

Participatory Approach

Research and technical agenda set by neighborhood residents

Solutions planned by outsiders fail when they do not comprehend the problems faced by the community. Neighborhood organizations are the bridge between the University and East St. Louis citizens. ESLARP projects, conceived by local residents and officials, have addressed neighborhood beautification, housing improvement, job creation, and park development. Because local individuals and neighborhood organizations participate in goal setting, program development, and plan implementation, these projects are more likely to become self-sustaining.

Students and residents learn from each other by working together



Community members work together with University students and faculty in both planning and implementation stages. In fact, the opportunity for hands-on work attracts many students to ESLARP. Their commitment to project completion - through repeat visits to project sites and neighborhood meetings - encourages the continued involvement of residents. At the same time, the students learn about working in distressed communities from the participating residents.



Mobilizing University resources to address the root cause of urban poverty

Through their lifetime experiences, residents often know what is wrong in their neighborhoods, and in many cases know how to make things better, but lack the organizational and financial resources necessary to bring about change. In ESLARP projects, concerned citizens work with faculty and students trained in physical design, strategic planning, and organizational development. Together they have planned, financed and implemented effective solutions to economic, housing and safety problems. A primary goal of this cooperative effort is supporting and enhancing the capabilities of community-based development organizations.

Fully integrated interdisciplinary effort

The Project enables students and faculty in **Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Urban Planning** to work toward common goals, contributing from their respective areas of expertise. Through this collaboration, students begin to develop their professional identity, and to better understand the concerns and responsibilities of other disciplines. The participatory approach provides training for a new generation of planners and designers for socially responsive community development. .

