

Contemporary Research in Urban Planning



Mariana Mohamed Osman
Alias Abdullah
Azila Ahmad Sarkawi
Rustam Khairi Zahari



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CHAPTER 10

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN KUALA LUMPUR

Raja Noriza Raja Ariffin, Rustam Khairi Zahari & Mohd Idham Mohd Yusof

Introduction

Similar to other developing cities in the world, Kuala Lumpur is facing multi-faceted problems caused by various elements directly related to urbanisation. It demands a strategic cooperation between the government and the society to create a better quality of life for the community. One of the promising solutions is to come up with programmes that particularly improve the capability and capacity of the community. This type of programme is often known as Community Development Programmes (CDP).

Kuala Lumpur City Hall (KLCH) through its Department of Community and Social Development plays crucial roles in providing and implementing CDP for the community in Kuala Lumpur. As the local authority, KLCH has to fulfil the need of its community particularly the low and middle income communities. The main objective is to create an inclusive community, which is an essential ingredient to create a harmonious society. Low and middle income communities in urban areas such as Kuala Lumpur need to be accessible to CDP to avoid an imbalance social development due to isolation. O'Hara (1999) states that low income urban residents experienced two-fold isolation: isolation from the economic successes of a growing economy and isolation from the political decision making process affecting their own life. In the CDP implementation, the needs of the community must not be ignored. Thus, the service providers should focus on these needs (O'Hara, 1999). Urban residents must not simply be viewed as the recipients of 'spill over' from the economic development in the urban settings, but their needs must also be the focus of urban development efforts.

Community Development

Community development can be defined as a process, method, programmes and movement (Christensen and Robinson, 1980). Community development is a process of social action at local level that is generated through various programmes, using methods for helping people and involving social movement from the networking and cooperation resulted from community development. At the same time, community development has often been promoted as a simple 'grassroots', 'bottom-up' approach towards social change. The social change is about the lasting shifts in economic, social and political structures and rearrangements in role patterns and relationship between and within them. However, prerequisite to the success of community development is the desire of the community to change and to make themselves better. It is not easy as it need influences on human behaviour in achieving lasting change (MacIntyre, 1997).