Exploration of Future Community Practices with Community Culture as the Core in the Context of Urban Renewal

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Abstract: Urban renewal is a complex and systemic endeavor that requires substantial funding, involves numerous stakeholders, and entails an intricate planning process with a relatively extended return period. The selection of an appropriate development model is crucial for ensuring the success of urban renewal projects, as it directly impacts construction efficiency, operational capabilities, and social outcomes. Given the current trend towards micro-updates and an emphasis on operations in urban renewal, this paper, focusing on two urban renewal cases in Chongqing, summarizes and analyzes the path of assisting urban renewal development and future community construction with community culture at its core. The aim is to provide insights into potential models for future project development. Such research is crucial for urban planning and sustainable urban development, aiding decision-makers in better understanding how to choose the right development model to ensure the success and sustainability of urban renewal projects.

Keywords: Urban Renewal; Rural Revitalization; Smart City; Brand Design

Introduction

The exploration of future community practices centered on community culture is a pivotal theme in the current realm of urban development and planning, particularly against the backdrop of extensive urban renewal. Preserving and nurturing the diversity and individuality of urban culture in the context of urban renewal is essential to ensure cities retain their charm[1], enhance urban branding to attract investments and tourism, thereby fostering sustainable urban development[2]. Culture, as a vital factor in urban renewal, contributes to drawing tourists, improving residents' quality of life, and stimulating economic growth[3]. Urban renewal projects should actively promote participation and collaboration between community residents and stakeholders to achieve more sustainable planning and decision-making[4]. Consequently, urban renewal is not merely infrastructure and development projects but also projects that deeply resonate with the people's livelihoods and sentiments. By examining two urban renewal cases in Chongqing, this study aims to summarize and analyze future community practices with community culture at their core, offering insights into potential models for upcoming urban renewal projects. The research endeavors to provide valuable lessons for urban planning and sustainable urban development, assisting decision-makers in better understanding how to select appropriate development models to ensure the success and sustainability of urban renewal projects.

1. Insights from Qingshuixi community practice: A societal design perspective on urban planning

By observing local interpersonal dynamics, uncovering indigenous resources, and untangling the structural aspects of issues, the initial focus is on establishing a connection and building trust with residents. Through a combination of online and offline communication, a deep understanding of residents' needs is gained. Extensive solicitation of resident opinions, coupled with intelligent management incorporating sustainable strategies and a user data collection system, strengthens data empowerment. This, in turn, provides robust big data support for the advancement of various subsequent initiatives.

Using the Qingshuixi Community in Nanan District, Chongqing, as a case study, the author conducted in-depth research in the preliminary stages of design. This involved surveys on local community culture and the future tourist demographic, and accumulated a total of 278 survey responses. The research findings revealed that 87% of local residents expressed dissatisfaction with the community living environment and neighborly relationships. Simultaneously, 67% of tourists were attracted to the natural landscape and mountain architecture features of Qingshuixi. However, 78% of tourists felt that the tourism facilities within the community were inadequate, which impacted their overall touring experience.

In the course of the research, residents expressed their desire for community revitalization, emphasizing the preservation of historical

memories such as old brick houses, ficus virens, retaining walls, and the natural elements. Simultaneously, they hoped that these scenes with shared historical memories could be preserved and showcased in the community. Against this research backdrop, the designer collected a significant amount of image data depicting the original appearance of the Qingshuixi community. In an innovative approach, this data was transformed into a series of thematic visual works. These works were later applied in the practice of micro-upgrades in the community, employing a "blend of old and new" design approach. Through this method, the community retained much of its historical appearance and the local cultural characteristics of the old mountain residents. Simultaneously, modern environmental upgrades and the addition of convenience facilities were integrated into the community to meet the needs and aesthetic tastes of different age groups and consumer demographics. This series of improvements not only addressed the multifaceted desires of younger demographic for proximity to nature, entertainment interaction, and social communication but also enhanced the living environment for local residents. It generated additional commercial prospects for the residents and broadened their spectrum of lifestyle choices.

2. Insights from Minzhu Village community practice: Design a community collaboration mechanism linking the public based on community construction

Motivate local residents to actively participate in co-creation plans to collectively build content based on the community's local characteristics and the actual needs of residents. Organize a spectrum of sustainable cultural events, ranging from charitable endeavors and book-sharing sessions to festive tea gatherings, concerts, and engaging parent-child interactions, to amplify interaction and foster a profound sense of belonging among community residents.

Establish a multi-agent organizational model characterized by "government leadership, smart implementation, local co-creation, and user collaboration". This framework aims to enhance communication between the government, various societal layers, and the general public. It fosters increased mutual trust and cohesion, to continuously build robust and positive relationships.

Using the example of the Minzhu Village Community Culture Co-creation Practice in Jiulongpo District, Chongqing, the Minzhu Village was once a residential area for construction factory employees. The entire project covers an area of 580 Mu, with a total construction area of 790,000 sq.m. There are currently 153 buildings, involving nearly 20,000 residents, making it the largest urban renewal project in the country5. In the process of urban renewal, the Minzhu Village, with government leadership, gradually improved the transformation of community residences and public spaces. Throughout the continuous transformation, professional design teams and social organizations were introduced to actively conduct targeted design research and community activities. Through surveys, community activities, and other means, local residents were encouraged to participate in the process of community design and community activities. The community co-creation process pays special attention to the spiritual and cultural needs of the middle-aged and elderly residents. Simultaneously, it encourages young people to be inspired by the enthusiasm for life from the previous generation. Through co-creation, it gradually eliminates barriers between different ages and cultural backgrounds, fostering emotional connections among new and old residents. Community culture is transmitted and propagated among people of different age groups, driving vibrant social development at the community level. This contributes to the mission of urban renewal to benefit the people and enhance their sense of well-being.

3. Empower the community with its own culture to cultivate a self-sufficient and regenerative model, fostering self-organization, self-governance, and autonomous growth

Urban renewal, driven by renovation, promotes the reconstruction and organization of the internal social structure of neighborhoods. It differentiates into two major domains: daily life and cultural consumption. This guides the positive evolution of social spaces, to achieve a symbiosis between cultural consumption and daily life 6. Through the stable establishment of communities, a long-term positive relationship and guiding role are formed. Utilizing community space resources for rent, the commercial dynamics of communities and brands, along with the revenue from semi-charitable and commercial activities, continuously contribute to the smart development of public facilities. This process shapes a community business model that functions as a conduit for delivering public services.

The significance of future community development lies not only in improving the living environment and enriching residents' cultural life but also in accumulating resources and energy for community growth. By creating settlements with distinctive local cultural features, more younger gen-

erations can be attracted to pay attention to and participate in old communities, to inject vitality into the future development of the community.

In addition, the future development of communities contributes significantly to the preservation and evolution of traditional culture. Through ongoing exploration and practical endeavors, urban renewal has become more vibrant and warmer, and gradually become an integral part of people's lives.

4. Envisioning future community models through community culture

A thorough examination of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals reveals that a substantial 64% of the policy content is intricately tied to urban development7. Looking forward, communities are envisioned to adopt a dual-system approach, with a central focus on residents' day-to-day lives. The construction of infrastructure will be premised on meeting the needs of people to "live and interact near their residences", incorporating more inclusive scenarios into community life. In this conceptualization of the future, community hubs will be established to enhance the convenience of community facilities, enable residents to access health, sanitation, cultural exchange, and other life services more conveniently. This signifies a shift towards more diverse communities, offering a range of scenes and services tailored to various demographics. Whether young or old, residents or newcomers, individuals will find tailored lifestyles and socializing options within the community.

The future communities ought to embrace and stimulate the vibrant exchange of diverse cultures, to foster integration and symbiosis within the community. By preserving and perpetuating local cultures and histories, creating distinctive local scenes such as street art, cultural exhibitions, and traditional festivals, communities can offer residents and visitors vibrant cultural experiences. This approach aims to cultivate a unique community atmosphere and foster a sense of identity. The richness of activities and foot traffic can also generate more opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs, attract a variety of commercial activities within the community and promote employment and economic development.

Future communities should strive to provide equal opportunities and resources for individuals of diverse backgrounds and needs. This entails a focused commitment to addressing the requirements of the elderly, people with disabilities, and marginalized groups by establishing accessible facilities and robust social support networks. Simultaneously, future communities will place heightened emphasis on the lifestyles, social interactions, consumption patterns, and psychological needs of the younger generation. Young people, as integral components of the community, will significantly influence the direction of community development. To meet their dynamic and flexible lifestyles, future communities may introduce a variety of shared economy services, including shared office spaces, transportation alternatives, and communal recreational facilities. This approach encourages young generations to unleash their creativity and innovative spirit, to support their entrepreneurial endeavors and employment opportunities. Moreover, fostering an atmosphere of equality, openness, and sharing can position communities as vital hubs for social and volunteer organizations. This, in turn, allows communities to provide residents with a broader array of social services and support. In embracing these principles, future communities become human-centric spaces capable of generating cultural, commercial, and societal value. Through continuous exploration and innovation, they have the potential to contribute to urban life by offering greater positivity and possibilities.

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