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LOCAL-SCALE PROJECTS AND THEIR POTENTIAL FOR URBAN REGENERATION. EXPERIENCES FROM EAST GERMANY

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ABSTRACT

The notion that the quality of living is composed by multiple, interacting aspects instead of only depending on the external and internal condition of buildings is widely known. However, once urban renewal is considered, talk automatically turns to large scale renovation and regeneration projects that focus on entire urban settlements, building blocks and city structures. Interestingly, to date, there has been little knowledge exchange between practitioners and researchers about projects that act on the local level tackling the socio-cultural dimension of urban life. While not destroying but transforming what already exists into something different and socially valuable, such projects open up a new set of opportunities for the urban community. In Germany, for instance, there is the example of the transformation of a prefabricated housing block into a cultural centre and a bed-and-breakfast for tourists. This is used to illustrate the significance of such projects for urban regeneration. In this paper, we argue that urban regeneration is about more than just demolishing or renovating bricks and stones. Instead, projects on the local level can be a potential for enhancing the socio-cultural aspects of living so making a positive contribution to residents' lives.