

Urban development planning

Urban growth is multifaceted. While it brings economic and development opportunities, it also puts pressure on the urban space, infrastructure and environment. Gender and generational relations change as new urban, often multi-ethnic, cultures emerge. The challenge is to balance different needs and interests, choose between different scenarios and guide development towards common goals including improved livelihoods for the urban poor.

Urban planning differs from country to country, but it generally encompasses controlling and enabling tools. **Controlling tools** include spatial plans, zoning and land subdivision regulations, building codes and standards, while **enabling tools** include public land acquisition and allocation, investment in public infrastructure, green spaces and service facilities, and stimulation of public-private partnerships. It is important to keep in mind that much city growth in developing countries happens outside authorised planning.

Key issues

Conventional urban planning and design skills are often inadequate to cope with urbanisation in developing countries where most planning legislation is inherited, in many cases from the colonial time, and not based on the actuality on the ground. Realistic urban development planning requires an **integrated approach** to cope with the complex reality and fast changing conditions. Planning tools need to be multi-disciplinary and participatory including women and men at all levels of decision-making. Services should be affordable and accessible for all inhabitants. Laws, regulations, policies and plans that facilitate access to land, hous-



FOTO: MAGNUS ROSSHAGEN

Informal settlements – the one above from Nairobi in Kenya – are parts of the urban fabric yet often neglected in the urban planning process.

ing and financial markets, particularly benefiting the poor and marginalised, need to be enforced.

Social aspects

Cities in developing countries experiencing economic and population growth will inevitably confront a physical expansion of the informal areas in particular, where the majority of the population is very poor. If current trends continue, the urban areas of developing countries will contain large unplanned areas with informal or illegal slums, characterised by unhealthy, poor quality housing, and lacking basic infrastructure, services and adequate transport systems. Especially affected by poor living environments are women, young people, children, and those living with diseases such as HIV/Aids. It is essential to involve them all in the planning process.

Economic aspects

Urban development planning could help manage and limit the drawbacks of the

inevitable urban expansion. Land-use plans and building codes are often inadequate or too restrictive, leading to an increase in informal settlements and markets. Spatial development plans backed by a realistic regulatory framework could direct urban growth towards a sustainable environmental, social and economic development. In many cities the informal sector delivers most economic growth and is normally based in the unplanned areas. It should be encouraged to gradually integrate into the formal economy.

Environmental aspects

Planning should address affordable and healthy housing, safe and efficient transport systems, social and technical services and access to economic development and job opportunities, while safeguarding natural resources and the historic environment. Adequate urban development planning, with short- and long-term perspectives, ensures that feasibly located, affordable, secure and accessible land is set aside for human settlement. The environmental impact of the planning should be considered at the outset, coupled with disaster prevention measures.

Democratic aspects

Local authorities are the key actors in planning but they need capacity development and institutional strengthening in order to use democratic planning tools such as participatory planning models, urbanisation statistics, multi-sector approaches, legislative tools, environmental assessment and public-private partnership. Civil society has a central role in planning; by expressing people's needs and demands; mobilising communities to participate in planning processes; and monitoring service delivery, observance of laws and systems for legal appeal. Equal participation of women and men is fundamental as is participation of different interest or ethnic groups. Likewise the

private sector, including the informal sector, should have a more instrumental role in urban planning. The media is important for information dissemination and public debate.

Strategic areas for support

Many national, federal and local governments have limited experience and expertise in adequate urban planning methods and implementation of practices that actually have a positive effect on the ground. Institutional strengthening and capacity development is the basis of urban development planning support. Other areas for support include:

- Develop land management systems at national and municipal levels, review land registration and cadastral systems and increase the use of GIS as a planning and revenue collection tool.
- Strengthen the revenue base for local authorities and create rational, transparent systems for allocating funds to municipalities for infrastructure investments and improved service delivery.
- Secure women's tenure rights, for example by using joint titling.
- Limit the urban sprawl through better use of existing space and through multi-storey buildings.
- Enhance capacity in environmental impact assessment methods, environmental management and sustainable development practices, including caring for historic environments, especially in post-disaster or conflict areas.
- Develop urban poverty indicators and carry out risk and vulnerability analyses, which consider gender, generational and health issues.
- Develop capacity to deliver reliable

and disaggregated urban statistics as a base for development planning.

- Use planning in disaster prevention and take into account the risk for natural disasters as well as geological and environmental site conditions.
- Develop and adopt urban planning laws, regulations and standards based on pro-poor approaches including building codes, low-cost housing regulations and affordable minimum standards specifications.

To be aware of

Urban growth brings a potential increase in **conflict** between environmental, economic, political, social and cultural interests as well as between the public and private sectors. Planning must counteract these tensions. The challenge is to support plans and standards that protect public interest, the local environment and the poor, and to balance private and public costs and interests.

Political commitment plays a significant role. Governments are rarely prepared for the ongoing urban growth as the planning horizon of politicians is often too short.

The distribution of responsibility and authority between levels of government is often ineffective and fiscal systems often need reforming. **Decentralisation** is rarely coupled with sufficient resource allocation or investment budgets, with smaller municipalities particularly suffering. Inadequate links between planning and budgeting often results in non-implementation of plans.

Local authorities lack creditworthiness due to inadequate fiscal and regulatory frameworks and capacity for revenue generation. **Low tax collection** rates result from people living on unregistered plots

where they are not recognised by the authorities, as well as inadequate and outdated mapping and non-computerised land management systems.

Examples of Sida Support

Lake Victoria region: Support to City Development Strategies (CDS) to form a more inclusive stakeholder process to reach a compact on essential development issues for cities.

South Africa: Support to Comprehensive Urban Planning and Integrated Development Planning in three municipalities for a wide range of projects within urban renewal, housing, public transport planning, traffic safety, waste management, HIV/Aids etc.

Kosovo: Support to capacity building in participatory spatial planning and preparation of municipal and urban development plans in six larger municipalities.

Albania: Assistance to revise the existing planning legislation for improved control of developers and private investors.

Bangladesh: Framework for development of plans and programmes for all public and private sector agencies within the Dhaka metropolitan area.

Sida references

Available at www.sida.se

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Tannerfeldt, G and Ljung, P (2006) *More Urban – Less Poor, An introduction to urban development and management*, London, Earthscan

REMINDERS

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| ☐ Is there sufficient political will to carry out long-term development planning? | ☐ Are there mechanisms for civil society and public participation? Have all relevant stakeholders been considered, including poor women and men, youth, children and disabled? | ☐ Have the roles of private and public actors (including the informal sector) been properly defined? |
| ☐ Is there institutional capacity to manage urban development planning? | ☐ Are there innovative approaches to improve women's and youth's visibility | ☐ Are the plans adapted to local conditions, including the risk of natural disaster? |
| ☐ Is there relevant legislation or regulations in place and are they properly implemented? | | |
| ☐ Are reliable and updated maps, basic | | |