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Constraints and Opportunities for the Development of Communication and Participation Strategies

Analysis for a political dialogue on climate friendly city
development

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Analysis for a political dialogue on climate friendly city development

Hans-Liudger Diene^{,†}, Heike Walk[†], Angela Jain^{±*}, Sabine Schröder^{*}, Bhaskar Poldas^{*}, Saira Alam^{*}, Shilpa Deekshith[§], Rama Rao[¶]*

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Abstract

The background analysis focuses mainly on chances for civil society participation, its democratic legitimacy and the existing forms and experiences of civil society participation, as well as constraints to participation and access to information. Furthermore, relevant stakeholders are identified with a focus on civil society organisations in Hyderabad, which are active in the field of climate protection, energy, sustainability, and environment, and their goals, activities, strengths and weaknesses, networks and specific needs described. On the basis of the stakeholder analysis, multipliers within civil society that are relevant to the project's areas, can be identified for participative processes with other WPs. Based on these findings and in an iterative process to test strategies, the participation strategies can be adapted to the local, cultural and civil society context in Hyderabad.

Key words: *citizens participation, civil society, stakeholder dialogue, city development, Hyderabad, India*

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1 Introduction

Participative and communicative methods are essential to create and increase awareness for the set of problems associated to climate change and for mitigation- and adaptation strategies among affected stakeholders. It is likewise essential, to integrate the local knowledge and the needs of the affected groups in developing these strategies and to activate the stakeholders to take self-initiative. The discussion on the reasons and consequences of climate change is taking place at different levels today, but is only marginally reaching the population. To ensure a sustainable growth process for the megacity Hyderabad there is a need for close co-operation between stakeholders of civil society, economy, science and government in developing political strategies. The issue of 'Climate Change and Energy Efficiency' demands new forms and ways of communication and participation. These consist in an intensive dialogue and discussion on the reasons and consequences of climate change, which is not only directed at political solutions, but also includes possibilities of self-action in daily routines. Thus, communication and participation strategies aim, on the one hand, at the dialogue and cooperation between the different stakeholders of all levels (civil society, business, science and government), and, on the other hand, on the possibilities for fostering low-emission lifestyles at the individual level of every citizen.

In this background study the framework for a political dialogue on climate friendly, energy efficient city development is analysed. The analysis addresses the discourse on climate change in India and the public awareness of the issue. Furthermore, it demonstrates how issue-framing is relevant for mobilising and activating citizens for the cause of environment and climate change.

Furthermore, it analyses the state of civil society in India and its chances for participation, its democratic legitimacy and the existing forms and experiences of participation in India, as well as constraints to participation and access to information.

The assignment is to foster stakeholder dialogue and citizen participation and to involve stakeholders and citizens in the activities and pilot projects of the overall project. Therefore, relevant stakeholders are identified in this analysis. The focus of the stakeholder analysis is on the civil society sector and thus, relevant civil society organisations in Hyderabad, which are active in the fields of research of the project (climate change, energy, sustainability, and environment) and their goals, activities, strengths and weaknesses, networks and specific needs are identified and described. On the basis of this analysis, multipliers within civil society can be identified for participative processes. Based on the findings of this background study and in an iterative process to test strategies, participation and communication strategies can be adapted to the local context in Hyderabad.

2 Communicating Environment and Climate Change in India

2.1 The Discourse on Climate Change in India

Climate change in India is often perceived – in academic and popular discourse alike – as a “global” challenge, a threat “beyond borders”. India and other developing countries feel strongly that they are not responsible for climate change. This is emphasised through the fact that in the intergovernmental climate negotiations India has consistently argued against greenhouse gas mitigation commitments for developing countries. Though India is resisting calls by developed countries to take on specific targets for the reduction of its Greenhouse Gas emissions, the Indian government has declared that even as it pursues its social and economic development objectives, it will not allow its per capita GHG emissions to exceed the average per capita emissions of the developed countries. India is a country, which is and will continue to be severely impacted by climate change, precisely at a time when it is confronted with huge development imperatives. India believes that addressing climate change, especially through investment in renewable energies, could create new jobs and spur technology innovation.

The discourse on climate change in India has tended to be obscured by technical and scientific issues. Much of climate change discussion has revolved around technicalities such as carbon emissions. For the most part, the jargon used is difficult to understand by those who are not scientists. In 2008, India has announced a National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), which incorporates its vision of sustainable development (with eight national missions) and the steps it must take to realise it.¹ Unfortunately, there is