it is the place for preserving natural resources and maintaining scenery. Besides, along with the rise of national income and the increase of opportunities for holidaymaking, rural diversity, naturalness and charm of rural village have attracted urban dwellers to tour in countryside. So rural village is a place for relaxation, tourism and leisure for urban dwellers during their free time.

Therefore, in the course of social and economic development, how to invigorate rural village and preserve its traditional flavors and unique styles has become an important topic for rural development. Efforts should be made to coordinate with agricultural tourism and to encourage people to spend "holidays on the farm" during their free time. This can even bring farmers with another channel for making money. What a wonderful thing!



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Village renewal is designed for coordinating with this tendency and the role-change of rural village in order to adapt to the needs of social and economic development in the rural village and meet various needs of farmers and the majority of non-agricultural population in their work and life. For example, reinforcing the construction of public utilities, improving the working conditions and living environment of villagers, meeting the needs of developing tourism and leisurely activities in the rural village, preserving rural ecology and scenery, renovating villager residences, setting up facilities for tourism and leisurely activities for creating a beautiful environment for leisure and attraction in the rural village. At the same time, it serves to protect cultural relics and ancient remains in the rural village, keep rural traditions and buildings with historic value, preserve natural resources and maintain rural scenery and flavors in order to reveal unique rural styles and their significance in prolonging innate culture. Such re-creation of the rural attraction in residence and leisure has brought the society closer to the rural village, hence strengthening villagers' approval of and attachment to the rural village.

III. The Process of Citizen Participation in Village Renewal

Apart from reinforcing villagers' understanding of the meaning and connotation of village renewal, efforts must be exerted to collect basic information on villages when the plan is being made until the completion of the construction. Villagers should all take an active part in making suggestions and get involved at any time. Only in this way can the objective for the planned construction be reached and the dream of all villagers be realized.

Therefore, government departments should inspire and stimulate villagers to take an active part in it when beginning to carry out village renewal. Prior to the planning, meetings of explanation and statement should be held several times in order to educate villagers to understand the significance and connotation of village renewal. Besides, publicity through newspapers, advertisement, broadcast, public notice and villager-meeting is also needed to

provide adequate information, so as to help villagers to participate in village renewal. Meetings of explanation should offer a general plan as well as the connotation of the renewal, projects and information, especially the content, process and purpose of village renewal. Moreover, villagers should be encouraged to organize into working groups to promote the establishment of the working group for village renewal, in order to further put “citizen participation” into effect.

As mentioned above, village renewal involves extensive ranges and contents marked by entity, comprehensiveness and permanence, i.e. improvement of life and infrastructure, industrial development and working environment, folk culture, natural scenery and ecologic environment, etc (Figure 1). Therefore, exploration and study of village development require a process of strict research and cautious consideration. Prior to village renewal, the village-head (mayor) and villagers must fully communicate with experts on rural planning while setting up several groups to promote active participation of villagers in village renewal. All these serve to prompt them to make a study of and think hard about such village renewal as public utilities, rural residences, the forms of communities, rural history, folk culture, rural features and outlook, preservation of natural resources and scenery, rural ecology and meaningful life, industrial development, rural tourism under five topics as follows: Subject1: villages as living space; Subject2: villages as cultural space; Subject3: villages as environmental space; Subject4: villages as working space; Subject5: villages as space for life in co-existence (Gemeinschaftsraum) (Figure 2).

Once the village development, future direction or ideal for living communities and environmental scenery have been worked out, efforts should be made to implement them through planning and construction. Only when all participants are able to share decisive policies for village renewal and engage in planning and construction that lives up to the expectation of villagers, can village renewal be made a success. Only when villagers in the rural village take an active part in it, utilize, protect and preserve local resources and village feature, can village renewal give due play to its functions and the significance of “citizen participation” be made prominent. The process of “citizen participation” in Germany is recounted as follows:

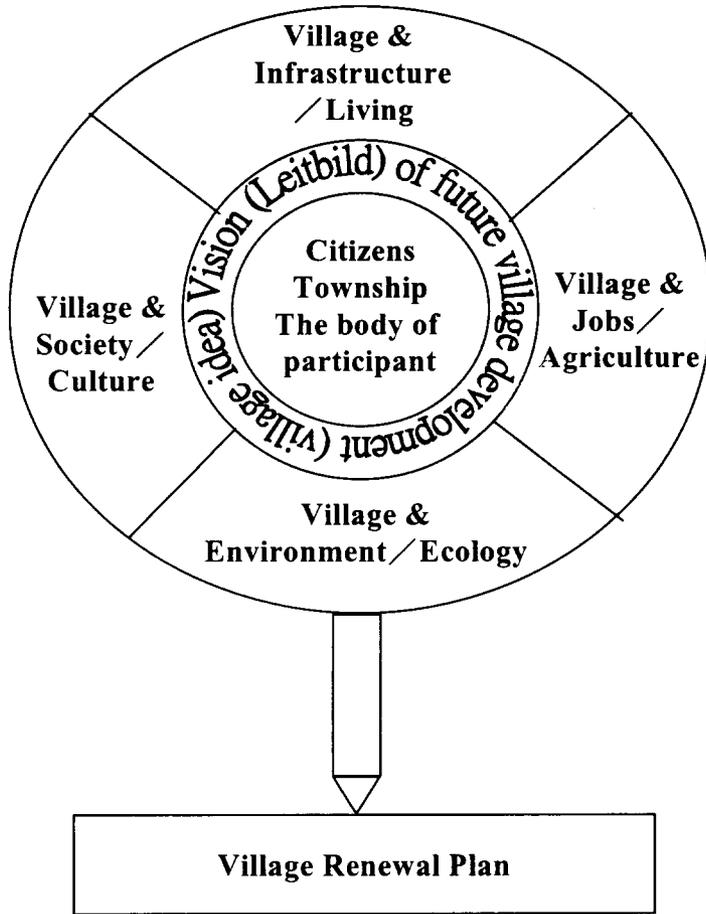


Figure 1 Four Aspects of Village Development

Source: Bayer. Staatsministerium für Ernährung, Landwirtschaft und Forsten(Hrsg.), Bayerisches Dorferneuerungsprogramm—Für die Zukunft der Dörfer, München 1998.

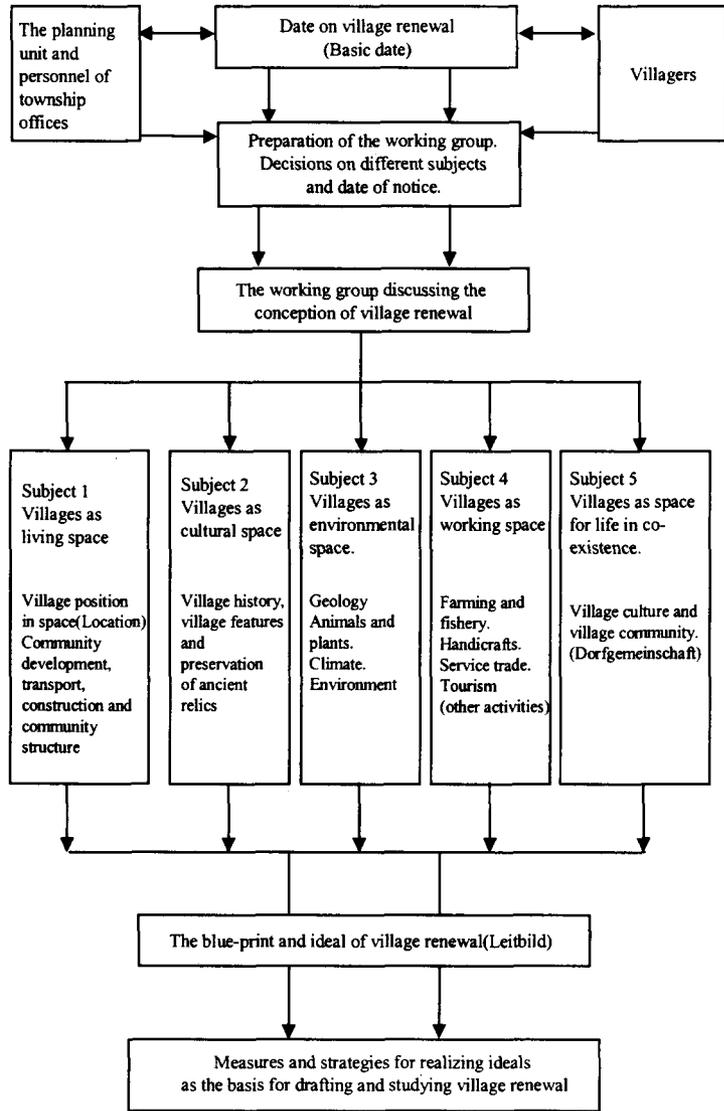


Figure2 A flow-chart of encouraging villagers to set up working groups to discuss the conception for future rural development.

Source: Revised from Magel, H., Dorferneuerung in Deutschland, DG Bank (Hrsg.). 1991, P.46.



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A. Setting Up Working Groups

As mentioned above, in order to enable villagers to take a more active part in village renewal, efforts must be made to encourage villagers to organize into working groups. Some villagers may join various working groups respectively according to their different interest in the projects of rural communities and their different majors in rural planning. Furthermore, through close coordination with planners, they are expected to plan their villages and serve as the main bridge between villagers and administrative departments for inter-reaction and exchanges. The tasks of working groups include: 1.Rural history and folk culture; 2.Problems with agricultural and other industrial development (comprising the development of handicrafts); 3.Construction of public utilities (village roads, squares, parks, leisurely and sports fields); 4.Rural residences (renewal and re-utilization of rural buildings); 5.Preservation of natural resources and scenery (naturalization and afforestation of rural rivers and streams); 6.Rural tourism and leisurely activities; 7.Rural flavors and outlook; 8.Living environment (polluted water, disposal of waste materials and sewers); 9.Ecologic environment in the rural village, etc. Projects are chosen according to the needs of village development and how enthusiastic villagers are in their participation.

The rural working group named “Rural features and outlook” in Wolfsegg, Bavaria, Germany, is taken as an example. Figure 3 shows the discussion of this group aimed at rural scenery and the result of villager opinions.

Members of the working group should basically include villager representatives of all trades and professions (10 to 15 people, comprising farmers, handicraftsmen, workers, the elderly, women, etc.). They should be able to cooperate, communicate and consult with planners and government departments closely.

Aspirations for Rural Scenery

Items	Very important	Important	Not important
1. Hoping to preserve farm-land for cultivation in order to maintain the scene of farming.	● ●● ●●● ●●● ●●● ●●● ●●● ●●● ●●● ●●●		
2. The surroundings and future perspective of villages should be defined as follows: *Preservation of farmland-use. *Preservation of scenery+conservation of natural resources.	● ●● ●●● ●●● ●●● ●●● ●●●	● ●● ●●● ●●● ●●● ●●●	
3. Hoping to protect and preserve diversified scenery and rural scenes.	● ●● ●●● ●●● ●●● ●●● ●●●	● ●	●
4. Marginal land should be kept as open space (streams, valleys and river-beds) and areas for preserving scenery.	● ●● ●●● ●●● ●●● ●●● ●●●	● ●● ●●● ●●●	●● ●● ●●
5. Protecting and developing habitats for special animals and plants.	● ●● ●●● ●●● ●●● ●●● ●●●	●● ●●● ●●● ●●● ●●●	●● ●
6. Village lanes, streets and farm-roads should be connected in a quite natural way.	● ●● ●●● ●●● ●●●	●● ●●● ●●● ●●● ●●●	●● ●●
7. Other main roads should be planted with trees on both sides.	● ●● ●●● ●●● ●●●	●● ●●●	●● ●●

Figure3 Aspirations for rural scenery

Prior to village renewal, the working group should take its initiative to provide basic information on the present status quo of the village concerned and analyze the advantages and disadvantages of village development (as shown in Table1 and Table2). With the working group set up, villagers should be encouraged to offer as many opinions as possible, trying to make the comments on and analysis of “advantages of our village” and “disadvantages of our village” fairer and more considerate. Moreover, based on analyzing strong points and weak points of village development, the entire concept for village development and perspective should be worked out. The entire concept for village development must evolve constantly with three layers of significance, i.e. economic concept, ecologic concept and the concept of society and culture. When village renewal is going on, plans should be made in the form of dialogues as an important process of planning among all participants as a must, particularly between township offices and government institutions of higher levels as well as between villagers and working groups³. Finally, discussion should be conducted on the measures or plans worked out by the planning unit along with suggestions.

With village renewal completed, the working group will be merged with the Association of Community Development to play the role of communication.

B. A Joint Study of the Conception for the Future Development of Rural Village

The conception for future village development refers to the expectation and vision for the development of the village in which villagers live. Each villager is likely to be concerned about a certain project or some subjects for development, just like each working group concerned about a subject as a matter of importance. Therefore, it is essential to integrate various expectations of all villagers and incorporate their vision and the ideal blueprint of village development into the process of planning for discussion. This is the deeper significance of “citizen participation” which is expected to combine the dreams of all villagers

³ See 1.

for future village development and to make a complete and perfect picture of the rural village. Citizen participation can avoid regret resulting from the lack of entity and comprehensiveness when rural planning is made. The completion of such planning is followed by the integration of the vision of all villagers. The dream can be realized definitely through active planning and construction.

Table1 Analysis of advantages and disadvantages of village development (A single item)

The working group:Folk culture	
Advantages	Disadvantages
1. Villagers pay attention to rural culture.	1. Inadequate protection of ancient relics
2. Villagers organize a farmer folk orchestra	2. No places for keeping antique farm-machines
3. ...	3. ...
4. ...	4. ...
⋮	⋮

Table2 Analysis advantages and disadvantages of village development (Overall evaluation)

Subject Items	Advantages of our village							Disadvantages of our village						
	Folk culture	Industry and commerce	Agriculture	Tourism	Supply of water and electricity	Rural features and outlook	Rural environment and ecology	Folk culture	Industry and commerce	Agriculture	Tourism	Supply of water and electricity	Rural features and outlook	Rural environment and ecology
1
2
4														
5														

(17)



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As mentioned above, exploration and study of village development require a process of discussion and cautious consideration. Therefore, prior to village renewal, the village-head (mayor) and villagers must be able to fully communicate with experts on rural planning as well as make a study of and think hard about rural flavors, the form of community, scenery and meaningful rural life, particularly issues as follows:

- a. What advantages in social economy, culture, ecology, scenery, customs and habits of our village deserve further development? What disadvantages should be overcome?
- b. What are disadvantages and mistakes in our village development so far? For example, houses construction, styles of architecture and industrial development, etc. It is necessary to adjust and improve them.
- c. Exploring village history and value as well as changes in the past enables villagers to gain the opportunity of acquiring knowledge and learning from lessons, such as exploring the following aspects:
 - Are traditional flavors and humane scenery of our village worthy of being maintained and carried forward?
 - What are the deeds of ancient people that deserve commendation and reveal the features of our village?
- d. Can village life, residence, social and economic activities be kept in harmony with the preservation of natural resources and scenery?

Before considering the development of the entire rural community, its surroundings and scenery, efforts should first be made to explore the history and past changes of the village concerned. The following issues merit particular attention:

- a. Historical vestiges still remain and must be demonstrated more clearly, such as research into the history of villages, residences and temples to get to know the past of old houses, courtyards and parks.
- b. What are particular meanings of village history? Are there any opportunities for us to acquire knowledge and learn from lessons?
- c. Are vestiges of those fields and village roads as well as names of villages and roads still so significant?

The future rural village should develop in the direction of coordinating with social and economic conditions for establishing well-grounded society and economy through development. For example:

- a. Taking the macro-environment of society and economy into account, i.e. the change of rural role, the change of the relationship between leisure and work, continuous improvement of agricultural structure, increase of environmental awareness and technical progress, etc.
- b. Taking into consideration the expectation, dream and inner anxiety of villagers while paying attention to regions and the relationship among villages so as to establish the position of the relevant village in the regional development.

Besides, villagers autonomy (Eigenbestimmung) and spontaneous participation with enthusiasm can manipulate the direction for the development of the relevant village, community and the future quality of the environment and scenery, e.g. showing concern about and exploring the following issues:

- a. How can land cultivation and survival basis of farmers be guaranteed and improved? (Through land consolidation and arrangement of farm-fields.)
- b. How can community development be kept in harmony with agricultural interest and rural scenery? How can the expansion and planning of rural communities as well as urban plans be coordinated with the plan for improving agricultural structure and the planning of afforestation?

Usually, assistance from many experts is needed when township offices and villagers design and study the future development of the rural village. For example:

- a. Experts and scholars associated with rural planning and village renewal.
- b. Experts on preserving ancient rural relics and scholars on history and folk customs.
- c. Community associations, religious organizations, rural women federations, organizations of folk customs, sports associations and gardening associations, as well as experts enthusiastic about participating in village development.

The ideal village development in the future can surely be explored through passionate discussion of above-mentioned experts enthusiastic about rural development. Once village development, the future direction or ideal of communities and environmental scenery have been worked out, bold efforts should be made to implement them through planning and construction. The preceding Figure 2 is a flow-chart jointly discussed by villagers, administrative personnel and planners in working out the connotation of the blueprint and ideal for rural development in the future.

C. Citizen Participation in Village Renewal Plan-Making

The plan for village renewal is the blueprint for village renewal as well as the main basis for implementing village renewal. Whether the plan is perfect or not only hinges upon the success and achievements of village renewal, but also upon the rights and interests of villagers, hence influencing the development of the entire rural village. According to the extensiveness and comprehensiveness of village renewal mentioned earlier, there should be cautious and considerate plans before the planning is made and that such plans should be made known to villagers. Extensive discussion among villagers or within the working group is expected to closely coordinate the aspirations of villagers with the ideal of renewal and necessary measures, so as to reach the objective in a gradual and harmonious way. The plan for village renewal can usually cover several aspects as follows:

a. The needs for developing agriculture are taken into account

Rural life and work in the fields tend to be like two sides of a coin. Therefore, another important objective of village renewal is to solve farmer problems in production and everyday life and adapt themselves to the future development. So, the plan for village renewal should be able to coordinate with local production features, farming systems and management. The plan for improving agricultural structure should involve the project of improving lanes and streets within the relevant area and roads leading to the

outside, the renovation of farm houses, the renewal and utilization of rural buildings, the distribution and establishment of common agricultural facilities in order to meet the development of agricultural modernization.

b. Taking into account the improvement of working and living environments of villagers as well as the needs for maintaining rural features

While improving working and living environments of villagers, village renewal should also serve to maintain unique rural flavors so as to prevent rural construction from disrupting traditional rural styles. Rural construction should take one phrase into consideration: “ Is it beautification or damage when the hometown is being built up? ” (Erbaute Heimat, Schön oder kaputt?) This is emphasis on the importance of maintaining unique rural flavors when rural planning is made. Therefore, the plan for village renewal should take into account production, everyday life, ecology and culture, with the features of entity, futurity and permanence, including:

- (a) The plan for improving village roads with rural characteristics (lanes and streets as well as roads leading to the outside).
- (b) The plan for village land-use and the distribution of public utilities required by the village, embracing the planning for the land reserved by the community.
- (c) The plan for renovating farm houses as well as renewing and utilizing rural buildings, comprising the utilization of villager residences, the maintenance of the outlook of buildings and rural buildings with local styles.
- (d) The plan for land distribution and compensation, including the size, location and value of new and old land owned by landlords as well as the compensation for the difference of the size and value of new and old land.

c. Taking into account the maintenance of rural scenery, tourism and leisurely activities

With beautiful scenery and unique flavors different from cities, the rural village not only facilitates production and residence, but also serves as a place for relaxation, tourism and leisurely activities for urban dwellers. Therefore, village renewal is also supposed to maintain rural scenery and flavors preserve natural resources and enhance leisure value and attraction of the rural village. The plan for village renewal should include:

- (a) The planning for the scenery and afforestation of rural communities, comprising village squares, streets, parks, afforested areas, play-grounds for children and sports fields.
- (b) The distribution of facilities for tourism and leisurely activities.
- (c) The maintenance of rural ecology and habitats for animals and plants.

The connotation of the plan for village renewal can be different according to different features, social and economic structures and problems in the rural village with regard to the emphasis of renewal. The above-mentioned citizen participation is very important in working out the plan for village renewal apart from integrating opinions of different experts as a necessity. Villagers are required to voice opinions, participate in the planning and try to play their roles as actively as possible in respect to the formation of their living space, needs for social and cultural activities as well as the future development of their hometowns. Apart from the perfection of the renewal plan, the success of village renewal also lies in the active participation of villagers with their opinions in the course of renewal so that the hope and expectation of villagers can receive some response in this process.

D. Conclusion

All in all with those mentioned above, the process and steps of citizen participation in village renewal are recounted as follows:

- a. With education and publicity, villagers are instructed to understand the connotation and points of importance in village renewal, including⁴:
 - (a) Improvement of basic public facilities in the rural village (roads, drainage system and garbage disposal).
 - (b) Establishment of afforested areas, sports fields, playgrounds for children and facilities for tourism and leisurely activities.
 - (c) Renovation and repair of the old villager residences.
 - (d) Building of common agricultural facilities (such as sheds for farm-machines and centers for maintaining farm-tools).
 - (e) Maintenance of water and land resources as well as habitats and biotops for wild animals and plants.
 - (f) Maintenance of buildings with unique rural styles as well as cultural relics and ancient remains.
- b. Making inspection and survey at areas planned, helping villagers get to know the village, tap village features and delve into its development.
- c. Helping villagers set up such working groups as follows:
 - (a) The working group on rural history and folk culture (culture, education, social organizations and activities, preservation and protection of cultural relics and ancient remains).
 - (b) The working group on the development of agriculture and other industries (including the development of handicrafts).
 - (c) The working group on the improvement of living environment (renovation of villager residences, environmental afforestation and household sanitation).
 - (d) The working group on public and common facilities (transport and communications, village roads, squares, parks, tourism, leisurely activities, sports fields and drinking facilities).
 - (e) The working group on the preservation of natural resources and scenery (natural ecology,

⁴ See 2, pp.28-35.

control over streams in the wilderness, naturalization and afforestation of rural rivers and brooks, rural environment and rural flavors).

- d. Helping working groups ponder over and study subjects concerning village development with the demonstration of charts (as shown in Table 3).
- e. With subjects concerning village development studied, further efforts should be made to discuss with villagers and make decisions after on-the-spot survey.
- f. Helping working groups work out charts of visions showing village development (as shown by Table 4 and Figure 3).
- g. Encouraging villagers to express their expectations on the aspirations for village development with regard to different subjects on development, in the order of “very important”, “important” or “not very important” (Table 4).
- h. Helping working groups make analysis of advantages and disadvantages of village development (as shown by preceding Table 1 and Table 2).
- i. Inspiring villagers to voice as many opinions as possible and making comments on and analysis of “advantages of our village” and “disadvantages of our village” fairer and more considerate.
- j. Studying and discussing with government departments and planners through close connections: According to the visions of villagers for village development and information resulting from the analysis of “advantages and disadvantages of our village”, efforts should be made to study and work out village renewal concept plus further discussion with villagers before the plan for village renewal is formulated.
- k. With the conception for village renewal finalized through the discussion between planners and villagers, a conception chart will be drawn to be compared with the chart of present status quo (as shown by Figure 4).
- l. Helping villagers gain a clear understanding of issues on village development through clarification as well as limitations on development planning. Seeking solutions together with villagers and other participants.

Table3 Subjects on village development

The working group:Folk culture	
Subjects on development	1. Trace-back and evolution of village history
	2. Preservation and protection of village cultural relics and ancient remains.
	3. Maintenance of traditional social organizations and festivals in the village.
	4. ...
	5. ...
	6. ...
	⋮

Table4 Aspirations for folk culture in village development

Subjects on development	Very important	Important	Not very important
1. Trace-back and evolution of village history			
2. Preservation and protection of village cultural relics and ancient remains.			
3. Maintenance of traditional social organizations and festivals in the village.			
4. ...			
5. ...			
6. ...			
⋮			

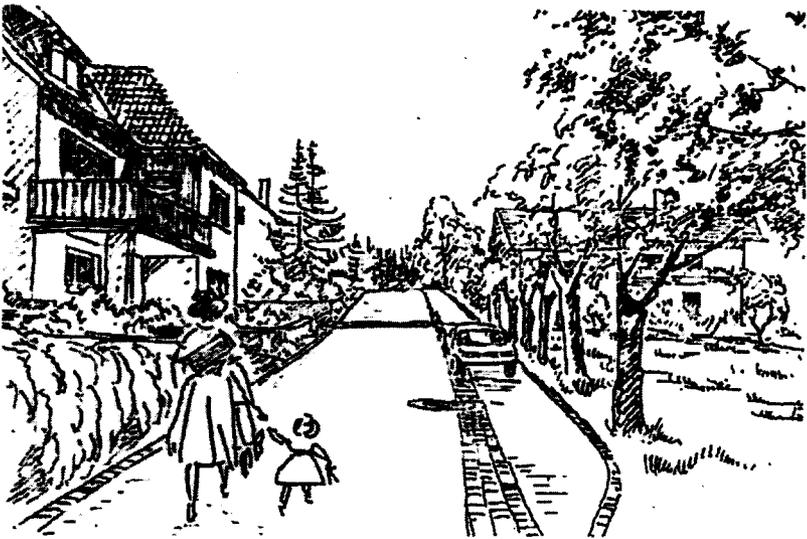


Figure 4 The chart showing the present status quo of village renewal in comparison with the chart of conception for planning.

- m. With discussion conducted and on-the-spot investigation made many times, further discussion will be carried out with planners in addition to further revision and study of the plan for village renewal and the conception chart (comparison before and after the planning, as shown by Figure 5).
- n. Further discussion among villagers and revision of the conception chart will be conducted to finalize the development plan as the basis for carrying out substantial rural construction.
- o. The plan for village renewal will be shown on the spot when physical construction is going on so as to reinforce the villager understanding of the renewal plan and put the mechanism of citizen participation into effect (Figure 6).



Prior to renewal



Having been renewed, it has become the center of economy and the rural weekend fair. (Germany, Bayern-Arnstorf)

Figure 5 Old villager residences and courtyards before the renewal and renovated /village residences and courtyards turned into a rural fair after the renewal.

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Figure6 Citizens participating in construction with rural planning-with the planned road demonstrated on the spot to facilitate the understanding of villagers.

Source: Prof. Dr. Dr. Weiss, Bonn University, Germany.

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IV. The Government Role and Citizen participation

A. Choosing the Planning Unit/Planner

Choosing a qualified planner is the responsibility of the township office. A common objective of the planning must be able to keep the planning and architectural culture of rural features in conformity with local needs and promote their development. As mentioned above, the township office must ensure dialogues among all planners as well as between government departments of high levels and villagers. This approach should be spurred as one of the processes of planning.

B. Establishing Norms of Evaluation

The rural planning department in charge should first form norms for evaluations as the basis for deciding on the planning and areas to be renewed. Norms for evaluation usually take the following aspects into consideration⁵:

- (a) Rural structure.
- (b) Potential of scenery (the beauty of scenery).
- (c) Citizen participation and wishes as well as villager involvement.
- (d) The conception for village development (conception or visions for village development already available or to be worked out as well as the concept of future development).
- (e) Demands for the construction of public utilities required (common demands for technology).
- (f) Demands for the maintenance and improvement of rural features and outlook as well as rural buildings, i.e. living space.

⁵ Liu, C. Z., (2002, PP.292-293) Norms for Evaluating Planned and Construction of Farm and Fishing Villages. Quarterly Review of Bank of Taiwan, Vol. 53 No.1, March 2002.

- (g) Demands for improving conditions of farming and non-farm work. (including rural tourism and leisurely activities).
- (h) Demands for the preservation of ecology and environmental protection.
- (i) Demands for social-cultural improvement.
- (j) Demands for land consolidation and arrangement, e.g. helping to obtain land needed in the construction of public utilities.
- (k) Opinions from local elders, mayors and villagers on local development and its quality.

Besides, close cooperation among government departments is expected to reinforce the result of integration in village renewal. People's organizations and social organizations should also take an active part in village development and planning as well as get themselves involved in the working groups organized by villagers as mentioned earlier. Therefore, when working out the plan for village renewal, relevant government departments, responsible departments in charge and people's organizations (Die Träger öffentlicher Belange) should all accept invitation for attending the discussion of the draft plan. The following participants are particularly requested:

Agricultural units, farmer organizations, construction units of communications, units in charge of making urban plans, protection of ancient cultural relics, water resources and water conservancy, units of scenery preservation and environmental protection as well as organizations of interest.

With the plan for village renewal finalized, government departments should make a budget for implementation according to supplementary measures for village renewal and the construction of public utilities (supplementary measures can be formulated first as a priority). Besides, government should provide maximum allowances and percentage of allowances to private sectors with measures and investment in village renewal.

C. Promoting Citizen participation

As mentioned before, villagers are the main participants (main characters) in rural planning and village renewal. Timely and active citizen participation ensures the success of rural planning, either in making the conception for village development, working out rural planning and the renewal plan, or the participation in making important decisions. Participation of villagers does not refer to their involvement in discussing the plan already made, but include three aspects as follows⁶:

- “Enabling” villagers to participate in it (mitwirken können),
- Making villagers feel “willing” to participate in it (mitwirken wollen),
- “Letting” villagers participate in it (mitwirken lassen).

In order to “enable” villagers to participate in it, villagers are first required to possess the basic knowledge of rural planning and understand the situation before and after the planning and renewal. Besides, villagers need to possess full knowledge all the more if they want to participate in decision-making in the course of planning. In order to make villagers feel “willing” to participate in it, villagers are required to directly voice their personal ideas and wishes. Usually, villagers don’t express opinions spontaneously. Therefore, free and infectious motive should be rendered to villagers through various ways, hence making them feel “willing” to participate in it spontaneously and offer opinions.

“Letting” villagers participate in it is regarding villagers as co-planners of the same group. Villagers must be looked on as working partners in discussion despite their different backgrounds of knowledge. In fact, villagers may be experts in offering opinions on the improvement of their living environment.

In spite of authoritativeness in their own professional fields, planners can lead laymen successfully, consider and respect villagers opinions in the course of exercising freedom and democracy by means of “letting them participate in it”.

⁶ Magel, H.,(1991,P46) Dorferneuerung in Deutschland, DG Bank (Hrsg.) 1991, p.46.

Three above-mentioned aspects concerning citizen participation inter-react with one another in co-existence in the process of planning. With citizen participation, planning will be a criss-crossed and cultural course of study, enabling the result discussed between villagers and relevant personnel to be injected into the concept of planning. Then, the objective and ideal planned can be reached by means of village renewal.

V. Conclusion

Along with the rapid development of society and economy, the role of the rural village endowed by modern society is gradually gaining momentum. There will be no solutions to urban problems if rural problems cannot be settled and the difference between the rural village and cities in their development is enlarged. Village renewal is not only a point of important policies of agricultural structure and rural development, but also an important part in social policies and policies of regional development. The following objectives can be reached through village renewal:

- A. Improving production conditions and living environment in the rural village, balanced development in rural and urban areas as well as the reduction of the number of villagers leaving for cities.
- B. Reinforcing the maintenance of rural features, preservation of historic cultural relics and flavors in the rural village and rendition of new life and function to old buildings of historic significance.
- C. Protecting natural ecology and scenery in the village and promotion of rural attraction with regard to living quality and value of leisurely activities.

Village renewal is a highly complicated and difficult task as well as a protracted and heavy job. We need to have long-term patience instead of expecting obvious results in a short period of time. A process of meticulous study and proper planning are required to meet various demands from villagers on village development. Therefore, how to “arouse people”,

integrate village resources with people's force and implement "citizen participation" in rural planning is the key to the success of village renewal. Village renewal is expected to meet the changes of the social and economic structure according to multi-polar roles of the rural village, making the rural working environment, community development, villager space in everyday life as well as social and cultural activities meet the demands of villagers and the changing society on the rural village.

In summarize, the rural features and values of folk culture can be understood and affirmed through the extension of citizen participation and the plan for village renewal. In this way, the unique rural vitality and vigor can continue and that villagers can recognize their "hometowns" and attach their affections to them once again, making villagers feel honored with their villages and take pride in living in them.

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村民參與農村社區更新之研究 — 德國經驗

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摘 要

關鍵字：鄉村發展，農村社區更新，村民參與，德國經驗

農村社區更新是一項高度複雜並且是艱巨的任務，同時也是一項長期性而任重而道遠的工作，吾人不應以為短期間即會有顯著的成果，而是需要有長期的耐性。它需要一段慎密的研討過程與妥善的規劃，廣泛的去瞭解及滿足村民對農村發展的種種要求。因此，如何「喚醒民眾」，結合村莊的資源與民間的力量，落實「村民參與」農村規劃，更為農村社區更新成功與否的關鍵。使農村社區更新確實迎合社會經濟結構的變遷，以及農村角色多元化的需求來進行，使農村的工作環境、聚落發展、村民的活動空間與村莊社會文化活動的需要，均能符合村民以及變遷中社會對農村的的要求。

總而言之，透過廣泛的「村民參與」以及週延的農村社區更新計畫，希望能夠使長久以來被遺忘了的農村特質與價值及鄉土文化等，重新得到社會大眾應有的認識與肯定，農村特有的活力與生氣盎然之景象可以持續，村民也能重拾其對「家鄉」的認同感與歸屬感；使村民能夠以其村莊為榮，並且以能夠居住及生活其間為傲。

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