III URBAN POVERTY REDUCTION

Though the reduction and elimination of poverty is of major concern for national governments as well as international and bilateral aid and assistance agencies, it has only recently been seen as having an urgent urban dimension. The increasing shift to an urbanised population will also mean an increase in the numbers of urban poor, and that urban rather than rural poverty will become of greater overall significance. The nature of urban poverty is less well understood and actions for its reduction less well tested. Studies of the coping mechanisms, vulnerability and notions of urban sustainability are only recently beginning to be converted into policy. This section focuses on how action at the urban level, as part of urban management, can have an effective an immediate impact on poverty reduction both through direct action and by tackling the impact and consequences of poverty.

The informal sector has managed to cater for much of the increased demand and needs to be supported and strengthened so that it can provide more effective employment and earnings. The extension of mutual and micro-credit schemes and mechanisms need to become more widespread in urban areas than they are at present. These need to be supported by the necessary enabling legislation and regulatory and operational frameworks at all levels of government, primarily the local level.

A large, and often major, part of the earnings of urban households goes towards accessing municipal services, land and shelter. Any reduction in the costs of accessing these has a direct bearing on the amount of disposable income available to an urban household, and therefore has an obvious impact on poverty.

Studies carried out as part of the UMP have shown the particularly vulnerable situation of the poor, especially of women and children. At different times, particular groups in society have been systematically excluded, leading to an increase in social disintegration. UMPstudies and examples are used to suggest how cities can reverse this trend and increase social integration as part of an anti poverty measure of urban management.

IIIa EMPLOYMENT, CREDIT, AND THE INFORMAL SECTOR

BACKGROUND

The urbanisation of poverty

Along with the relative shift in balance between the rural and urban populations of the world, there has been an equally dramatic shift in the location of poverty. Whereas until recently, the majority of the world's population was rural, and the majority of the world's poor were also in rural areas, this is no longer the case. Both the majority of the world's poor and the worst of poverty are increasingly to be found in urban areas. According to some estimates, as much as 60% of the urban population in some countries is below the poverty line, and between 30 and 40% of the urban populations of all regions, in or close to life-threatening poverty levels.

The definition of poverty varies, but the concepts of absolute and relative poverty are easily understood, notwithstanding problems of definition and measurement. However, poverty is more than merely a state of not having enough or sufficient for survival or as much as other people may have. Poverty is also a case of perception, both personally and by others. The perceptions of poverty also define access and exclusion from a variety of social and physical services, and help define status. The presence and existence of poverty is an obstacle to participating in and contributing to urban living, and impacts negatively on the resources of urban local governments.

Poverty and urban resources

The reduction, alleviation and elimination of poverty have to be one of the integral concerns of urban management, not least because the extent and level of poverty directly affects its operational ability and viability. On the one hand, the existence of large numbers of poor or widespread poverty reduces the number and proportion of households that are able and willing to pay for urban goods and services, thereby reducing the city's income and income-generating possibilities. On the other, since municipalities and local governments are increasingly obliged to meet the essential and basic shelter and service needs of the poorer households, and if these have to be provided at no, low or subsidised rates, then there is a strain on the budgetary capabilities of local governments, reducing their ability to be active and effective in other areas.

Box IIIa) 1

Some Basic Poverty Definitions

HUMAN POVERTY	The lack of essential human capabilities, such as being literate or adequately nourished.
INCOME POVERTY	he lack of minimally adequate income or expenditures.
EXTRENIE POVERTY	Indigence or destitution, usually specifled as the inability to satisfy even minimum food needs
OVERALLPOVERTY	A less severe level of poverty; usually designed to compare the extent of poverty across different countries. Often this term is used loosely to denote extreme poverty.
RELATIVE POVERTY	Poverty defined by standards that can change across countries or over time. An example is a poverty line set at one-half of mean per capita income - implying that the line can rise along with income. Another example is a poverty line whose real value stays the same over time so as to determine changes in poverty in one country. Often this term is used loosely to mean overall poverty.
ABSOLUTE POVERTY	Poverty defined by a fixed standard. An example is the international one-dollar-a-day poverty line - which is defined as the inability to satisfy essential nonfood as well as food needs. The definition of essential nonfood needs can vary significantly across countries.

UNDPPoverty report 1998

The informal sector and the urban economy

Although the causes of poverty and its extent and persistence may be dependent largely on actions and events outside its jurisdiction and control, the actions of urban management can and do have a direct impact on poverty.

The extent and impact of poverty on urban populations, as well as on urban and national economies would be much greater and far more severe were it not for the presence and operations of the informal sector. Variously described as unregulated, largely self-employed and small-scale activities, this previously "hidden" or "unrecognised" part of the economy often provides a source of employment for as much as 60% of the urban population, and may well serve the needs of an equally high proportion of citizens through the provision of goods and services.

Numerous studies in a variety of contexts have established that the informal sector is better integrated with and recognised by the formal sector than its dichotomous title would suggest. It has been shown that it is far more buoyant and elastic in absorbing an increasing urban labour force and providing employment than the formal sector. It has a number of other advantages over the formal sector. Due to its small-scale of operations and low levels of capitalisation, it can not only provide employment at a far lower cost per job, but also requires fewer skills or training. Coupled with a lack of regulation and controls, the ease of entry makes it an ideal vehicle for the absorption of newcomers to the labour force and rural-urban migrants.

In particular, when economies have been affected by the impact of structural adjustment or that of the global economy, it has been mainly the informal sector that has provided the safety net with a source of income for those made redundant or unemployed.

Limitations of the informal sector

However, the informal sector has its problems and limitations. Firstly, the low-productivity nature of the sector means that the income and earning levels are for the most part lower than are possible in the formal sector. Secondly, the very nature of the sector makes earnings both more erratic and intermittent. Thirdly, the irregular and often illegal nature of many of its activities make them subject to official harassment or persecution as well as prone to Mafia-style protection rackets. Fourthly, the unregulated nature of the sector makes it difficult, and perhaps impossible to obtain access to credit or other facilities necessary for increasing earnings or moving up or out of the sector. Fifthly, the informal nature of many of the activities makes it difficult protect those who are engaged in them, whether as paid workers or as unpaid family members. One much-publicised example is that of child-labour where the "rights of the child" may be in direct conflict with the survival strategies of the family. Finally, almost by definition, the informal sector does not contribute its share of (local) taxation.

Within the informal sector, there are also a range of opportunities and earning possibilities. Naturally those with the greatest earning possibilities and the least effort or discomfort are taken up most readily. It is not surprising that many of those who are forced to move into the sector, especially

Box IIIa) 2
Informal Waste Pickers and Urban Management

As with many cities in the region, continuous urban expansion and population growth in Amman, the capital of Jordan and its largest urban centre, are straining the city's infrastructure network beyond existing capacities. The solid waste management system is a case in point. Increasing amounts of solid waste are being generated in the capital; these are collected haphazardly and disposed of in open and unplanned dump sites located at the edge of the city.

Groups of informal waste pickers, representing the poorest sector of the urban population, have begun to settle around these dumping areas. They make a meagre living by retrieving and selling reusable waste materials. Elsewhere in the city, increasing numbers of waste pickers can be seen rifling through waste bins in search of food and resaleable materials. The informal waste pickers of Amman belong to the traditional poor, i.e., those who are part of a multi-generation pattern of poverty. The Jordan Panel identified them as a priority target for any attempt to break the urban poverty cycle.

To address the growing problem of solid waste management in the city, the Municipality of Amman launched a solid waste management project whose centrepiece was the construction of a recycling plant. The UMPCountry Panel believed that inclusion of the waste pickers in the recycling project presented a unique opportunity to improve their socio-economic situation. Their exclusion, on the other hand, would have deprived them of their only source of livelihood.

Accordingly, the Panel initiated a consultation process to promote the participation of waste pickers in recycling. A first step in the consultation process was a meeting held on October 15, 1997 to officially launch the project, agree on a course for implementation with the partners, and introduce the project to the general public. The meeting was hosted by the Municipality of Amman and attended by representatives of government, the private sector, and NGOs. During the meeting, the Municipality made a commitment to support the project, while private sector representatives demonstrated interest in financially contributing to the activity. An important outcome of the meeting was that the respective responsibilities of the various partners were clearly outlined.

The consultation process has been completed and the action plan is currently being implemented. The Jordan panel was able to encourage a policy shift on the part of the Municipality, which now views the waste pickers as partners/actors in solving Amman's solid waste management problems. The panel was also successful in mobilising resources for the implementation of the action plan. The Municipality of Amman has donated a plot of land for the plant; the British Embassy has agreed to finance the cost of the plastic shredding machines; and several experts have offered their time and expertise to follow up on the production process.

UMP-ASR

following the impact of structural adjustment, recession or other such reasons outside the control of the individual, are unable to do so at the more lucrative and desirable end. For many, entering the informal sector during periods of general economic decline or crisis is likely to be a coping mechanism, part of a survival strategy, or as a last resort. For women this is most likely to focus on domestic and other service employment, while for men this means self-employment. Households are also likely to aim to increase the numbers of those engaged in income-earning activities rather than being engaged in non-waged activities or at school. The influx of greater numbers into the informal sector reduces their earnings capacity, and many may find themselves severely under-employed.

ISSUES

Poverty and urban management

The issue for urban management is not one of whether or not it should tackle poverty and unemployment. Nor whether or not it has or can and should obtain or acquire the mandate to do so. The activities of urban local authorities have an impact on the level and extent of poverty and earnings capacities and possibilities and certainly on the impact and consequences of poverty. The issue therefore is to understand the relationship and consequences of urban management and poverty and to work towards lessening the negative impact while creating opportunities for poverty reduction and elimination.

The key to poverty reduction and eradication lies in productive employment and income generation. While little headway can be made without sustained, broad-based economic growth at the national level, flexible and well-trained labour, the process can be aided by supply-side inputs such as access to credit, information and markets.

Poverty eradication programmes have tended to operate, and to be applied at two levels. One, at the macro level, which involves policy and programme interventions defined and implemented by central government and includes investment, subsidy, pricing and credit. Two, at the micro level which involves working directly with community groups in supporting a variety of activities including credit, basic infrastructure and slum upgrading, micro-enterprise development and strengthening community participation. Traditionally the first has been more targeted by the international agencies and development banks working with national governments, while the second has been promoted and supported more by NGOs and CBOs working with donor agencies. Inreasingly, international agencies such UNDP are supporting poverty reduction activities at the local level.

Involving local government in anti-poverty action

There is a need to open and advocate work at a third, intermediate level, that of the municipalities, which could translate national policies and programmes into local action, and lend support to the activities of local and community-level actions and activities, including income and employment generation, access to credit for micro-enterprise and support to the informal sector.

Local government also has the opportunity to act on poverty reduction measures whereby specific manifestations of poverty are systematically reduced, resulting in short and long-term conditions. This could include improving access to housing and basic urban services through land tenure, housing, housing finance and area upgrading and improvement schemes (see section III b below).

For local governments, intervention on poverty reduction requires neither a change in mandate nor of powers, and may not necessarily require additional funding. Particularly if a participatory approach is used that works in partnership with local communities and NGOs, existing resources can be more efficiently deployed to undertake poverty reduction measures.

However, local government action may be made difficult or constrained by financial and/or political dependence on central government or a lack of clarity of functions and responsibilities or a coherent policy for addressing urban poverty.

To undertake poverty eradication programmes, changes in responsibilities and the authority to act as a financial intermediary may require initiating a dialogue with central government. The need for generating and increasing access to financial resources may also require a change in powers.

Options for Action

Once a local government or municipality is ready, willing and able to develop and implement poverty eradication programmes, the following options should be investigated.

1 Opportunities for employment generation through municipal works should be examined.

A number of countries such as Pakistan, Egypt, Colombia, Jamaica, and Sri Lanka have successfully implemented programmes of community-based small-scale public works and contracts. Some cities have made the relative employment generated an explicit criteria for assessing and evaluating all bids for municipal tenders and contracts. The participation of women, especially as managers, supervisors, storekeepers etc. should not be overlooked while their general participation and involvement should be encouraged.

2 Support informal sector activities

Local government must recognise the contribution the informal sector makes to employment and income generation and should remove regulatory impediments limiting the opportunities for informal sector operations such as hawkers, traders, and waste recyclers to enhance the economics of their activities.

3 Establish credit for small scale and micro-enterprises

Credit for small scale and micro-enterprises should be established, preferably through providing funds for on-lending to NGOs, CBOs, or by providing guarantees for them to financial institutions, rather than embark-

Box IIIa) 3
Integrated Policy Reduction Strategies
Promoting Full Citizenship as a Poverty Alleviation Mechanism

"DIGNIFIED HOMES" HOME IMPROVEMENTLOANS
This proposal for an alternative financial system for the low-income inhabitants of Maracaibo was born from a long-standing involvement of a local university in low-income settlements, the experience of a local NGO and the decision of the Mayor's Office of Maracaibo to develop innovating policies and programs to strengthen participatory governance and to eradicate poverty in the city. The proposal was endorsed by the UMPwhose mandate is to support local governments in Latin American countries in their efforts to promote participation and equity and to foster the economic development of urban sectors in a state of critical poverty. UMP's support came in the form of direct involvement of the regional coordinator at crucial points in the process, as well as constant oversight and assessment by UMP-LAC's anchoring institution in the area of urban poverty, Cearah Periferia, which itself has significant experience in the area of credit for popular housing.

During the consultation process and prior to the implementation of the plan, the urban actors interested in this type of project were identified. These include the Asociación Civil "Nuevo Amanecer" (attached to CESAP), the Escuela de Vecinos de Venezuela, the University of Zulia, the Pastorales Sociales, the Rotary Club of Maracaibo, private banks, etc. With the objective of developing funding alternatives for low-income population, the participating actors reached an agreement on the following points:

- Promoting the involvement of beneficiaries in all stages of the process;
- Strengthening community organizations;
- Fostering the generation of a culture of savings among the poorest populations;
- Democratising loan access as a tool poverty reduction tool;
- Enhancing the municipal housing subsidy;
- Working with the lower-income population, particularly households headed by women with no access to formal credit;
- Establishing an interinstitutional arrangement for the joint work of public powers, community-based organizations, social movements, NGOs, universities, and the private sector;
- Designing a systems approach that, with the appropriate funding, will be capable of making home improvements for underprivileged sectors, increasing productive and consumer processes, and providing emergency aid;
- Training social actors involved in social conflict settlement and negotiation processes, and in concrete community social projects;
- Granting individual and collective loans to groups of 10 to 25 households, requested by community-based neighborhood organizations.

As a result of the "Dignified Homes" program and the city consultation, the mayor has committed to providing funds for 1000 credits.
UMP-LAC

ing upon a municipal banking operation. Biases against women either as borrowers or as entrepreneurs should be actively removed.

4 Mitigate impact of economic shocks

Emergency credit facilities (small, very short-term loans available on a fast-track basis, triggered by general rather than particular circumstances) should be made available to reduce the vulnerability of low-income households and businesses to withstand economic shocks and fluctuations in market conditions.

5 Provide marketing advice and information

Credit schemes and facilities should be linked to marketing, market intelligence, information and advice centres.

6 Provide training and capacity building

Vocational and other practical training and skills development and capacity building courses and opportunities should be provided. These should particularly focus on and encourage the participation of women, incorporating child-care, crèche facilities, and other such provisions without which their participation is severely constrained.

7 Provide security of tenure

Providing security of tenure for "owner-occupiers" in illegal settlements greatly increases the value of their assets and their ability to access credit. It also reduces the risks of eviction thereby encouraging investment in plant and equipment, particularly that associated with manufacturing or assembly. Provision of titles or security of tenure to women, rather than men, often has a greater multiplier impact on improvements and income generation.

8 Provide business networking and information exchange to micro-enterprises

Assistance and advice should be made available on business networking and exchange of information amongst micro-enterprises as well as vertically with other up- and down-stream enterprises. This would facilitate in-business support, as well as encourage enterprises to move up the value-adding ladder, perhaps through joint, collaborative or co-operative actions and initiatives.

9 Form "chambers of micro-commerce"

Local government could also assist in the formation of "chambers of micro-commerce" through which it can have a direct channel of communications and feedback for its activities and support to employment generation and poverty eradication programmes. While these have not been formed to date, the UMP assisted Micro Credit support programme in Quito, Ecuador, may develop in this direction.

10. Assess impact of municipal regulations on micro-economic activities

Municipalities should monitor the operation of land-use and zoning regulations and infrastructure provision to support and facilitate marketing, manufacturing and employment generation activities.

Further information

UMP 20 Policy Programme Options for Urban Poverty Reduction: A Framework for Action at the Municipal Government Level. Franz Vanderschueren, Emiel Wegelin and Kadmiel Wekwete. ISBN 0-8213-3716-5, 55 pages, published September 1996

UMP-Africa papers nrs. 1-5

UMP-Asia Occasional Paper nr. 29 Clarence Shubert, 1996;

IIIb ACCESS TO URBAN SERVICES AND LAND

BACKGROUND

Limited access to land and urban services by the urban poor

The poor, like other urban dwellers, need access to municipal services, as access to such services directly influences their living conditions, and particularly impacts on their health status. Apart from that, if it is argued that housing has a vital role to play in the survival strategy of the poor, it is evident that well-serviced housing with secure land tenure fulfils that role much more effectively than inaccessible housing with doubtful chances of obtaining a land title and devoid of water supply and reasonable sanitary conditions[22] .

The poor essentially face the problem of limited access to all the above municipal services: poor neighbourhoods are usually not the first targets for road upgrading, water supply, sewerage, drainage or municipal solid waste collection. Usually women (or girls) bear the brunt of such inadequacies in water supply, sanitation, drainage and garbage collection, and often fail to get their needs and priorities recognised in community dialogue.

Unaffordable standards

Such exclusion is exacerbated by the near-universal tendency to set design and service standards (and hence capital costs) at levels unaffordable by the city (further limiting expansion of service networks) and by the poor. A related design factor further limiting access by the poor is constituted by the fact that municipal infrastructure and services are often not designed to allow for incremental upgrading as poor communities improve and their incomes and affordability to pay for services increase.

In consequence, by virtue of such exclusion from formal delivery systems, subsidies for municipal infrastructure and services, even if well intended, often do not reach the urban poor, but are pre-empted by middle and higher income groups served by the system. Often, effective community level organisations have been established for neighbourhood services provision and management in poor areas in many cities. However, these community initiatives are often not recognised and effectively linked into municipal delivery networks, thus reducing the provision effectiveness of the entire system, and adversely affecting cost-recovery potential.

a) Water supply

ISSUES

Disparity in access

Invariably there is a disparity in the access to formal water supply facilities between different income groups in urban areas. The poor tend to have lower levels of access and poorer quality of water. Additionally, in many cities, per capita water supply to the poorer sections of the population is much below the recommended minimum.

This disparity is aggravated by the fact that formal supply is generally subsidised in a non-discriminating or insufficiently discriminating manner, thus effectively having the result that not only is there a disparity in water supply coverage, but also in the accrual of the benefits of the subsidy.

For those services which can be individualised and for which a price can be charged

[22] Vanderschueren, Franz, Emiel Wegelin and Kadmiel Wekwete, 1996, Policy Programme Options for Urban Poverty Reduction: a framework for action at the municipal level, UNDP/UNCHS/World Bank - Urban Management Programme policy framework paper no. 20

(not only water supply, but also solid waste collection and public transport), inadequate and subsidised municipal/public supply to poor neighbourhoods is usually substituted for by informal sector supply - in the case of water supply mostly through brokers and vendors, often drawing on the same bulk water supply sources as the public supply system.

Informal supply of drinking water is usually provided at prices, which the low-income market can bear. In having to rely on such mechanisms, the poor usually end up paying more per unit (say a litre of drinking water) for comparable services, or for services of lower quality than the better off, who have access to the subsidised public system (see Box III b) 1 for price differential estimates in a number of cities in developing countries).

Box IIIb) 1
Differentials in the cost of water in selected cities
(ratio of price charged by water vendors to prices charged by the public utility):

City	Price ratio
Abidjan	5:1
Dhaka	12:1 to 25:1
Istanbul	10:1
Kampala	4:1 to 9:1
Karachi	28:1 to 83:1
Lagos	4:1 to 10:1
Lima	17:1
Lome	7:1 to 10:1
Nairobi	7:1 to 11:1
Port-au-Price	17:1 to 100:1
Surabaya	20:1 to 60:1
Tegucigalpa	16:1 to 34:1

Source: World Bank World Development Report, 1988

Options for Action

1 Undertake a market survey of demand for water

In designing municipal water supply systems, it is important that the starting point is a well-designed market survey of demand for water by all segments of the population to be served, including the urban poor, who, as indicated above, have often much higher ability and willingness to pay than is assumed by water agencies (viz. amounts actually paid per unit consumed).

Low-income households sometimes share a water meter if they live in apartment buildings or compounds that they share with others. Households without connections often obtain their water from public systems indirectly, purchasing it either from neighbours who do have connections or from water vendors. The practice of resale of publicly supplied water, rather than being prohibited, should be legalised and encouraged, as it will not only enhance the water supply agency's net revenues (both through higher sales, as well as through reductions in administrative and technically unaccounted for water), but also will tend to drive down water vendors' prices (reducing the possible extent of rent-seeking).

2 Incorporate community participation in system design

A high level of community participation in the planning, implementation and subsequent management (operation and maintenance as well as collection of charges) of small water supply systems, or the tertiary distribution end of large systems will ensure that supply will be better targeted to community demands and also safeguard operation and maintenance of the network.

Such participation should involve training at the community level as well as of the local water agency's staff.

3 The introduction of community and shared standpipes should be promoted in the following ways:

1. by providing specific central and/or local government subsidies for the installation of water supply networks incorporating publicly accessible taps (community or shared standpipes), without such subsidies adversely affecting the financial results of the water agency (which would provide a disincentive to the agency to provide them);
2. by promoting community management of such standpipes, including the encouragement of water sale at remunerative levels for the operators; this again would reduce vendors' rent seeking.

Sanitation and solid waste management.

ISSUES

Human waste management

The disparity and the gap between lower and upper income levels in terms of sanitation facilities is generally significantly higher than in the case of water. Latrine facilities are more common in the higher income brackets, as are flush latrines connected to the sewerage system. Where sewerage systems exist, these are often managed and maintained by the municipality and a nominal user charge is levied on the households. So, like in the case of water supply, subsidised sanitation facilities are often available to relatively well-off sections of the population. These not only have the privilege of latrine facilities but also their exclusive use. The pattern for poor households is just the opposite, with shared facilities being common.

However, it is often somewhat easier for the urban poor to develop their own neighbourhood solutions to sanitation deficiencies than to water deficiencies (unless there are abundant shallow well resources available, centrally provided bulk water supply is unavoidable), both through individual house-hold arrangements (such as the conventional hiring of sweepers for both solid and human waste disposal, as is common throughout the South Asian sub-continent, and through the implementation of on-plot low-cost sanitation solutions such as soak-pits) or on a neighbourhood or community basis (examples are communal toilets, shallow lane sewers and collective community solid waste collection arrangements, often on a lane basis).

Solid Waste Management

Often there is little public recognition of existing community activities in waste collection and recycling, and of the economic functions these activities have for the poor. In consequence, desirable support to and linking of such "informal" activities with the formal municipal waste collection and disposal system does not.

Options for action

1 Separate focus of municipal and community responsibilities

The local government must recognise the distinction between public provision and community provision, and in doing so devote its scarce resources to focus direct public provision only on sewage treatment, the trunk sewer system and main collector lines, and on disposal sites and main routes in the solid waste collection system. The neighbourhood level of sewage and solid waste disposal can be dealt with by community-based solutions such as the above-mentioned; municipal regulations and practices should stimulate such solutions rather than prohibit them or considering them second-rate.

2 Promote municipal-community cooperation

The local government must actively promote municipal-NGO/CBO co-operation at the interface of public and community based disposal and recycling elements. This is critical considering that the majority of the poor live in informal and unserviced areas and that a significant number of the urban poor derive their income from such community based disposal and recycling activities.

ISSUES

Public health and primary health care.

Primary health care, comprising both preventive measures (health education, environmental health awareness and immunisation campaigns) and curative facilities at neighbourhood level, though often a statutory municipal function, has not generally been well integrated with other municipal services and has generally not adequately been targeted at or adapted to urban poor neighbourhoods. As a result, the urban poor lack access. This is partly because in some countries primary health care is seen as an extension of the rural-oriented national health care system, rather than as an element of municipal services. Although local governments almost universally are responsible for the maintenance of public health within their jurisdictions, this is usually narrowly interpreted as a responsibility for cleanliness of streets, abattoirs and public markets. Hence, where this applies, primary health care often is dispensed under the auspices of the ministry of health, rather than by the municipalities.

As in the case of other municipal services, provision of primary health care has also been hampered by the conflict between provision standards and financial constraints, effectively further limiting access by the poor.

Options for action

1 Stimulate the provision of primary health care to low-income neighbourhoods

Municipalities need to stimulate the provision of appropriate primary health care, particularly targeted to low-income (slum) neighbourhoods. This may take the form of direct provision of such services (clinics, doctors, nurses, primary health care workers and training them, medicines and information materials) by the municipality or supporting and (re-)directing the efforts of others, including provision of services by the health department, private commercial entities and NGO/CBOs. Training of local health volunteers may also be particularly beneficial.

2 Set more modest, appropriate standards

Provision standards should be modest, with strong emphasis on trained community residents to provide preventive measures, including environmental health awareness/information campaigns in conjunction with the provision of sanitation services (such campaigns have proven particularly effective in conjunction with solid waste collection services).

3 Integrate primary health care with other neighbourhood infrastructure provision

As much as possible, primary health care should be integrated with the provision of neighbourhood infrastructure affecting public health (water supply, sanitation, including solid waste disposal, roads and footpaths, drainage and flood prevention) in slum areas. Effectively this would mean that primary health care would become a regular element of slum upgrading.

Primary education and vocational training

Literacy and vocational training are two basic factors, which enable poor children to be prepared for entry into the primary labour market. Primary education plays a crucial role in the social and economic integration of children into a city or a nation. In addition, the level of education of girls not only contributes to their employment potential, but also constitutes the most important variable for family planning and health care to be successfully implemented.

The experience of the last decade indicates that the percentage of drop-out or illiterate youngsters originating from low-income families is increasing in some countries. Where this is the case, this is largely caused by affordability problems, sometimes exacerbated by a decrease in quality of primary education.

ISSUES

In many countries the responsibility for primary education and vocational training is split between central/provincial governments, municipal government, the private sector and voluntary agencies. This is often not the result of a conscious policy decision to distribute responsibilities based on comparative advantages, but more of an accident of history. As a result, typically, low-income areas are usually under-endowed with primary education facilities, teachers and training materials.

The lack of public investment in the development or maintenance of schools in poor areas limits coverage and quality of primary education. Where this is compensated for by private/NGO activities, such schools often

suffer from similar quality deficiencies and from lack of government recognition.

In some cities, poor children are not going to school or drop-out very early. Quite often, children need to work to support their families, being unable to go to school. Among low-income families, school is no longer perceived as a way for social mobility and therefore is losing its function of a vehicle for the social integration of poor families.

The lack of qualified teachers - aggravated by the shift from teaching to other more profitable activities or private sector schools for well-off families, further reduces the quality of primary education. This further contributes to enlarging the gap between social classes.

Vocational schools have limited outreach due to lack of resources to buy appropriate equipment and many children from poor urban families have no option but to get their technical background from the poor technical environment of the micro-enterprises.

Options for action

1 Target primary school provision and supply

Municipal investment in education should target primary schools and the quality of teachers, equipment and environment, as these areas of concern generally fall at least in part within the orbit of statutory municipal responsibilities. As much as possible, primary education should be integrated with the provision of other services such as health services or neighbourhood infrastructure in slums.

2 Offset indirect costs of school attendance

Local government could provide additional incentives to encourage children in poor neighbourhoods to attend school, such as the provision of breakfast at school (many children are going to school without having eaten), subsidies for school uniforms, for basic school material (pens, pencils, notebooks, books -some materials from better-endowed schools can be recycled).

3 Encourage parents' participation in education management

The municipality could encourage participation of parents in the support of or management of primary schools. Some primary schools built by residents with the support of the municipality or the private sector have become cultural centres or meeting places for the families. The municipality could also encourage more effective control on school attendance (basically an important social control) as a way of reinforcing parental responsibilities.

4 Support adult and youth literacy campaigns and programmes

The municipality could promote short courses for illiterates - children or adults, to be organised by NGOs, CBOs, and religious structures and organisations. Home-based schools for girls should be developed by NGOs and CBOs with municipal support and encouragement in those socio-cultural environments in which the formal education system does not reach girls from poor families.

5 Support private and community ventures

Local government could promote and encourage the private (formal and informal) sector to provide vocational training.

Impediments to recognition of private/ CBO/home (primary) schools should be removed, so that such schools will have access to regular government support for curriculum development and teaching materials and that their pupils can transfer credits to formal government schools.

e) Urban Transport

Availability of public (formal and informal) transport is of significant importance in the survival strategies of the urban poor. Availability of transport has an important bearing on the question of access to employment and markets. In many cities of the developing world public transport systems are poorly developed and therefore need to be complemented by private operators, some of whom are not officially registered. Municipalities have the power to issue (sometimes in conjunction with central government) operating permits, road/routing licences and impose operating conditions.

ISSUES

Access to employment and markets are often a problem for the urban poor, because they typically live in informal, unplanned areas relatively far away from job opportunities, which are often poorly serviced by roads.

The costs of both formal and informal public transport are often prohibitive to the urban poor (particularly in African cities), confining their transport options to walking long distances in search of income opportunities. This has become particularly acute in countries facing economic recession. It has also led to restrictions on mobility and a premium on proximity: social and economic activities tend to be restricted to the neighbourhood within walking distance.

Municipalities (and central governments) usually lack resources to develop mass transport systems to adequately service urban areas. Prevalent public transport systems are often highly inefficient. Where such systems are subsidised, these subsidies more often than not accrue to the middle class rather than to the poor, who often do not have easy access to the transport routes.

Box IIIb) 2

Guiding principles for Urban transport – the Lessons from Curitiba

- Effective urban transportation does not develop in isolation from a city's evolving settlement pattern, it integrates the individual activities that contribute to urban change
- Transportation development and land use controls are powerful tools for guiding the quality and quantity of growth along desired lines: a city must know where it is going and why.
- Quality transportation places a first priority on an effective system rather than on a particular mode of transportation.
- Land use controls and transportation must complement each other and promote an easy interchange of people between their different activities.
- An explicit hierarchy of roads and streets support peoples'demands for access to services and for residential quality of life.
- A sustainable city is one that wastes the least and conserves the maximum, for example through recycling.
- Smaller incremental steps towards an explicit long-term goal can bring about large changes.
- With an incremental approach, analysis, improvement and implementation are continuous, interactive process.
- Creativity, information and recycling are often substitutes for financial resources, but sustainable decisions are financially sound.
- A sustainable transportation system is a partnership between government, the private sector and citizens.

Rabinovitch, J.and Hoehn, J,ASustainable Transportation System: the Surface Metro in Curitiba, Brazil. M.S.U., 1995

In some cities municipalities impose severe restrictions on the operations of private operators of minibuses and non-motorised informal means of public transport (becaks, rickshaws), which the poor can afford, and which are able to service poor neighbourhoods effectively.

Options for action

1. Make better use of existing instruments

The authorities in charge of transport, including municipalities, have a number of instruments at their disposal to direct public transport supply and to manage the coexistence of various forms of public transport. Such instruments could be used in developing a coherent urban public transport strategy, as e.g. demonstrated in the well-known example of Curitiba in Brazil:

- physical organisation and design of street furniture, including roads design, layout of bus stops, location of transfer stations;
- technical control of roadworthiness of vehicles;
- terms and conditions of operating licences, including mandatory routings and rates to be charged;
- terms and conditions for financing of vehicles purchase;
- acknowledgement of professional organisations of owners, drivers and assistants;
- dissemination of information on users demand, supply and transport safety.

2. Incorporate and support the informal sector

In most cities of the developing world it has been recognised that the role of private informal transport operators is crucial in the provision of public transport services to the cities. In Africa, most municipalities now facilitate the operation of such informal transport systems, although there are often problems regulating such operators. Municipalities could facilitate the development of effective formal and informal public transport systems in order to maximise access by urban residents including the poor.

3 Encourage competition between public and private sectors

Local government may influence the effective functioning of public transport systems, by encouraging healthy competition between the public and private sectors, while still retaining a measure of control over route coverage and fees charged through the judicious application of terms and conditions of operating licences. Municipalities should encourage the private sector to be efficient and remove unnecessary harassment and penalties for operators. The local authority may also negotiate intermodal or interline arrangements to reduce the rates of a specific trip.

4. Support non-formal modes

Local government should support non-formal modes of transport wherever possible, and create appropriate infrastructure for bicycling and other non-motorised forms of transport.

Non-motorised transport, such as bicycles, should be considered as forming part and parcel of a long term urban transport solution and therefore investments should be oriented towards this way of transport. Walking is a main way of transport for the urban poor, suggesting significant investments in walkways and rearrangements of public space in favour of pedestrians.

Specific types of short distance popular transport (e.g. rickshaws, becak, motoconchos) could be encouraged and regulated after negotiations between users, operators (drivers and owners) and the municipality, both in the interest of providing safe, cheap and convenient public transport for short distances, and in the interest of creating low-income employment. Safety should be ensured by enforcing traffic rules, as well as by checking the level of maintenance and source of pollution of public transport vehicles.

5 Introduce and use traffic management measures more effectively

Local government can take a host of (traffic management) measures to eliminate traffic jams and to encourage the utilisation of bus transport instead of private cars, such as the designation of reserved routes for buses or public transport, regulation of parking places, implementing toll roads in some areas, operation of traffic lights control from public buses, modification of labour timetables. The benefits of these measures should be transferred to the users and particularly to poor users.

6 Integrate Land-use and transport planning

Many of the problems of traffic and transport arise because of the lack of co-ordination and integration between transport planning and land-use planning. Often, the inadequacies and shortcomings of land-use planning have to be made good by the introduction of transportation systems. A better integrated land-use planning system would reduce the need for many of the journeys, especially those to work, shopping and schools.

BOX IIIb) 3

Syria -- Informal Settlement Upgrading

Unregulated urban growth in the Arab States region combined with housing policies that fail to meet the needs of the poor are encouraging the growth of informal settlements. In Damascus, for example, informal housing has become a permanent architectural feature of large sections of the city's perimeter, where an estimated 13 informal settlements are rapidly expanding. In response to the urgent need to upgrade informal housing and improve basic services in these settlements, the Syrian Country Panel has embarked on a long-term effort to develop appropriate policies and programmes. The Panel selected the area of Tabali in Damascus as a starting point for its work. The Tabali area suffers from many of the problems characterizing informal settlements in the region. These include:

- misuse of land
- high population density, overcrowding and lack of privacy
- poor housing and living conditions, including a general lack of facilities
- poor quality utilities and inadequate basic infrastructure (especially water, sewerage and electricity networks)
- insufficient social services and cultural and recreational facilities
- poor accessibility

The Panel carried out a comprehensive study of the area, including an assessment of the capacity of existing organizations to function as partners in project implementation. Based on the findings, an integrated plan for the upgrading of the settlement was produced. The plan proposed the use of funds from both the UMPand the Syrian government. Upgrading of the settlement began in January 1995, at a total estimated cost of US$ 13.2 million, financed entirely by the Syrian government. Large sections of the water, sewage, road, and telephone networks have been constructed, and the electricity network has been repaired. In parallel to the state-sponsored infrastructure improvements, UMP-Syria developed a women's income-generation project as well as a solid waste management activity.

The Syrian Panel has been successful in shifting the government's approach toward informal settlements, as evidenced by the replication of the Tabali experience in other parts of the city. The dialogue created with the government on this issue has been kept open. At the request of the Governorate of Damascus, the Panel is now organizing both city and country-based consultations to develop national and city-wide policy frameworks for the upgrading of informal settlements. The Consultation process, which has already been launched, aims to incorporate lessons learnt at the national and regional levels through a review and evaluation of ongoing upgrading efforts.

UMP-ASR

f) Other infrastructure provision

For other municipal services and infrastructure, such as roads, drainage and flood protection, similar lack of access by the poor and problems of standards apply. These are often more serious than for water and sanitation, public health care and urban transport, because the absence of the direct cost-recovery option in principle precludes the possibility that such services can be provided in a free-standing, financially sustainable way. Instead, provision levels depend on the limited financial and institutional capability of local governments or specialised delivery agencies, such as development authorities, public works departments of higher levels of government, and on the priority such provision enjoys among these agencies' other development spending options.

g) Neighbourhood Infrastructure and Land Tenure in Slum Areas

ISSUES

Upgrading of slum areas is one of the prongs of the enabling approach to improving the environmental conditions of the urban poor. In many countries municipalities have been the lead agencies in implementing such schemes. Slum upgrading programmes have generally comprised neighbourhood infra--structure upgrading (generally including the provision and/or upgrading of walkways, micro-drainage, neighbourhood water supply distribution, solid waste collection, and some times communal sanitation), often complemented by legalisation of land tenure, and sometimes dovetailed with a home improvement loan-and/or small business development loan scheme.

However, upgrading slum/squatter areas is a highly politicised activity and requires active mobilisation of communities and sensitisation regarding the long term sustainability issues. Often, upgrading is carried out as an ad-hoc and short term project activity and therefore does not address the real problems of supply and demand of shelter and services.

Upgrading of slum areas tends to concentrate purely on physical upgrading and often fails to address social and economic issues. In many slum areas, the poor suffer a multiplicity of problems, which cannot be addressed simply through providing infrastructure. So there is a need for a more comprehensive approach to upgrading, including social (particularly primary health care and education) and economic services. Yet where this has been attempted, additional complications have often arisen. For instance, where small business development loans provision is included in the upgrading programme, there is often a co-ordination problem between the agencies involved (usually the municipality and one or more financial institutions). Similarly, where programmes have included explicit measures to legalise land tenure, the complexity of managing this alongside services and infrastructure tend to multiply (particularly where such land titling is intended to directly contribute to cost recovery of infrastructure investments) has proven difficult.

There is an apparent incongruence between the need for cost-recovery and the need to keep solutions affordable for the urban poor. Programmes which do not have a land tenure regularisation component have generally relied on indirect cost-recovery through local (mainly land/property) taxa-

tion, or have accepted that neighbourhood infrastructure is a part of the wider urban infra-structure network and their associated financing problems, and that therefore cost-recovery in the narrow context of slum upgrading is not appropriate.

Options for action

1. Municipalities should continue to initiate and support slum upgrading schemes.

The overwhelming evidence is that such schemes have led to a moderate acceleration of the normal, organic process of low-income settlement formation and consolidation, including the provision of neighbourhood infrastructure. It is important to view upgrading as an ongoing process facilitating employment and income generating opportunities.

In doing so, increased cooperation with neighbourhood associations and other CBOs and NGOs will be necessary in making such schemes more demand-oriented and cost effective. Infrastructure investment priority setting and financing of investments and O&M would be done through shared responsibility with the community, instead of for the community.

BOX IIIb) 4 *Access of the Urban Poor to Land*

In most Arab countries, rapid rates of urbanization have limited the access of low-income populations to land. Land prices in major Arab cities have soared, pushing the poor to urban peripheries where they are able to buy land through clandestine land markets. Informal settlements have sprouted around most major Arab cities, demonstrating central and local government loss of control over the urban development process. Such settlements are characterized by: insecure tenure, lack of urban services and infrastructure, low quality construction, and difficult access to resources. Residents usually suffer from a low standard of living and poor quality of life, and are deprived of opportunities they would have enjoyed in more planned settlements.

During the early half of 1995, an Inter-Regional Workshop on "Land Management Regularization Policies, and Local Development in Africa and the Arab States" was held in Abidjan. In a meeting held immediately following the workshop, the Arab delegates identified regional priorities and outlined an action plan for the development of coordinated, country-based land management initiatives. As a result, an ongoing dialogue to define the pertinent issues in each of the participating countries has been initiated. Activities arising from this dialogue focused on developing a regional strategy for urban land management, generating policy change, and initiating concrete actions. Consultations on land regularization and policy reform have been implemented in Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. Information collected and experience gained through these country-based initiatives will be consolidated into a policy paper, to be disseminated through the UMPnetwork.

The case of Amman illustrates some of the problems of urban land management in the region. In Jordan, misguided master planning by municipalities in the past has led to distortions in the land market. Under current zoning practices and regulations, nearly all the land within Amman's municipal boundaries is zoned to suit the needs of upper middle to upper income households, which represent only a small proportion of the demand. As a result, large tracts of urban land remain undeveloped. In effect, the poor are denied access to affordable lots, which forces them to squat on public and private land.

To rectify this situation, the UMPJordan Country Panel proposed the "down zoning" of large plots of land. The panel carried out a feasibility study for the down zoning of two sites, one in Amman and the other in Irbid, and presented a series of recommendations for increasing the access of the poor to land. The recommendations met with strong resistance from the local authorities. The Panel concluded that a more structured and systematic approach was required to persuade policy makers of the merits of down-zoning. Accordingly, a revised study for rezoning a new site in Amman was developed, and a city consultation was subsequently held. The goal of the city consultation was to persuade the Municipality to formally agree to implement the proposed reforms at the city level. It consisted of a series of informal meetings, which took place over the course of a year. These meetings fostered an ongoing dialogue between the UMPpanel, the Municipality of Amman and other stakeholders. As a result, the recommendations of the revised study were adopted and implemented by the Municipality. The Municipality is currently reviewing all its zoning regulations to ensure that they reflect the existing and actual demand for land.

A country consultation was held with mayors and decision makers representing 10 municipalities. The consultation aimed at sharing the results of the city consultation and sensitising participants to the socioeconomic benefits of providing an adequate supply of residential land for their low-income populations. All the mayors present expressed strong support for down-zoning, an indication that UMP-Jordan activities have resulted in a shift in thinking regarding land management issues in Jordan.

UMP-ASR

2. Municipalities need to ensure adequate security of land tenure.

Security of tenure is essential to avoid eviction/displacement of low-income residents and to safeguard the sustainability of the physical investment both in households' shelter and in infrastructure (box III b) 4). Without such security, residents are unlikely to participate in or make their own investments in upgrading. Municipalities need to enhance the intrinsic cost-effectiveness of such schemes by ensuring that such neighbourhood schemes are adequately linked into major trunk infrastructure.

Further Information

UMP 20 Policy Programme Options for Urban Poverty Reduction: a Framework for Action at the Municipal Government Level. Franz Vanderschueren, Emiel Wegelin and Kadmiel Wekwete.
ISBN 0-8213-3716-5, 55 pages, published September 1996

UMP-Africa papers nrs. 1-5

UMP-Asia Occasional paper nr. 29, Clarence Shubert, 1996;

IIIc VULNERABILITY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION/ INTEGRATION

BACKGROUND

Understanding and measuring poverty

Over the last few years, a large proportion of the global development effort has gone to the eradication of poverty. As part of this effort, a number of studies have been carried out to define poverty. These studies helped move the debate very quickly away from notions of poverty that were based on a particular level of income, suggesting that income could not be held to such a rigid indicator. The use of income as an indicator of poverty was replaced by relating poverty to a basket of goods and services that could be purchased at a particular location, and those that could not afford the minimum required for an acceptable level of existence were identified as the poor. Other studies tried to develop indicators and to measure poverty amongst different groups of households. In particular the prevalence of poverty amongst disadvantaged groups and the impact of poverty on particular groups was studied. Amongst these groups were women and women-headed households who were shown to be doubly affected, by both their gender and their low levels of income.

Increasingly scholars are concluding that poverty is both more extensive and more elusive in its definition as well as in its eradication. This is not just because of notions of relative poverty that would still leave the current poor less able to afford the acceptable levels of goods and services since the acceptable level itself was subjective and subject to change.

Yet without an acceptable, working definition of poverty it is neither possible to assess whom needs assisting, nor can suitable responses be designed that would reach the poor. Being able to identify the poor would also help to identify and study the strategies that the poor themselves use to overcome or minimise the impact of poverty. These could then be built upon to develop viable anti-poverty and poverty-eradication policy measures.

The concept of vulnerability

Studies carried out by the Urban Management Programme[23], and those based on them[24], are suggesting that instead of defining and measuring poverty, a better understanding can be gained through the concept of vulnerability. Unlike poverty, vulnerability is a dynamic concept that reflects households' perceptions and situations to their socio-economic environment and their resilience to it. Vulnerability better captures the sense of threat and the pressures felt and experienced by particular groups. Without access to an adequate store of assets, households find it difficult to survive. These assets are more than just financial assets and include individual (labour and human capital), household (housing and housing relations) as well as community (networks, infrastructure) assets that can be built up and accumulated and that are needed to fend off vulnerability. The vulnerability of particular households within society can be greater if they belong to a particular caste, ethnic group or even occupation, or if they do not conform to the "norms" of that society, as in the case of women-headed households, pavement dwellers or street children. For such groups, the community assets available to other households may be denied them, leading to their isolation and exclusion. Such social exclusion, or the pressures of vulnerability, may in turn lead to a disintegration of the household, and even of society.

ISSUES

Social exclusion

Many of those socially excluded are not amongst the poorest, but because of the way these groups are viewed by society, they are unable to avail of the facilities and measures that may be in place for poverty alleviation.

Similarly, it is not that all those who are poor are also vulnerable, nor that all those who are vulnerable are poor. Vulnerability is as much a matter of perception as of reality.

Ironically, municipalities often embark on campaigns to "clean up" the city, removing pavement dwellings and street children off the streets. Such actions also destroy many of the very networks and social structures that support and sustain these groups. While such action increases vulnerability, pushing these groups out of sight does nothing to solve the problem, but makes it even more difficult to locate and target.

[23] Moser, C. et al, Household Responses to Poverty and Vulnerability, Volumes 1 to 4, UMP Policy Papers.
[24] Moser, C. Confrontin Crisis: A Comparative Study of Household Responses to Poverty and Vulnerability in Four Urban Poor Communities, ESD Studies and Monographs, The World Bank, 1996

Options for Action

1. Improve access to land, shelter and urban services

The impact of poverty can be considerably lessened through the actions of the municipality in the provision of access to land, shelter and urban services (see Section IIIa, above).

2. Increase awareness against discriminatory practices

The municipality should act in concert with social and religious organisations and activists to overcome prejudices and behaviour that isolates and discriminates against particular groups and initiate and endorse policies and programmes of reintegration.

3. Set up an information gathering process

The municipality needs to be engaged in a constant process of information and intelligence gathering in order to improve its understanding of vulnerability and social exclusion so that it can take appropriate action.

4. Enter into dialogue with the vulnerable

The municipality should engage in dialogue with the vulnerable and the socially excluded to develop participatory programmes of support and action.

BOX IIIc) 1
Urban Poverty Reduction in Abidjan

OBJECTIVES
- Elaboration of a municipal plan for urban poverty reduction, adopted by the municipal council in the four municipalities;
- improved capacity and competence of experts and technical agents in implementing the project in the municipalities;
- development, testing and use of practical training and sensitisation programmes for municipal agents, local experts and beneficiaries involved in the implementation of micro projects;
- development of proposals to improve the efficiency of the project and of future municipal urban poverty reduction activities.

CITYCONSULTATION PROCESS
The project began its first operational phase with a public consultation, under supervision by BNETD, the project executing agency. The public consultation involved all segments of the population and started in July 1997 in Port Bouet, finishing in October 1997 in Bingerville. This first phase of the project allowed each municipality involved in the project to develop its Municipal Action Plan for the fight against urban poverty. These plans were officially accepted by the municipalities in March 1997. A participatory method was used for the elaboration of these municipal documents, which are composed of :
- An urban poverty profile;
- A long term action plan over 10 years;
- An operation plan over 3 years.

The second phase of the project, which has already started includes the implementation of micro projects, as follows:
1. Standard Micro projects in the four municipalities

A The setting up of a micro loan facility ($50,000) to allow the beneficiaries to implement their micro projects. The project management and follow up for this micro loan activity has been given to a NGO specialising in micro finance.

B Training of municipal environmental health and hygiene officers. Upon completion of their training the officers were supplied with modes of transport, protective work clothing and equipment in order to facilitate their daily work.

C The establishment of a system to lend primary school books to children who would otherwise not be able to afford them. This system is managed by the municipal development unit in partnership with the primary schools.

2 Specific micro project for each of the municipalities
Bingerville: The rehabilitation of the youth cultural center. Port Bouet: Creation of a legal assistance center. Abobo and Adjame:Activities to improve urban security have been entrusted to the urban security in Abidjan project (UNCHS).

UMP-Africa

5. Assist the formation of groups and associations of the poor and the vulnerable

Such groups should be encouraged and assisted to form associations in order to strengthen their ability to act collectively, thereby reducing their vulnerability and lessening their exclusion.

The experience of groups such as SEWA and the Bombay Pavement Dwellers have shown that it is possible for even the poorest to come together, engage in small-scale savings and micro-credit operations and gradually help themselves to overcome poverty and reduce vulnerability.

6. Eliminate legal and social constraints to access

The municipality should work towards eliminating legal and social conventions and constraints for women and other socially disadvantaged groups from entering the labour market, or from access to land, shelter and urban services.

7. Strengthen and support peoples' efforts

Wherever possible, policies and measures should support and strengthen peoples' efforts, complementing rather than replacing them. Priority should be given to long term sustainable strategies in preference to short-term hand-outs and compensatory measures.

Further Information

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