Enhancement of Urban Security through Community Empowerment – A Local Perspective

RABAÇAL, Carlos\textsuperscript{a}, Sousa, Nuno\textsuperscript{b} and Levy, Raquel\textsuperscript{c}

\textsuperscript{a} Setúbal City Councilman, Setúbal Municipality, Setúbal, Portugal, e-mail: carlos.rabacal@mun-setubal.pt

\textsuperscript{b} Municipal Civil Protection and Firefighting Service, Setúbal Municipality, Setúbal, Portugal, e-mail: nuno.sousa@mun-setubal.pt

\textsuperscript{c} Housing Division, Setúbal Municipality, Setúbal, Portugal, e-mail: raquel.levy@mun-setubal.pt

Abstract – In a globalized world, social risks arise by the vacuums of income and welfare distribution. Municipalities cannot control the globalization process but are strongly affected by it. The effects can be positive (and mostly are), or negative, but it cannot be denied that globalization has brought strong opportunities, but also threats, by creating networks of information and knowledge, allowing the free flow of ideas, people, goods, services and capital at a pace that surpasses the social and political capacity of individuals and political parties to analyze, scope, integrate, choose and accompany the complex interactions of a multilayered world with diffuse horizontal and vertical borders, a world (western) yet obliged to respect political cycles and choices of democratic regimes that cannot pace with the hyperflux transfer of information and knowledge, but who even so has to make momentum choices for a passed world in consequence of a continuum framework of change. The access to information is disseminated by technological platforms, selling an iconic way of live that cannot be met by all individuals but which they feel is right in the realm of their fingers. In consequence, social stratification surges among societies and personal and group incapacities gain real color, taste and smell. Security is a core value for individuals, groups, communities and states. In each level, security is permanently linked with survival plus. If a subject has security, he has a choice. Democracy dictates that the individual has a choice. This work is about strategies and community empowerment programs to create choices for survival plus for those who, by random chance, live in social neighborhoods, stigmatized by their condition and with lesser capacities to surpass social barriers of common wellbeing.


1. Introduction or Background

Setúbal is a city and a Municipality in Portugal with an area of 172.0 km\textsuperscript{2} and a total population of 118,696 residents. Of the total population, 6,427 are foreign residents (see table 1). The city of Setúbal is located on the northern bank of the Sado River estuary, approximately 40 kilometres (25 miles) south of Portugal’s capital, Lisbon. It is also the seat of the Setúbal District.

Pimentel (2008) states the ancientness of the settlements around Sado River basin, being Setúbal being the oldest, reflecting this status by the conformation of the two words: Set (Place of) Ubal (the grandson of Noah): “The settlement of the Peninsula (Iberia) began with Tubal, the grandson of Noah, two centuries after the Flood. He docked in Sado river, rising in its margins current Setúbal (Set: Armenian word for seat or “place” where Noah’s Ark docked; Setúbal is Tubal seat because it was where Tubal had its seat).”

The cultural myth recalls the importance of maritime activities throughout Setúbal development. In the course of history, the city survived relying on Port activities, allowing the development of traditional fishing, commercial trade (salt, fish, spices) and industrial undertakings (ore, paper pulp, cement, cars, fertilizers, pesticides, chemical products, etc.).

Being a maritime city its population was always formed by the mixing of locals open to national migrants and immigrants, establishing a multicultural community.

Table 1: Immigrants in Setúbal by Nationality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setúbal District</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Permanent</th>
<th>Residential Titles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total District</td>
<td>41711</td>
<td>41518</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Setúbal Municipality</td>
<td>6427</td>
<td>6234</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>2322</td>
<td>2307</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Vert Islands</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>668</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>671</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>563</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>433</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldavia</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>307</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>280</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea Bissau</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>101</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Thomas and Prince</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Columbia</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum of total individuals disregarding nationality &lt;20</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>241</td>
<td></td>
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The communities established themselves or were established by administrative powers in characteristic places and neighborhoods in accordance with their differentiated culture, geography, social status and resources, and sometimes ethnicity. In consequence of no strategy some insecurity/security problems arose. Specifically, this paper will develop Setúbal strategy to enhance security through a multilevel approach towards five social neighborhoods (Bela Vista, Forte, Alameda das Palmeiras, Quinta de Santo António e Manteigadas), characterized by specific endogenies which conforms a framework for the rise of fluctuating local insecurity perception and the raise of fears inside the neighborhoods and their surroundings. These strategies aim to enhance and integrate the neighborhoods with the city and the region and vice versa. How? Setúbal municipality is developing several approaches toward individual and community development focusing in partnerships with international, national and local actors, recognizing and debating the challenges and opportunities of local political actions.

2. Security

2.1. United Nations

The 143 paragraph of the 2005 World Summit Outcome approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations, declares that people have the “right to live in freedom and dignity, free from poverty and despair.” Recognizing “that all individuals, in particular vulnerable people, are entitled to freedom from fear and freedom from want, with an equal opportunity to enjoy all their rights and fully develop their human potential.”

In this declaration, the United Nations adopts an idealistic approach to international relations (IR). Goldstein & Pevehouse (2014) defended “IR affects our lives in many ways”. In accordance with the statement, these authors raise the question: “How can a group (…) serve its collective interests when doing so requires its members to forgo their individual interests?”

The quest for an answer derives from a higher level of consideration: “the collective goods problem”. This problem focuses on the forms to supply common goods and benefits to all members of a community independently of individual effort to acquire a common share of the collective results. By pursuing individual interests, many may not contribute to the all benefits of sharing, creating a systemic distortion for receiving without giving. If groups are small, the probability that the group regulates itself in sharing the collective goods is higher, but if the group is large, complexity emerges, and realistic approach arises to correct distortions by selfish conducts, imposing minimal order through power politics, domination and punishment.

The regulation of political systems is subjected to three basic principles (Goldstein & Pevehouse: 2014: 5-6):

- **Dominance**: This principle imposes a power hierarchy where the bottom is controlled by the top. This is achieved by building and accepting a corps of socialist rules and common recognition of status hierarchy. This status is very often maintained by the rule of law and force, but economical, intellectual, physical, emotional, psychological characteristics also play a role in dominance.

- **Reciprocity**: This principle is the one that rewards behaviors regarding common achieving, punishing egocentric pursue of personal interests with prejudice to the community. If someone gives, community takes care and rewards. If someone quits running for general interests, community punishes the individual part in the collective distribution, sometimes by force and isolation. Goldstein & Pevehouse (2014) points for the possibility of downward or upward spiraling conflicts when parts confront each other. When this happens, one of the parts must deescalate conflicts and “act generously”. If none of the parts deescalates, one must win unequivocally or conflicts continue with prejudice to all parts.

- **Identity**: Each single part belongs or identifies itself to a larger group or community. Recognizing and accepting this for the majority, it is mostly common that one individual part can sacrifice its singular interests in benefice of others. Ethology recognizes this in its field of study, most commonly in ant and bee colonies, but it is also seen in altruistic action in large animals behavior like wolves, monkeys, etc.

Identifying the three basic principles of political sys-
tems one must look at Human Security concept defined by the United Nations, being the first time security moved its primary focus from state security to an individual human security perspective.

Human Security (Commission on Human Security: 2003: 4) is defined “to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms - freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people’s strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity.”

Here we can conclude that the person itself is “invited” to act in its best interest and not solely depending on state craft security. We can appoint that state security is proportionally higher if individual and community security is resilient to stress posed by threats. In accordance, human security develops inside a specific framework of protection and empowerment:

Protection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOP</th>
<th>DOWN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Security</td>
<td></td>
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Empowerment

<table>
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<tr>
<th>BOTTOM</th>
<th>UP</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Figure 1: Human Security Framework

Protection concerns state craft instruments (public and private) for protection of people “from critical and pervasive threats (...) that are beyond their control” (Human Security Unit, 2011). This requires the construction of instruments of governance, law, defense, internal security, health, social protection, education, etc.

Empowerment defines and implements strategies to allow people to build their own capacity to make their own choices, being capable of receiving negative effects and to stay capable to respond to them and maintain activity. This individual resilience must be well informed of choices ahead, so choices can guarantee individual human security as well as community security.

To achieve human security, United Nations proposes five associated principles:

- People-centered presents and discusses the main threats risking a particular community and prepares them to construct better coping capacities that can respond to threats.
- Comprehensive by integration of multiple transversal domains: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security. Any referred domain contains specific threats and impacts that are connected in our interlinked world, magnifying effects that when isolated could not represent catastrophic events, but now, in a globalized world, represent.
- Multi-sectorial because present inter-linkages between human security domains forces society organizations to adopt multi-sector responses upon multi-actor agreements and strategies.
- Context-specific relates to the level of observation of the phenomena, which may be local, national, regional or global. For a specific phenomenon or group of events, each one has its own matrix of threats and range of solutions.
- Prevention-focused suggesting the permanent scanning of initiative precursors for singular or cascading events, constructing overall strategies for structural resilience with a new security culture, adopting new holistic rules of engagement for crisis and emergency prevention.

The adoption of a strategic approach induces the concept of programming steps towards overall human security. These steps are sequential and discriminated next (Human Security Unit, 2011):

- Phase 1 – Situational Analysis: Environmental scanning of the origins and level of threats identifying vectors of impacts in human security domains and the damages to people, community, organizations, infrastructure and administration.
- Phase 2 – Mapping and analysis of needs, vulnerabilities & capacities: After the identification of threats and their impacts, phase 2 identifies the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities in each human security domain. In resume, detects insecure spaces that need to be addressed by authorities, the assessment of capacities and needs to safely secure the vulnerable identified domains.
- Phase 3 – Build Strategies: The concept of new strategies or the reformulation of existing ones should integrate the 5 human security principles already identified with implementation of top down (protection) and bottom up (empowerment) actions, planned over clear time frames.
- Phase 4 – Implement in a participatory manner: The implementation of adopted strategy should be participated by referent stakeholders, engaging them through the phases of planning, preparation, response and recovery.
- Phase 5 – Human Security Impact Assessment: As in any process, results should be assessed by defining management indicators throughout the various phases of the program implementation. It is in this phase that lessons are learned from failures and successes, suggesting the adoption of adaptability and flexibility when necessary, and incorporating corrective measures to achieve higher standards of human security.
3. Our Neighborhood, Our City

3.1. ONOC - Our Neighborhood, Our City

The Municipality of Setúbal believes in politics⁴ build upon the direct participation of citizens and their institutions. Its motto is Participated Municipality. It is the municipality’s intent to listen to citizens problems, promoting their active engagement in the search for solutions. One vector of action is group and commissions support to identify problems and organize and execute solving actions. These actions are collective and directed to the community (TOP DOWN), encouraging the construction of a body of organized citizens, diminishing insecurity concerns and raising safety and security levels through problem identification, integration and collaboration with official authorities and non-governmental organizations, constructing networks of trust and bridges under intercultural mediation (BOTTOM UP). Our Neighborhood, Our City is the anchor program, initially called Integrated Program for Development and Participation of Bela Vista and Surrounding Territories, for the sustained development of the identified five quarters with social housing, integrating and developing the resident population and expanding their relations with other municipal territories.

The program defined 5 axes of actions:

• Youth Intervention;
• Education, Training and Employment;
• Image and visibility;
• Live in community;
• People participation promotion.

3.2. ONOC - Phase 1 / Situational Analysis

Setúbal municipality has 118,696 residents, 46% live in São Sebastião Parish where the five neighborhoods (Bela Vista, Forte, Alameda das Palmeiras, Quinta de Santo António e Manteigadas) are located. Data from December 2011 identified that the five quarters have 153 buildings, 1,592 houses, of these 25% of private property, and 5,769 residents.

Nogueira, Rodrigues, & Nicola (2007) identified that in 3 neighborhoods (Belavista, Forte e Alameda) the great majority of people had Portuguese nationality (88,5%), followed by Cape Verde nationality (7,7%) and other east European countries (2,2%). Concerning ethnicity the quarters have 65,6% of “white population”, 20,9% of “african population”, 10,5% of “gipsy population” and 2,9% of “asian population”.

When looking at educational qualifications, the authors conducted a survey of 797 individuals representing 2,664 people from family aggregates. They found out the following:

![Figure 2: Educational Qualifications (Bela Vista 2007)](image)

In the forth quarter of year 2006, 37,9% was the employment rate in Bela Vista well below the 57,4% national employment rate. The unemployment rate was 28,7% in Bela Vista against 8,2% of national unemployment rate. Today (2014) we have 13,9% of national unemployment rate. No one can state proportionality exists in this field of social sciences, but without accurate data, we can extrapolate empirically that unemployment rate in Bela Vista must have raised, accordingly with national data, to higher rates. From April to December 2011, the municipal services of social housing and social inclusion provided 1,682 attendences and made 554 domiciliary visits. Base on the survey of Nogueira, Rodrigues, & Nicola (2007), we can provide a situational analysis:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The middle age is 30 years;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low level of scholarity;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 23% of the population are students;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 83% of the population works for other parties;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The medium income is 520€;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The rate of inactivity is 53%;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 23,6% of unemployed people is searching for first employment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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⁴[“Politics” might best be characterized as the constrained use of social power. Following on from that, the study of politics - whether by academics or practical politicians - might be characterized, in turn, as the study of the nature and source of those constraints and the techniques for the use of social power within those constraints]. Cfr. Klingemann, H.-D., & Goodin, R. (1996). A New Handbook of Political Science. Oxford University Press, New York.
Young People:

• 28,4% of the youngsters liked to learn a desired profession;
• The positive points of the neighborhood are: the existence of the green park of Bela Vista, human relations (union, joy and sympathy), police presence in the neighborhood, the existence of social institutions and the work developed by them;
• The negative feeling of the neighborhood is: Conflictuality and insecurity, garbage and negative external image of Bela Vista.
• ¾ of young people claim to enjoy living in the neighborhood;
• School quitting and retention rates are significant;
• The absence of school results is due to absenteeism and dislike to study;
• Influence of peers for illicit practices;
• The young people care about free time occupancy and show receptivity to mobilize within associations for developing their own activities;
• Value education and professional training;
• Recognize little dialogue inside families nucleus about youth themes (sexuality, drugs, tobacco, alcohol);
• 1/3 of young people do not adopt prevention measures against sexual transmissible diseases;
• A desire to leave the neighborhood for considering that staying can lead them to “get lost”.

Families:

• Numerous families with several generations;
• 64,8% of the children stay home with older relatives;
• 72% of the families do not practice sport regularly;
• 75,1% live in rented houses;
• 61,2% claim their houses are in good conditions;
• Only ¼ of the families have regular contact with the school;
• 53% of families are poor;
• 54,1% of family aggregates have debts they cannot pay with actual income;
• Noise and garbage are the main reasons people appoint for not liking to live in Bela Vista;
• The good relation with neighbors, good public transports and the green park are appointed as positive points;
• Recognition of low scholarship as a factor for economic difficulties;
• 300 families benefit from Social Integration Income (2010 data);
• It is appointed the need to expand answers in the field of health and culture for young people and elderly population.

3.3. ONOC – Phase 2 / Mapping and Analysis of ‘Needs, Vulnerabilities & Capacities’

In Phase 2 the “needs, vulnerabilities & capacities” were analyzed.

Needs:

• More education;
• Family structuring;
• Associative movements promotion;
• Buildings maintenance;
• Participated management of common interests;
• Better health, hygiene and sanitation practices;
• Youth problems counseling (sexuality, drugs, tobacco, alcohol);
• Reading promotion (Library)
• Local art promotion and participation;
• Theater activities development;
• Sport activities;
• Development of geriatric activities;
• Safety education;
• External visits promotion;
• Positive media news

Vulnerabilities:

• Economic crisis;
• Budgetary constraints;
• Heterogenic ethnicities;
• Strong degradation of large parts of block buildings;
• National and municipal perception towards segregation of social neighborhoods;
• Low education;
• High unemployment;
• Identified delinquent groups;
• Youth ritualistic adherence to delinquent groups;

Capabilities:

• Neighborhood majority of Portuguese nationality (88.5%);
• Common sense of belonging;
• Existence of multicultural associations (25);
• Good school infrastructures;
• Good collective sport infrastructures;
• Green park of Bela Vista;
• Existence of municipal proximity cabinets;
• Permanence of one national public security police squad;
• Nomination of recognized ethnic interlocutors;
• Existence of the Social Bela Vista Observatory;
• Social studies data with high level degree of information;
• Strong patronage practices between the municipality and referent local, national and international institutions and organizations.
• Promotion of good institutional relations with national government;
• Municipal high human resources qualifications;
• Motivated teams;
• Benchmarking practices;
• Capacity for formulation of strategies.

3.4. ONOC – Phase 3 / Build Strategies

One problem identified or solved by citizens themselves generates public savings allowing better resources management.

After internal analysis, the municipality adopted a strategy concerning one main goal: Emergence of development processes (TOP DOWN – Protection) by the participation of the people (BOTTOM UP – Empowerment). To achieve this goal it was important to organize groups having a basic task to implement participation. The actions should be developed on common interest’s definition towards resolution of real identified problems, sharing tasks and responsibilities.

All to be achieved should derive from explicit identification, self-generating processes of resolution, practises and competences for collective organization, mobilization of the community and emergence of recognized leaders. The recognition and visibility of community values should be a permanent objective.

The lines of interventions are: Youth intervention; Education, training and employment; Image and Visibility; Life in community and Promotion and Participation of the people.

3.5. ONOC – Phase 4 / Participatory Implementation

Our neighborhood, our city program is a democratic exercise experience that implements a strategy for popular organization being subjected to replication in any territorial communitarian management. The program allocated 14 Municipal Services, 20 technicians and 4 Heads of Division, with external participation of 25 institutions and other entities.

Some conditions were necessary for the implementation of the program:

• Identify the necessity to deepen the democratic expression of territorial management;
• Political compromise and investment by the promoter of the program;
• Fulfillment of compromises assumed towards the community;
• Strong ideological firmness in the permanent capacitiation of the participants to act and transform (focus in process management);
• Building of a cohesive team focused on process orientation;
• Minimal adjustments to financial and logistical availabilities;
• Respect for the principle of residents capacity in decision making that respects them and their community;
• Trust building with locals, needed to implement a strategic sedimentation of democratic experience;
• Adoption by the municipal team of a permanent posture of correctness and action adjustments, by feedback and intervenient orientation;
• Predisposition for collective relations

Once the conditions were assured for the implementation of the program, residents gatherings started, promoting participation and the election of residents for appointing interlocutors.

The meetings with residents were strategic in the generative practice of new competences of collective organization, mobilizing others for decision making. These reunions served for the identification and development of leaderships among residents, strongly necessary for the group’s social organization.

Until June 2014, 642 resident’s reunions were conducted, with the participation of 2898 residents and 307 elected interlocutors.

In the meetings, the residents present problems and proposals which they conduct inside three areas: requalification of public and common spaces, communitarian actions and generative participatory actions.

Besides the requalification of public and common spaces with transfer of materials by the municipality and patrons, at communitarian level showed up:

• 77 initiatives of popular promotion (musical and dance festival, awareness actions, the holidays in the neighborhood program, sport tournaments and popular festivities);
• Dissemination of a residents manifesto entitled
“There’s live beyond violence”, denouncing the way social media contributes to reinforce the negative image of social neighborhoods.

3.6. ONOC – Phase 5 / Human Security Impact Assessment

Quantitative results from the overall participation:

- 652 resident reunions and 81 reunions with local institutions, with the participation of 2898 residents and 307 elected interlocutors

Quantitative results from the organization:

- 30 staircases painted in Quinta de Santo António, Alameda das Palmeiras e Manteigada;
- 20 rehabilitated and painted buildings in Forte da Bela Vista;
- 19 rehabilitated and painted buildings in Bela Vista;
- 23 buildings in Bela Vista closed staircases access;
- Rehabilitation of flowerbeds in Alameda das Palmeiras;
- 77 initiatives of popular promotion;
- Dissemination of a residents manifesto;
- Meeting promotion for debate and approval of work proposals;
- 109 reunions with groups of organized residents;
- Creation of two residents commissions;
- Creation of two juvenile groups: “change the look” in Bela Vista and “Atitude” in Manteigada;
- Creation of a residents association in Quinta de Santo António.

Results generated by participation:

- Realization of the Residents Meeting (2nd edition in preparation) with the presence of 90 residents in plenary session, debating and approving future work proposals previously identified in 9 thematic groups.
- Realization of 109 reunions with residential voluntary groups for communitarian achieving’s;
- Conduct of 81 reunions with local institutions;
- Creation of a residents association in Forte da Bela Vista
- Creation of a monitoring commission for the supervision of “Holidays in the Neighborhood” project;
- Creation of a commission for the definition of a residents association for Quinta de Santo António.

Because of the acceptance and participation of local residents the program defined the next strategic guidelines for the mandate 2013-2017: a) direct and collective participation of the residents; b) promote the organization of the community among the residents of the municipal social houses; c) continue and deepen the process of rehabilitation of the buildings based on the residents’ organization; d) creation of local social units; e) promotion of formal groups of organized residents such as condominiums, commissions, associations and other non-formal groups in order to enhance the cooperation and collective partnership; f) consolidation of the participative model of the administration of social housing; g) reinforcement of the role of the interlocutor of the building or courtyard, elected by the residents, representing the interests and the development of the actions collectively decided; h) intensification of the integrated model of the territorial administration of social housing; i) implementing the programme “our neighbourhood, our city” by actions that reflect the plurality of competences and technical and popular skills (culture, sports and education).

3.7. The Role of the Project

Project impact at territorial level:

At local and regional level, impacts have been identified in the dematerialization of Bela Vista violent image, with publication/emission of more than 200 positive news in journals, radios and televisions about residents organization and developed actions.

Environmentally, in consequence of resident’s behavioral changes the cleaning of public and common spaces can be observed in response to their involvement and participation in territorial management process. The process was developed through promotion of building/yard reunions where environmental education sessions and communitarian organization for cleaning building staircases took place. In this item it is included the Project for the Efficient Use of Public Equipment’s (Under a call for the Reference Framework for National Strategy - RFNS), with highlight for the project of Hygiene and Cleaning Communitarian Teams, where residents assure by voluntary adherence the cleaning of Bela Vista yard’s in straight articulation with São Sebastião Parish and local institution ACM, minimizing harmful behaviors towards cleaning maintenance of public spaces.
In Bela Vista public spaces all yards were rehabilitated with installation of a new Museological Urban Nucleus (financed by the call for the RFNS with a total finance of 3.000.000€).

This last project aims at a local and regional level, being totally innovative in Portugal. On what concerns visibility of common parts in public places, the participation of residents in works of rehabilitation of buildings produced very positive impacts in the level of conservation and maintenance of improvements conducted by them.

At the level of civil protection it was implemented the rehabilitation of fire hydrants network and the formation of Community Emergency Response Teams with awareness for the need to prepare against dangers with high potential of impact in their residential areas, training them to develop basic competences of response to disasters.

Project impact at economical level:

The participation and residents organization in the execution of works in common spaces reflects in high gains in municipal budget assigning for the rehabilitation of social neighborhoods. With municipality supporting materials and technical expertise for works in common parts, the municipality could direct scarce financial resources to other highly important works, requiring higher technical expertise (repair of plastering and external facades, repair of water columns and electricity networks, among others).

Following this strategy, two priorities of investment were complemented: municipal investment and resident’s investment, the last by volunteering free work force necessary for rehabilitation of common parts and public spaces, being the case that in some occasion’s residents offered themselves resources the municipality didn’t have.

Other vectors of analysis focus on sustainability of investment over time, gaining in consequence, special relevance, the participation of local residents, allowing the endurance of projects that are constrained by tight financial availabilities.

By last, the employability level was also part of the program, with implementation of one action entitled Committee for the Democratization of Informatics Project, developing digital literacy among young people who developed one online newspaper to contribute to the good image of Bela Vista.

Project impact at societal level:

77 promotion actions of the program produced the next positive impacts:

- Education benefits:
  Execution of training actions with residents about: child monitoring; environment; green spaces conservation; rental contracts; hygiene and cleaning (garbage deposition) and animals care procedures and socialization. A tricot and crochet atelier was implemented by female residents, attracting people from outside the neighborhood. These actions achieved the change of behaviors and accountability for residents, influencing positively life in the neighborhood.

- Cultural benefits:
  The young people from Bela Vista were invited to organize a regular cultural event entitled “Change the Look Festival”. This specific action originated higher self-esteem among the youngsters and the formation of a youth local group. The “Change the Look Festival” is mainly dedicated to music and dancing performances.
Figure 10: Change the Look Festival

- **Sport benefits:**
  Training actions for the formation of referees and sport delegates were executed as the basic step for organization of local street tournaments, promoting health habits through sport practice and the respect for the other in competition and in life. By this action it was also achieved the participation of families, reinforcing family ties.

Figure 11: Ping-pong tournament

- **Security:**
  The collective participation of residents in community actions improved self-esteem, promoting collaborative neighborhood relations, minimizing existing conflicts and tensions.

- **Specific Groups:**
  A great success of the program was “Holidays in The Neighborhood”, offering cost free time occupation for kids outside school periods, developed and implemented by volunteer monitors, also residents of the neighborhood. These monitors had technical and logistical support from the municipality, responding to an existing necessity for children who have no link with local children institutions.

Innovation and originality:
The practice of social neighborhoods intervention had been, until the development of the program, centered in building and housing management. The process was characterized by a vertical hierarchical relation between the municipality and the residents, prevailing unilateral decisions, many times not considering the best interest of residents, focusing mainly in problems containment. The program developed innovative relations of the municipality with the neighborhoods by changing the hierarchical relation to horizontal management of resident’s participation and their organization, building a relation of trust and partnership in decision making, trying to act in problems resolution collectively.

Another innovation, in comparison with former conducts, was the creation of a multidisciplinary group of municipal technicians, not exclusively detached to this project, overcoming the conjectural constrain of not being able to hire a specific team for the project due to procedural and financial constraints, articulating synergies of the disposable resources. This way of work was responsible by the originality of the municipal action because it created a rupture with acquired practices and services segmentation. On the other hand, this practice removed the technical organization of the territory from straight social housing management, permitting the emergence of systemic management, a systemic management that should be applied to any territory.

In consequence of the richness of the program, social innovation practices are a permanent value, seeking problem resolution after solutions are negotiated with residents and promotes superior organization.

Cost-benefit relation:
In the measure that the program counts mainly with the participation and organization of the residents, volunteering for actions development and execution, falling in the municipality the technical, logistical and training support, the costs of the program are proportionally lower than the collected benefits.

This statement is valid comparing the benefits created by the residents themselves (practical and immediate results in lives neighborhood), with the benefits concerning the municipality (deepening the democratic relation with the citizens).
The program does not have an assigned budget, being financed by the mobilization of organized residents who fulfil the necessity to display teams for conduct of planned actions and by the schedule of territorialized actions by several municipal services integrating the work group. An example is given: From other examples, the rehabilitation of 20 buildings in the “Forte da Bela Vista” neighborhood was conducted by organized residents, with a cost of 70.000€ in paints (35.000€ donated by patrons and 35.000€ invested by the municipality) in budget work of 450.000€, if performed by municipal assignment.

It is important to state that this practice requires residents continual training-actions that slowly but consistently qualify program intervention teams, validating planned scheduling of territorial actions by groups of organized residents.

4. Conclusions

The presented project was developed as a social engineering 3 lever focusing on local community empowerment, pursuing citizens active participation in problem solving, forming and bridging own consciousness of individual or social group rights with individual or group civic and community duty roles and social requirements. Society can be designated a fully developed society when the homogeneous common values permits the differences of the heterogeneous singularities of minorities and distinct cultures. The tale of dream of humans living in security without differences and conflicts with roots in ethnicity, resources access or wealth distribution may be a utopia, but it would be contrary to human endeavour if Setúbal municipality does not affirm loud and clear the constant objective for contributing for the elevation of human condition, of human security, specially of those who by lack of chance live in poverty and insecurity, and when confronted with others wealth adopt misjudging or criminal conducts, aggravating their personal conditions and

Table 2: Results obtained by the project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Achievements</td>
<td>Innovative management practices of scarce resources; self-esteem enhancement; promotion of good neighborhood vicinity; conflict attenuation; bridge of public and individual interests; building rehabilitation; children occupancy; competences building; citizenship edification; public health promotion by better hygiene and cleaning practices and sport activities; superior neighborhood proximity to the city and vice versa; cultural development; digital learning; safety improvements; better democracy; leadership emergence; social empowerment; improved human security.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lessons learned</td>
<td>- The need for leadership.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- The need for initiative actions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Action produces new actions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Personal commitment must be permanent.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Action generates organization when people motivation endures.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Organization raises solidarity among resident’s improving vicinity relations.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- The growth of the ONOC depends on the global political, economic and social constraints.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Participation processes have unpredictable developments and setbacks.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Training strategies are central to the sustainability of participation.</td>
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<td>- Common actions helped to resolve conflicts of multicultural relations for which there was no apparent solution.</td>
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<td>- Participation is easier around specific and punctual issues than around permanent and collective responsibilities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Interlocutors assumed permanent responsibilities because there are gains to residents.</td>
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<td>- In consequence of resident’s power growth motivation, work availability also grows.</td>
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<td>- The logic of participation applies to any type of risk.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Empowerment generates human security</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steps for the future</td>
<td>- Maintain the current investment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Implement a local program news agency.</td>
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<td>- Include program initiatives beyond the neighborhoods territory.</td>
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<td>- Implement physical spaces to local associations</td>
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<td>- Maintain and support developed leaderships and residents organization by building and yard.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Enlarge resident’s participation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Find new ways of coordination between the municipality and local institutions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
generating mistrust, isolation and repression (many times by force) toward all social groups living in social housing (quarters). The project intends to enhance individual awareness of its own potential, capacities, rights and duties, inducing them to focus their strength towards positive actions in relations with others, generating and organizing group synergies between local communities to ascend in face of enduring social condemnation.

References


Citation