

A Future Vision for Developing Techniques of Planning Social Programs and Projects at the Local Level

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ABSTRACT

The formulation of a future vision for developing program and project planning techniques at the local level becomes a fundamental pillar in supporting sustainable development and improving the quality of life in local communities. Developing the techniques used in the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of programs and projects is a pivotal factor in enhancing efficiency, reducing waste, and achieving effective performance. Despite these important factors and the presence of national initiatives like the Egyptian Villages Development Project and Saudi Vision 2030, it is evident that there are still cumulative challenges affecting sustainable development in the local communities, and this is as a result of the ineffectiveness of traditional planning tools, the lack of community participation in developing policies, the inadequacy of technical competences, and shifting development priorities due to rapid economic and political transformations. This research aims to examine an integrated future vision for developing the techniques used in planning social programs and projects at the local level. A qualitative method based on content analysis was used to examine local planning data and extract development techniques. The findings reveal that for the future vision to succeed, several components must be considered: analyzing the reality, identifying key techniques, defining strategies, roles, and mechanisms, and proposing an implementation roadmap for gradual execution. These findings point out the importance of incorporating community participation and digital advancements into the suggested techniques. This connection aims to align local planning tools with governance, accountability, and efficiency standards, focusing on empowering the social planner as a key figure in community development. The study emphasizes the importance of effective planning methods in local social initiatives, highlighting their role in promoting sustainable growth and improving community welfare. It also offers a forward-looking perspective that combines modern planning techniques with traditional strategies, giving a new view on local development challenges.

Keywords: Development; Techniques For Planning; Social Programs; Local Community; Future Vision

INTRODUCTION

The development process is a fundamental necessity sought by governments to improve the quality of life and address the challenges facing societies, especially local communities, which are witnessing a clear deterioration in infrastructure and basic services, such as water, sanitation, electricity, and healthcare, due to weak funding and neglected maintenance (Al-Sayyad, 2024). At the beginning of the twenty-first century, three major forces emerged that shaped the content of contemporary civilization: knowledge, globalization, and the environment. These dimensions are intertwined to reshape concepts of development (Hashem, 2006). The primary goal of development has become improving the quality of life in the areas of health, education, and housing, through social changes that enhance the survival and stability of societies (Al-Sarugi, 2009). Because human development cannot be achieved

without a guided model and clear strategies, the importance of activating the basic needs approach, developing institutional capacities, and empowering individuals to participate in decisions that impact their lives has emerged, all within the framework of a conscious social policy (Al-Sarugi, 2009).

Local communities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have faced various development challenges over the decades, represented by uneven services, weak infrastructure in some peripheral areas, and difficulty accessing resources and opportunities for some groups. Development was previously often managed in a centralized, "top-down" manner, where policies were formulated at the national level and then implemented regionally without sufficient participation from the local population. Although the government has launched numerous initiatives to promote local development, such as the National Transformation Program and Saudi Vision 2030, which represented a turning point in adopting a more effective participatory approach, involving citizens in identifying their needs (Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and Housing, 2023; Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2022). Despite this effort, the level of community participation is still lacking or inefficient in policy or developmental programs at the community level. Al-Anzi and Al-Qahtani (2020) further argued that the lack of financial support and weak community participation limit the effectiveness of local development programs in Saudi Arabia.

In this context, interest has grown in improving the quality of social services that affect a broad segment of citizens (Shehata, 2006). From here, the state launched "Saudi Vision 2030," a long-term strategic plan to achieve sustainable development that takes into account economic, social, and environmental dimensions, with a particular focus on developing local administration and infrastructure, and achieving a balance between different regions, especially rural and informal areas (Saudi Vision 2030, 2018). Despite these efforts, there are still challenges hindering the planning of programs and projects at the local level. These challenges include weak planning skills and techniques, limited community participation, and a lack of accurate data. This is confirmed by recent official reports and statistics on the distribution of administrative units and services in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which are an important reference for supporting local planning and developing social programs. According to the report, there are about 17 municipal secretariats, 267 municipalities, and 129 sub-municipalities, with about 31,231 schools, 74,482 mosques, 765 civil defence centres, 609 red cross centres, 40 social development centres, 103 social security offices, 38 labour offices, 24 social development banks, 61 branches of agricultural development fund, and more than 15,000 ATMs (General Authority for Statistics, Services Statistics Bulletin, 2023).

Concerning the population, as of May 2025, the Saudi census estimated that the total population was 37.6 million, comprising 25 million Saudis (66.5%) and 12.6 million non-Saudis (33.5%). These statistics demonstrate the broad distribution of services and administrative units in the Kingdom, highlighting the importance of effective local planning to ensure the equitable distribution of resources and meet the needs of the population in different regions (General Authority for Statistics, Saudi Census Results 2025).

Based on the above, there is an urgent need to develop techniques for planning social programs and projects at the local level in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in a way that enhances the efficiency of implementing development plans and achieves fairness in the distribution of resources and services. Therefore, attention must be paid to applying scientific thinking or scientific research by adopting planning as a principle in confronting our individual and social problems. In this regard, this study aims to provide a future vision for developing program and project planning techniques at the local level, contributing to enhancing the efficiency of development performance, improving the quality of response to community needs, and achieving sustainable development goals. It is hoped that the study will contribute to bridging the knowledge gap in social service and social planning research, which has yet to provide a comprehensive analytical database on the effectiveness of local programs. It attempts to provide an analytical and methodological framework that supports decision-makers in adopting modern planning tools and enriches the scientific literature with applicable models that contribute to the efficient allocation of resources and the enhancement of the sustainability of development projects.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Vision: is a sensory, visual, and mental act performed by the mind, relying on logic and the power of judgment (Arabic Language Academy, 1999). The Cambridge Dictionary defines it as a person's vision of a future situation or society, and what they imagine and hope it will be like compared to their current state of life (Cambridge English Dictionary, 2022).

Future vision: This refers to a positive scenario for a desired future. It is sometimes defined more specifically to mean a desired future that can also be perceived as a possible future. It is also a set of broad and comprehensive intentions, all of which consider the future (Khalifa, 2014). The International Association for Future Studies defines it as: "broader than the boundaries of science and deals with a range of futures over time periods ranging from five to fifty years" (Al-Zaabout, 2015).

Planning: The word "planning" comes from the Arabic root "khattata," which means determining paths or drawing up plans. Planning refers to the process of developing strategies or sequential and systematic methods to achieve specific goals, whether in the short or long term. In its general sense, planning is associated with envisioning the future and charting a path to reach a specific goal. In the social context, planning is considered a means of directing and organizing resources and efforts to achieve development and improve social conditions (Ibn Manzur,

2000). Therefore, planning is a set of mental processes based on a scientific approach that aims to achieve pre-determined goals to improve the quality of life and achieve social well-being for the individual and society. This means shaping the future of society by determining the actions that should be taken to achieve specific goals within a specific period of time (Alawi, 2022).

Program: It is derived from the Persian word "programme," which means "plan" or "organization." It refers to a set of activities or procedures determined in a chronological order to achieve a specific goal, a specific approach, or a plan followed for a specific purpose (Ibn Manzur, 2000). It is a group of related projects and other sub-programs and activities that are managed in a coordinated manner to obtain benefits not achieved by their individual management. (Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, 2022).

Planning Techniques: In Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasit, it is stated that "technique" is the method and style by which a specific work is performed (Academy of the Arabic Language, 1999). According to Ali (2022), the term technique refers to a successful management that requires the application of specific techniques that help achieve organizational goals efficiently. This implies the methods and techniques used in planning and implementing development, social programs, and projects, such as development project planning techniques, i.e., the tools and methods used to identify and analyze problems and plan appropriate solutions.

Local Community Development: From the Arab point of view, the word development is derived from the word "nama" which literally means 'increase', or 'to grow' (Ma'jam al-Ma'ani website, 2021). Webster's Dictionary defines it as: "A series of variables that progress from a lower state to a better state through the presence of more favorable conditions, and it is synonymous with progress." (Webster's Dictionary, 1999). A local community, on the other hand, refers to a group of people whose members are bound together by common interests and ties." (Lewis, 2002). Barker also defines a local community as a group of individuals who live in a specific local area with common culture, interests, rules, principles of behavior based on a common tradition, and subject to a governing structure or government that is accepted by all (Robert, 1987; Ali, 2022)

Project: A project is defined as "a temporary endeavor undertaken to achieve a unique product, service, or result" (Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, 2022). The concept of projects refers to specific development activities implemented by responsible individuals to produce a specific product. Development projects have a start and end time, which is significantly different from routine jobs and tasks, in which employees do not experience any change in their work performance. The project produces tangible results that can be observed or verified.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative method based on a content analysis approach to analyze the content of contemporary theoretical contributions related to program and project planning and investing them in constructing an applied future vision. Therefore, given the theoretical and prospective nature of the study, it employed specialized content analysis in the literature on program and project planning, along with the design of an integrated conceptual map that embodies the structural model of the proposed vision, reflecting the components and relationships between techniques, mechanisms, and implementation indicators.

To avoid biases in selecting the research material, certain inclusion criteria were considered as suggested in the RADAR model by Mandalios (2013). The RADAR model is a framework used for evaluating sources based on relevancy, authority, date, accuracy, and rationale. Firstly, the researchers focused on determining the relevance of the selected literature. At this stage, the researchers focus on examining the identified literature's relevance to the research focus and objective. Only relevant and valuable literature was included. Secondly, authority was also considered while selecting the literature. The researchers focus on the credibility and expertise of the authors. We critically assessed the qualifications and expertise of the author or the organization responsible for the literature. Thirdly, the date is crucial in review studies. At this point, the researchers determine the relevance and timeliness of the literature to their study. Researchers typically prefer recent literature from the past five years to ensure the information is current and up-to-date. Fourthly, the study's validity hinges on the accuracy of the information. At this stage, the researchers focus on the reliability and truthfulness of the information in the source; this means sources or literature that are balanced and unbiased are considered. Finally, the rationale is the last stage used to examine the credibility of the sources or materials. The researchers determine the authors' purposes and objectives. Literature that provides more information related to the research objectives was selected.

Based on this, five steps were followed in content analysis; these steps are: First, the content was identified based on the research objectives and focus. At this stage, the documents were identified (literature, government documents such as Vision 2030, and magazines) from academic datasets such as Google, Scopus, and government websites based on certain criteria (location, time & language). At the second stage, the level at which the chosen document is analyzed is determined. This procedure means the unit of meaning is coded. For example, the words and phrases of relevant concepts related to the study were examined and coded. However, the set of categories was established. In this process, certain concepts like planning, techniques, and programs were categorized, and subsequent codes are distributed under each of the main categories. At the third stage, a set of rules for coding was developed. At this stage, more conceptual categories were used to simplify the meaning. For instance, only concepts

of planning or projects related to community development were considered. In the fourth stage, all the identified coded concepts were put in the appropriate categories, and the process was done manually. At the final stage, the results were analyzed based on the research objectives, and conclusions were made.

RESULT

This section presents the findings of the study, which were derived from the content analysis. Consequently, the results are discussed thematically in the following subsections.

The Reality of Local Planning in Light of Saudi Vision 2030

Local planning is one of the essential pillars for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. This issue has received significant attention within Saudi Vision 2030, the most comprehensive strategic framework for organizing development efforts. The vision focuses on improving quality of life, achieving fairness in the distribution of services, and enhancing community participation, reflecting the state's drive toward balanced development across geographies and sectors. In this context, planning programs and projects at the local level represents the meeting point between national policies and the needs of the population in villages and cities. Official documents indicate that more than 58% of development projects are implemented at the local level, reflecting the importance of enhancing the efficiency of these processes to ensure their effectiveness and achieve a tangible impact on citizens' lives (Abdul Aziz, 2024).

The Ministry of Planning and Economy has identified a number of specific objectives for this planning, most notably: achieving comprehensive and integrated development, raising the efficiency of local institutions, improving infrastructure and services, and involving the private sector and the local community in planning and implementation processes. Meanwhile, the Projects and Performance Management Department within the Ministry undertakes multiple tasks related to drawing up plans, monitoring implementation, evaluating performance, and submitting periodic reports to decision-makers. (Ministry of Planning and Economy, 2022). An analysis of the project life cycle—as outlined in the Ministry of Planning documents—reveals the complexity of the local planning stages, beginning with setting priorities, proceeding to plan preparation, then supervision and follow-up, and ending with evaluation and closure. This integrated model reflects an institutional awareness of the importance of systematic planning, but it remains dependent on the ability of local authorities to understand and implement these stages effectively, which is one of the most prominent challenges addressed in this study.

Challenges in Developing Planning Techniques at the Local Level

Despite relative progress within the framework of national development policies, the process of planning programs and projects at the local level still faces a number of structural and implementation challenges that hinder its effectiveness. These challenges according to Masoud (2023), are distributed across several dimensions, related to the nature of the techniques used, available resources, and institutional capacities.

1. **Administrative and Institutional Challenges:** Poor coordination between central and local government agencies is one of the most prominent obstacles. Overlapping jurisdictions and multiple implementing agencies lead to wasted efforts and duplication of projects. Many local units also suffer from a lack of specialized planning competencies and poor professional training for social workers and local planners, which negatively impacts the quality of plans and their outcomes.
2. **Financial Challenges:** Official reports indicate limited funding resources allocated to local units and the absence of effective mechanisms to ensure sustainable project financing. Some planners also face difficulty preparing accurate budgets or redistributing resources according to actual community priorities.
3. **Technical and Technological Challenges:** These include the absence of modern measurement and monitoring tools, the weak use of key performance indicators (KPIs), and reliance on traditional models in project preparation. Furthermore, weak community communication and a lack of data collection and analysis tools lead to a gap between what is planned and the actual needs of the population.
4. **Environmental and Contextual Challenges:** Some regions face climatic or geographical challenges that hinder project implementation. Political and economic changes also affect the sustainability of some local initiatives and increase reliance on centralized decision-making, weakening the autonomy of local administration in adapting to local conditions.

Therefore, identifying these challenges is the first step towards providing a practical future vision that seeks to overcome them through innovative tools and techniques that are more flexible and responsive to the local context.

Analysis of Selected Models of Saudi Experiences in Local Planning

Over the past decade, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has introduced a number of major models and initiatives in the field of local planning, in an effort to achieve balanced development and improve the efficiency of infrastructure and services in rural and urban areas. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives is not measured

solely by the amount of funding or the number of projects, but also by the integration of the techniques used and their responsiveness to the actual needs of local communities. The following are some of the most important examples:

Within Saudi Vision 2030, the Kingdom focuses on local development in the regions, with the aim of reducing development disparities and stimulating balanced growth. Among the most prominent local development initiatives and projects in Saudi Arabia are:

1. **Regional Development Program (2021–present):** This program aims to provide development projects in less developed regions, including infrastructure, housing, health, and education (Ministry of Economy and Planning, 2023).
2. **Villages and Settlements Development Initiative:** Implementing road, water, electricity, and health center projects in remote villages, under the supervision of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs.
3. **Al-Ahsa Smart Oasis Project:** Aims to transform Al-Ahsa Governorate into a model for integrated smart development.
4. **Quality of Life Program:** Implements projects in cities and governorates, such as parks, sports facilities, and cultural facilities, to improve local living standards.
5. **Empowering Municipalities:** Granting greater financial and administrative powers to municipalities and secretariats to prioritize local projects (Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 2022).
6. **The Initiative to Support Crafts and Productive Families:** Through "Baree" and "Monsha'at," thousands of small local projects have been supported in various regions.

From the above, it can be said that these models highlight the diversity of development approaches. However, they also reveal gaps in the technical dimension of planning and the absence of a unified system of techniques that should guide local work, which the study seeks to address through its proposed vision.

Selected Lessons from International Experiences in Developing Planning Techniques

International experiences represent an important source of inspiration for effective approaches to developing program and project planning techniques, particularly in countries that have faced challenges similar to the Egyptian context, whether in terms of limited resources, diverse local environments, or the need for participatory and flexible models. The following is a review of the most important examples of the global experiences in program and project planning:

Microfinance Initiative in India. The Indian government provides financing for small projects through programs such as the Microfinance Institution, which aim to support small projects and provide employment opportunities for marginalized groups. (National Microfinance Corporation Annual Performance Reports, India, 2022).

The "Social Neighborhoods" program in Brazil. This program aims to improve living conditions in slums by building or improving infrastructure, teaching skills, and providing social support. (Brazilian Ministry of Planning and Social Development Report, 2022). **Smart Cities in Europe.** Many European cities, such as Amsterdam and Barcelona, are applying innovative technologies to promote social and economic sustainability in local communities. Smart data is being used to deliver more efficient public services such as transportation, health, and education (EU Smart Cities Projects Report, 2021).

The "Co-Financing" program in the United States. This program aims to enable local communities to participate in crowdfunding for local development projects through platforms such as Kickstarter and GoFundMe. This contributes to financing projects such as improving public facilities or supporting social projects (US Nonprofit Reports, 2022). **Canada's "Community Development".** This program relies on approaches geared toward engaging residents in the development process through collective action and stimulating local initiatives that contribute to improving the standard of living (Reports of the Ministry of Social Development of Canada, 2023).

Singapore's Sustainable Development Initiative implements innovative programs to improve the quality of life in local communities through sustainable urban planning that focuses on green spaces, renewable energy, and waste recycling (Reports of the National Environment Agency of Singapore, 2022). **China's "Rural Development"** initiative invests in rural development projects to provide job opportunities in remote areas, enhance village infrastructure, and improve education and healthcare (Report of the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture, 2023).

A Future Vision for Developing Social Programs and Project Planning Techniques at the Local Level:

In recent years, local communities have witnessed rapid developmental and social transformations, necessitating the development of planning tools, particularly "program and project planning techniques," to ensure sustainable development and promote social justice. Traditional methods are no longer sufficient to address contemporary challenges. It has become imperative to modernize these techniques to ensure a flexible response to community needs, based on scientific and participatory standards. In light of the state's adoption of major

strategies such as "Saudi Vision 2030," the need to renew the local planning system and develop its tools in line with the concepts of sustainable development and social accountability emerges. Hence, this study presents a future vision for the development of planning techniques, based on an analysis of reality, the construction of a conceptual map, and the identification of roles and mechanisms that ensure the transformation of planning from a traditional tool to a dynamic process based on innovation, knowledge, and foresight. This is as follows:

Firstly, the analysis of the current reality of program and project planning techniques at the local level. The analysis of reality indicates that program and project planning techniques at the local level still suffer from shortcomings, both conceptually and practically. Multiple challenges limit the effectiveness of these techniques, which can be summarized as follows:

1. **Weak Institutional Structure of Local Planning:** Many local units are characterized by fragile organizational structures and a lack of trained and specialized personnel in planning processes, which negatively impacts the quality of the techniques used and their responsiveness to community needs.
2. **Limited Community Participation in Planning:** Despite repeated calls for citizen involvement in the planning stages, the reality shows that planning is still conducted according to a centralized, top-down approach, which reduces the realism of implemented programs and projects and weakens community commitment to them.
3. **Lack of Effective Evaluation Tools for Planning Techniques:** Most local programs lack clear performance indicators that demonstrate the effectiveness of the techniques used, whether in terms of efficiency or impact, which hinders their development based on quantitative or qualitative evidence.
4. **Weak Knowledge Accumulation and Documentation:** There are no unified, systematic databases that monitor the techniques used across local units, which weakens the chances of learning from past experiences and repeating the same mistakes.
5. **Lack of a Forward-Looking Approach:** Planning techniques are still practiced in many contexts as a routine implementation tool, without truly incorporating future visions or proactive analysis of variables. This leaves programs vulnerable to failure when circumstances change.

Secondly, the foundations of the future vision. The intellectual and methodological foundations represent the cornerstone of constructing a future vision for developing program and project planning techniques at the local level. They serve as the frame of reference upon which the foresight process and identification of possible alternatives are based. This vision is based on a set of integrated foundations, most notably:

1. **Development Principles of Saudi Vision 2030:** The proposed future vision is fully aligned with the development dimensions of Saudi Vision 2030, which emphasizes sustainable local development, achieving spatial justice, and enhancing the efficiency of local administration through more flexible and comprehensive planning mechanisms.
2. **Structural Transformations in the Reality of Local Development:** The local environment is witnessing rapid changes in terms of social and economic challenges. This necessitates a reconsideration of traditional planning tools and a transition to more adaptable and innovative models that respond to the specificities of each local community.
3. **Accumulated Knowledge in the Social Work Profession:** The future vision is based on accumulated scientific and field experience in the field of social planning, both in theoretical research and in community applications. This enhances the effectiveness of employing planning techniques in local environments.
4. **The Principle of Community Participation as a Framework of Reference:** The vision is based on the premise that effective development planning is not achieved from the top down, but rather through activating the role of local residents in identifying needs and participating in decision-making. This requires the development of techniques that take participatory approaches into account at all project stages.
5. **Scientific Approach and Analytical Foresight:** This vision adheres to a scientific approach based on analyzing reality and extrapolating trends, using content analysis tools, leveraging previous studies, and employing modern planning models that have proven effective in similar contexts.

Thirdly, the determinants of developing social programs and project planning techniques at the local level. Developing social programs and project planning techniques at the local level cannot occur in an organizational or social vacuum. Rather, it is a complex process based on a set of interconnected determinants, which represent either supporting or challenging factors. These determinants must be carefully considered before formulating any future vision. The importance of these determinants lies in their role as the objective regulator of development paths and the practical guide for selecting appropriate mechanisms and means. Therefore, the determinants (obstacles/constraints) facing the development of social programs and project planning techniques at the local level in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, according to the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and Housing (2023) include the following:

1. **Limited Local Competencies in Social Planning.** The poor qualification of some local cadres in the use of modern planning tools and statistical analysis hinders the implementation of accurate, data-driven programs.
2. **Lack of Integration between Local Government Agencies.** Overlapping responsibilities between local administrations and limited horizontal coordination hinder the effectiveness of joint planning.
3. **Centralization of Decision-Making and Planning.** Despite the Kingdom's move toward decentralization, many decisions are made by central authorities, weakening regions' ability to design tailored solutions (Quality of Life Program, 2022).
4. **Limited Independent Local Funding:** Most financial resources are managed centrally, limiting regions' ability to implement flexible and rapid local development plans.

It is worth noting that a number of recent studies have highlighted the importance of renewing methodological tools in local planning. These include the study by Al-Hunaidi and Al-Harith (2022), which discussed the contributions of the planning and social development sectors to achieving Vision 2030; the study by Miloud (2022), which demonstrated the pivotal relationship between social planning and community development; and the study by Alawi (2022), which emphasized the participatory role of local government in achieving sustainable development. Together, these studies indicate the need for more flexible and efficient planning mechanisms in societies.

Fourthly, the foundations for developing techniques for planning social programs and projects. It is impossible to discuss the development of techniques for planning programs and projects without examining the intellectual and professional foundations that represent the theoretical and practical basis for this development. Techniques are not merely isolated procedural tools; rather, they reflect a broader vision of local planning and its role in achieving sustainable development, which requires the adoption of clear foundations that guide this development and regulate its pace. In this context, the process of developing techniques is based on four central foundations:

1. **Participatory Planning Pillar:** This pillar involves local stakeholders, including residents, institutions, and civil society, in all stages of program and project planning, from needs assessment to evaluation. This pillar enhances the legitimacy of planning and increases the effectiveness of techniques by aligning them with the priorities and specificities of local reality.
2. **Sustainable Development Pillar:** This pillar ensures that the development of techniques is not limited to the economic or time dimension alone, but also takes into account the environmental and social dimensions, achieving a balance between meeting the needs of the present without compromising the rights of future generations. Therefore, the developed techniques must incorporate the principle of sustainability in their construction and function.
3. **Good Governance Pillar:** This pillar indicates that techniques must be part of a planning system governed by the principles of transparency, accountability, efficiency, and participation. Technologies that are not implemented within an institutional governance environment may become mere formal procedures that do not have a qualitative impact on local planning.
4. **The Pillar of Digital and Knowledge Transformation:** In light of the accelerating digital transformations, it has become imperative for technologies to be technologically advanced, utilizing artificial intelligence, geographic information systems (GIS), predictive analytics, and other digital tools. This ensures accurate diagnosis, flexible implementation, and rapid evaluation. It should be noted that these pillars represent the reference framework upon which the future vision for developing technologies is built, helping to set the standards by which their efficiency and effectiveness are measured.

After examining the determinants and foundations, it becomes necessary to present a clear methodological vision of the required techniques, which is presented in the following paragraph.

Fifthly, the techniques required to develop local planning: These techniques represent the methodological foundation upon which any effective planning is based, especially at the local level, where variables are numerous and challenges vary between regions. The techniques here refer to the tools, procedures, and methodological approaches used by the social planner to analyze the local reality, determine priorities, allocate resources, and activate community participation, ensuring the design of more realistic programs and projects. In light of the major transformations undergone by local communities and the increasing reliance on participatory approaches, developing these techniques has become a strategic necessity to keep pace with changes. Based on an analysis of the development reality and with reference to the study's objectives, the most prominent required techniques can be highlighted as follows:

1. **Interactive Community Needs Diagnosis Technique:** It is no longer sufficient to use traditional tools based on general indicators or office data. It has become necessary to adopt modern techniques that rely on collecting accurate and up-to-date field data, using various tools such as focused interviews, structured observation, and digital questionnaires, while involving the population itself in the diagnosis process.

Diagnosing needs according to this model does not simply identify development gaps, but also aims to understand the social, psychological, and cultural contexts that produce these gaps.

2. **Stakeholder Analysis and Influence Mapping Technique:** This type of analysis is essential for contemporary local planning, as it ensures the identification of community actors (government agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector, and grassroots leaders) and analyzing the extent of each party's influence on the success of programs and projects. This analysis relies on advanced methodologies such as the power and influence matrix and the network map, which contribute to building partnerships based on integration and coordination and reducing duplication or conflict between different parties.
3. **SMART Goals:** This technique contributes to improving the quality of planning by transforming general visions into measurable operational goals that are realistic, clear, and time-bound. This technique helps control implementation, provides a basis for evaluating success, and enables executive teams to measure progress at each stage.
4. **Program Design Technique Based on Logical Framework Approach:** This is a planning technique that links program inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact through a logical matrix used in planning, monitoring, and evaluation. This technique helps build a comprehensive and interconnected vision of the project and enables supervising entities to track the long-term impact of projects and accurately identify shortcomings or successes.
5. **Results-Based Management (RBM):** This technique represents a qualitative shift in the evaluation philosophy from simply tracking activities to measuring results and impact. It requires developing clear performance indicators, linking funding to actual outcomes, and preparing interim and final evaluation reports used for institutional learning and continuous improvement.
6. **Efficient Local Resource Management:** The local environment often requires working within strict constraints in terms of funding, staff, or time. Therefore, one of the most important techniques required is the efficient management of available resources, through adopting participatory budgets, flexible time allocation plans, and alternative strategies for leveraging non-cash community support (such as volunteer resources, local expertise, and existing infrastructure). This technique contributes to enhancing sustainability and reducing dependence on external support.
7. **Scenario Mapping and Risk Assessment:** Local planning cannot be effective without the ability to anticipate risks and alternative scenarios. This technique relies on analyzing different environments (economic, political, climatic, social) to chart multiple paths for implementation, while developing contingency plans for each eventuality. This makes planning more flexible and responsive to shocks.
8. **Integrating Technology into Project Management:** Today, digital transformation is a pillar of contemporary planning. Adopting tools such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS), cloud databases, or digital monitoring platforms enhances planning accuracy, facilitates monitoring and evaluation, and enables community engagement through interactive survey tools or electronic portals. This technology not only contributes to combating corruption but also raises citizen confidence and increases the project's chances of success.
9. **Enhancing Transparency and Community Accountability:** Today, local planning requires tools that ensure the project's openness to the community and the accountability of its managers, such as publishing budgets, holding hearings, and activating feedback loops.

In light of these techniques, it becomes possible to build a comprehensive vision for developing local planning, one that goes beyond tools, but expands to include defining the roles, mechanisms, and supporting and implementing entities. This will be clarified in the next section of this future vision.

Sixthly, the proposed mechanisms for developing program and project planning techniques at the local level. To achieve the effectiveness of the development process, it is not sufficient to simply define the techniques; clear implementation mechanisms are also required to translate these techniques into applicable practical steps. The most prominent of these mechanisms can be identified in the following sections:

1. **Mechanism for Continuous Training for Local Planners:** Developing techniques requires investing in human resources by providing specialized training programs for social planners and those working in local development units. This includes enhancing data analysis skills, developing indicators, employing modern technology tools, and participatory planning, ensuring capacity renewal and adapting to transformations.
2. **Mechanism for Institutional and Organizational Support:** Activating planning techniques requires a flexible and decentralized institutional environment that empowers workers to make decisions based on their local context. This requires reviewing organizational structures, redistributing powers, facilitating horizontal coordination between various entities, and establishing local planning units capable of operating independently and in an integrated manner.

3. **Mechanism for Collecting and Analyzing Community Data:** The availability of accurate data is a prerequisite for any successful planning. Therefore, mechanisms must be implemented to monitor citizens' needs, analyze demographic models, migration patterns, and economic and social characteristics using advanced quantitative and qualitative tools. This data must be made available to planning agencies to ensure their responsiveness to changing realities.
4. **Mechanism for Activating Partnerships with Civil Society and the Private Sector:** Strategic partnerships represent one of the most prominent incentives for developing local planning, particularly in terms of funding, transfer of expertise, and expanding the scope of impact. This includes building frameworks for cooperation with civil society organizations, youth entities, and local companies, so that planning becomes a collective process that leverages community resources and shares responsibility.

Seventhly, the proposed tools for developing program and project planning techniques at the local level. Improving planning techniques at the local level requires adopting a suite of modern tools that integrate a participatory methodology and a scientific approach to development. The most prominent of these tools are:

1. **SWOT Analysis Tool:** Used to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within the local community, helping to make more informed and balanced planning decisions and identify priority areas for intervention.
2. **Questionnaires and Targeted Interviews:** These are essential tools for collecting data directly from the population, allowing for a deeper understanding of community problems and beneficiary preferences, and for use in formulating realistic and implementable programs and projects.
3. **Geographic Information Systems (GIS):** Allow planners to analyze the spatial relationships of resources and services and assess the environmental and social impacts of projects, contributing to more accurate decisions in resource allocation and prioritization.
4. **Balanced Scorecards (BSC):** These are used to evaluate the performance of programs and projects according to four main dimensions: finance, beneficiaries, internal processes, and learning and growth. They provide a basis for developing measurable and trackable performance indicators.

Eighthly, implementing a future vision for developing local planning techniques. The real challenge lies not only in formulating an ambitious vision but also in building a realistic roadmap that includes clear stages, defined roles, allocated resources, and precise mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. In light of this, this implementation map emerges as a strategic component complementing the vision, linking scientific analysis with real-world requirements and establishing a sustainable, practical path that contributes to raising the efficiency of local development performance.

1. **The Vision's Implementation Objectives:** This map seeks to translate the theoretical vision into a comprehensive implementation plan through the following: empowering local planning units with modern, flexible, and realistic tools and techniques. Enhancing community participation in the various planning stages, ensuring that programs align with the actual needs of the population, and integrating the principles of governance and accountability into the planning and implementation process of local projects.
2. **The Vision's Practical Implementation Axes:** To achieve effective implementation, this map proposes five interconnected axes, as follows: first, institutional structure. This involves establishing a specialized unit within each city called the "Planning Techniques Development Unit," tasked with adopting the vision and monitoring its implementation. And also establishing partnerships with local universities and research centers to provide technical support and ongoing training. Second, operational tools and mechanisms, which include developing a practical guide for new techniques (toolkit) that includes planning steps, participation methods, and measurement and evaluation techniques. Adopting local reality analysis tools (such as SWOT analysis, poverty maps, and social development indicators). Using digital applications and interactive maps to design and monitor the implementation of social programs and projects. Third, financing and resource allocation. This entails the "planning capacity development" item in annual local development budgets. Attracting funding from private sector initiatives, corporate social responsibility, and international development organizations. Encouraging donors to fund pilot, replicable experiences. Fourth, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This refers to developing SMART KPIs to measure the extent to which the objectives of new technologies are achieved. Forming local monitoring committees that include representatives from civil society and popular councils, and submitting an annual report to the Ministry of Local Development on the results of implementing the vision and the obstacles to implementation.
3. **Ensuring the Sustainability and Integration of the Vision:** This involves integrating the developed technologies into the job descriptions of local specialists and planners. Including training in the technologies within local leadership development programs. Incorporating the principles of the vision into

the curricula of colleges of social work, planning, and development. Networking with major national initiatives, such as the "Egyptian Rural Development Initiative," to ensure integrated efforts.

4. **Proposed timeline for implementing the vision:** this is divided into three successive phases, with an average timeframe of 12 to 24 months, allocated to: Phase 1 (6 months): Analyzing the reality, building a database, and enhancing staff capabilities. Phase 2 (8 months): Designing new technologies and piloting them on community samples. Phase 3 (6 to 10 months): Evaluating the experience, improving it, and gradually disseminating successful models.

This allocation takes into account time flexibility based on the capabilities of each local unit and the degree of institutional support available.

Ninthly, a proposed model for forming a local planning team. Within the framework of activating the future vision and implementing it on the ground, it is proposed to form a multidisciplinary local planning team, tasked with implementing the stages of developing the technologies according to the proposed roadmap. This team's composition should include representation from relevant professional and community groups, according to the following model:

Table 1: Proposed Model for forming a local planning team

Job	Specialization	The primary role in implementing the vision
Planning Coordinator	social worker	Managing the planning process and ensuring coordination between tasks
Data Analyst	statistical	Analyzing indicators and monitoring the performance of proposed techniques
Community representative	Local actor	Conveying the voice of the population and ensuring their needs are flexibly integrated
Evaluation and Tracking Expert	Evaluation and Tracking	Measuring the interim impact of the vision and providing feedback
Institutional Development Consultant	Strategic Management	Linking local implementation to national frameworks and development plans

This proposed training is a fundamental organizational step toward transforming the vision into a practical, implementable practice within diverse local environments. The training must be adapted to the nature of the community and the resources of the implementing agency. Figure 1 shows a mind map that includes the skills, roles, principles, and objectives for achieving the future vision for developing project planning techniques for local development in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



Figure 1: The mind map for achieving the future vision for developing project planning techniques

Finally, the Expected Impact of Implementing the Vision. The implementation of this future vision is expected to contribute to a number of qualitative impacts on local development performance, most notably:

1. Enhancing the efficiency of social planners in designing and implementing programs and projects.
2. Strengthening the principle of community participation in the planning and decision-making process.
3. Improving the utilization of available resources through flexible and accurate planning tools.
4. Increasing the degree of community acceptance of projects due to their alignment with population needs.
5. Facilitating monitoring and evaluation through clear, measurable tools.
6. These points can serve as an introduction to future studies that test the extent to which these impacts are being realized in the field.

CONCLUSION

Summary of the Main Findings

This study aims to provide an integrated future vision for developing the techniques used in planning social programs and projects at the local level. The research indicated that successful local planning is significantly dependent on robust community engagement. Involving citizens in the planning process results in more pertinent and sustainable development outcomes. It also illustrates substantial deficiencies in existing local planning methodologies, including inadequate stakeholder involvement and an absence of adaptive solutions tailored to the distinct requirements of communities. The results further demonstrated that local planning endeavors must correspond with national initiatives, such as Saudi Vision 2030, to guarantee consistency and bolster overarching developmental objectives. The findings also revealed a significant necessity for training and capacity-building programs for local planners and community leaders to provide them with the essential skills and knowledge for effective planning strategy implementation.

DISCUSSION OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

The study's findings aligned with Empel's (2008) research, which posited that modern planning theories recognize the importance of community participation in the development of the built environment, indicating that such involvement can lead to more sustainable outcomes. Participatory planning encourages community involvement, optimizes resource distribution, and cultivates local ownership and accountability, hence increasing the long-term efficacy of projects (Sebunya & Gichuki, 2024). Agyekum et al. (2022) pointed out that stakeholders aren't involved enough and that there aren't any adaptive strategies. They also said that the importance of stakeholders in Sustainable Procurement (SP) isn't properly recognized, which means that stakeholders don't take part much in the sustainable procurement of public works. Adaptive strategies can help people take part, and they can set the rules for communication and feedback. These rules include an intercultural approach (involving indigenous groups), an intergenerational perspective (combining traditional knowledge with modern information channels that appeal to youth), and recognizing how important it is to be sensitive to gender issues. These principles provide a basis for collective ownership of adaptation initiatives across stakeholders nationwide (United Nations, 2022). The local planning efforts must correspond with the national initiatives. Extensive research demonstrates the close connection between effective planning and national objectives. Gupta & Sigdel (2024) advocate for the necessity of local planning to align with the global SDG framework. The local community has not yet acknowledged the advantages of localization in successfully executing and attaining the SDGs. Local governments face numerous challenges, including insufficient ownership, limited financial resources, inadequate data aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, low institutional capacity, and ineffective coordination and collaboration. Following capacity-building training, Elias et al. (2024) found that teenagers' teamwork significantly improved as a result of gains in both training and building capacity. These illustrate the significance of training initiatives and capacity enhancement in community development.

IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

The results offer practical guidance for policymakers in Saudi Arabia and analogous environments, aiding the establishment of more successful local planning strategies that correspond with national development objectives such as Saudi Vision 2030. The paper emphasizes the necessity for training and capacity-building programs for municipal planners and community stakeholders. This recommendation may facilitate the development of training programs that improve planning skills and promote community involvement. The findings propose practical solutions for improving the allocation of scarce resources in local development projects through the promotion of effective resource management and the use of digital tools. Local governments and groups can directly implement the suggested planning strategies and procedures to increase the efficacy of social programs, guaranteeing that they are responsive to the needs and priorities of the community and, in the end, producing favorable results for all parties concerned.

The paper theoretically enhances the discourse on social planning by synthesizing old and contemporary planning methodologies. It underscores the necessity of tailoring planning strategies to local circumstances and community requirements, contesting traditional top-down approaches. The findings advocate for community involvement and engagement, supporting the creation of a theoretical framework that emphasizes local voices in the planning process and enhancing the literature on participatory governance and social justice. The research integrates sociology, social work, and development studies, emphasizing the interrelation of these disciplines in tackling local planning issues. This interdisciplinary method promotes further study that integrates perspectives

from several fields. The findings of this study include significant theoretical and practical consequences, providing a framework for advancing social planning theory and guiding successful, community-oriented development strategies.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER STUDY

This study provides detailed information about the reality and challenges of community development in Saudi Arabia; despite this information, it may not be fully generalizable. This is because of the specific documents involved in the content analysis, which may be limited and not fully capture all the documents related to community development across Saudi Arabia and the world at large. Furthermore, the content analysis method employed in this study may not permit a comprehensive analysis of the broader literature. Therefore, to further improve the quality of the research, a qualitative method based on interviews is required to explore the experience, views, and concerns of the people about community development and policy involvement. A quantitative method is also needed to examine the relationship between people's participation, satisfaction, and community development.

Conclusion Remarks

This future vision represents a scientific and practical response to the needs of the local development reality in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It was crystallized through a systematic analysis of existing planning techniques and the identification of gaps and opportunities offered by the current societal and institutional context. It sought to provide an integrated framework that integrates theoretical foundations and procedural strategies, enabling policymakers and program planners to use it as a guide in developing their tools and updating their practices. Translating this vision into tangible implementation plans requires an effective participatory system that includes government agencies, civil society institutions, the academic sector, and local actors. It is also essential to create a stimulating legislative and regulatory environment that embraces good governance, supports institutional innovation, and enhances the capabilities of working personnel through specialized and ongoing training programs.

This vision also opens new horizons for more dynamic and effective planning, based on trend forecasting and data analysis, focusing on the needs of citizens rather than administrative centralization, and measuring its impact through trackable and evaluable development indicators. The researchers hope that this vision will represent a cognitive and professional contribution that contributes to the development of local planning thought and paves the way for more just and sustainable development policies that enhance the value of community participation and link national goals with the real needs of local communities.

Therefore, the study contributes to existing knowledge by integrating digital tools and technology into planning approaches. This integration signifies a forward-thinking strategy, addressing the need for modern procedures in a rapidly evolving landscape. The paper transcends academic discourse by providing explicit operational procedures and tools for the implementation of the suggested planning methodologies, rendering the vision both actionable and pragmatic. This paper enhances social planning by merging theoretical concepts with practical solutions tailored to the local context, thereby encouraging community participation and sustainable development. Additionally, the paper presents a progressive vision that combines contemporary planning methodologies with traditional strategies, offering an innovative perspective on local development challenges that have not been captured

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declared that the study was carried out without any financial or commercial ties that might be interpreted as a potential conflict of interest.

Author Contributions

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