

Abstract

Since the advent of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), local outline plans for the Palestinian towns, villages and cities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been prepared hastily in an accelerating manner. Scientific and impartial study of these prepared plans shows that the traditional master planning approach (that focuses on physical planning issues only such as zoning and land- use classifications without considering other socio-economic and environmental aspects) was inefficient and lack the most basic planning principles, which that should focuses on the policies of comprehensive and sustainable development. As a result planning at the local level exacerbated and became an impediment against Palestinian local development, not a solution to its important physical, socio-economic and environmental issues.

This study is an initiative to address the issue of local planning practice in the Palestinian territories (mainly in the West Bank "WB")to date, and to diagnose its strengths, weaknesses, and shortcomings on scientific basis, and to develop recommendations and strategies to enhance the strengths and minimize weaknesses.

The study and assessment of 47 local Outline Plans indicated that local plans were considered merely as a tool to classify residential areas, facilitate issuing building permits and serve road networks. Nothing was proposed to enhance the local economy with only limited industrial and commercial areas proposed in the outline plans. Moreover, villages and small towns were assumed "sleeping quarters" outside the economic center(s) similar to colonial planning before the advent of (PNA). The social aspects and implications of the outline plans ignored the needs and services that prerequisites for healthy and sustainable communities. Other planning aspects were ignored as well, which include environmental and the contraction of agricultural land at the expense of urban expansion.

Planning practices prior, during and after the advent of (PNA) reflects serious lack of depth in the planning process, and use of "quick solutions", that do not respect local communities' special needs, and largely overlooked the special characteristics of Palestinian Urban and rural towns and villages.

This problem raise a serious question about the existing planning approach, and highlight the urgent need to develop a more practical, efficient, promising approach that is inspired by Palestinian context. This study Propose a Comprehensive Community Based Planning Approach "CCBPP" as an ambitious and responsive approach for the Palestinian local planning practices.