IV URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

The growing world-wide concern for the environment gave rise to the Rio conference which adopted Agenda 21. It also saw the emergence of the concept of Local Agenda 21, and the need to draw up local plans for environmental management accordingly. As cities grow, there is increasing emphasis on ensuring that the sort of environmental pollution that accompanied earlier urbanisation is not repeated. More importantly, for many cities, it is the "brown agenda", sanitation, drainage and the disposal of solid wastes that is particularly important. The provision of urban infrastructure, including water supply, flood protection, as well as air and water pollution, are covered in this section, along with the concomitant issues of public health, etc. However, the issue here is their management and maintenance and operations rather than their engineering design and installation. The focus is on how these should be dealt with through decentralised, participatory and partnership oriented processes that extend the reach and scope of these services to all sectors of society. Also covered is the conservation, protection and management of cultural heritage, much of which is manifest by buildings, monuments and urban areas that are often under threat from environmental pollution and degradation as much as the pressures of urban populations.

IVa URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Municipal services generally comprise water supply, sanitation (including solid waste management), drainage, flood protection, local roads, public transport, street lighting and traffic management.

It is clear that the critical issues in these areas relate to their management and operations[25] . Design issues are related to these and to affordability issues. Recommended priorities for municipal interventions in the broad sectoral area of municipal infrastructure and services, as distilled from sectoral issues and potential areas for sector-specific municipal interventions are discussed in detail below.

Water Supply

ISSUES

Cost recovery

To the extent that such subsidies result in aggregate provision at price levels below provision costs, the sustainability of the system over time is also at risk, with shortfalls occurring in network extension possibilities as well as in O&M of the existing network; this tends to aggravate access disparities even further. The usual concern about the poor is usually misplaced since they are either not connected or already paying a higher price for water than the better-off.

Standards

This is aggravated by the standards issue: frequently systems are designed to deliver unduly high levels of water per capita in areas served, thus further reducing possi-bilities to extend service to areas as yet unserved (a case may, however, be made for targeted over-dimensioning of water mains to anticipate future replacement of initially-provided public, shared or communal water taps by individual house connections as incomes rise).

In many cities, therefore, the picture which emerges with respect to water supply is that of a system supplying subsidised water in relatively large quantities to those who do not really need such subsidised provision.

Obviously there is least check on such situations if water is not priced per unit actually consumed (e.g. because of practical difficulties to install and/or operate a metering system), but on the basis of house floor space or rental value, which provides no incentive to economise on water use.

Options for action.

1.Encourage accountability

The intervention possibilities of government are closely tied to the institutional position of the entity delivering formal water supply to the city's population. In some cases this is a department in the municipality, but more often than not it is a semi-autonomous body, partly or wholly owned by the municipality. A separate legal entity for the provision of water supply is preferable from an administrative point of view, in the sense that it stimulates accountability and financial policies which enhance sustainability of O&M and expansion of the system; such policies are a necessary but not sufficient condition for enhancing equity in water supply delivery.

[25] For an over view of issues, see: William F. Fox, Strategic Options for Urban Infrastructure Management, UMP Policy Paper # 17, 1994; George Peterson, G. Thomas Kingsley and Jeffrey P. Telgarsky, Multi Sectoral Investment Planning, UMP Working Paper nr. 3, June 1994; P. Gidman, I. Blore, J. Lorentzen, P. Schuttenbelt, Public-Private Partnerships in Urban Infrastructure Services, UMP Working Paper nr. 4, January 1995

2. Establish and manage demand

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 (vis. amounts actually paid per unit consumed). However, attention must be paid to managing demand, through curbing water wastage, minimising leakage and spillage, all of which tend to increase with supply.

3. Safeguard equity

To safeguard equity, the municipality needs to have some influence over water pricing. In the interest of sustainability, water pricing must be based on the marginal provision costs of additional supply in the aggregate. To stimulate economising on water consumption, there must be a clear relationship between quantities consumed and amounts due by consumers. In detailing this in practice, some progressivity in water tariffs could additionally enhance the equity of the pricing system, provided it is easily enforceable (for instance, the price of water in the initial block of consumption may be set at a lower, cross-subsidised rate to ensure that the poor are not discouraged from using the amount of water essential for human needs). Simple water meters, along with appropriate rates, which adequately safeguard against tampering and efficient billing and collection systems, are essential to economise on water use.

It may be argued that either the government or water companies should pre-finance meter installation costs and gradually recover the cost through the monthly water bill. In this way, low-income households, too, can be provided with a meter.

4. Incorporate community participation

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.

5. Set more appropriate, affordable standards

If the municipality is in a position to determine system design standards, it may set more appropriate (usually more moderate than those in force) standards of water delivery per capita, thus enhancing population coverage of the network and its extension. As noted above, appropriate standards may include deliberate, but targeted overdimensioning of water mains to anticipate future replacement of initially provided communal water taps by individual house connections as incomes rise.

Sanitation and Solid Waste Management.

ISSUES

Human waste management

The constraints operative on public provision of sanitation services (as for water) are largely a combination of the financial and institutional inability to adequately operate and maintain existing systems and to extend such systems into low-income areas, in combination with unrealistically high design standards of provision. Unlike for water, once the system is designed and in operation, individual "consumption" levels can only vary between being served or not being served by the system. Where sewerage and/or solid waste charges are incorporated in water charges (often done out of collection convenience, as the supply agencies often have responsibility both for water and sanitation services), financial sustainability of sanitation operations becomes dependent on the effectiveness of the water charges collection system.

Solid waste management

In almost all municipalities around the world, solid waste management is a major municipal function, which is insufficiently and unreliably performed, with major problems in collection as well as in the availability and conditions of final disposal sites. Lack of attention to waste minimisation exacerbates this problem.

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

Insufficient segregation of toxic/industrial waste from household waste and inadequate procedures for separate disposal adversely affect health conditions of both residue and garbage handlers.

Options for action

1. Separate public and community responsibilities

Since the neighbourhood level of sewage and solid waste disposal can be dealt with by community-based solutions (see section III b above); municipal regulations and practices should stimulate such solutions rather than prohibit them or considering them second-rate. Direct public provision could therefore focus mainly on sewage treatment, the trunk sewer system and main collector lines, and on disposal sites and main routes in the solid waste collection system.

2. Adopt appropriate standards

With respect to the public part of the disposal system: to adopt appropriate design standards, bearing a clear relation to the likely amount of waste water and solid waste (and its composition) that can be expected. In most cases this will entail a scaling down of existing design standards in the interest of increased coverage.

3. Recover costs

In as much as possible adopting the marginal cost pricing principle for the public part of the sanitation system; in practice this is most effectively done through surcharges on consumption-based water charges.

4. Increase environmental awareness

Without further investment in plant and equipment, municipalities can improve the management of their solid waste through working at the community level (with environmental NGOs and with CBOs) to develop an enhanced appreciation of the importance of environmental cleanliness and a reduction in the amount of waste produced, as well as to pre-collect and organise local waste; and they can encourage small-scale composting to be used for urban agriculture. Through imaginative and flexible zoning regulations and other incentives they can encourage private waste-recycling industries, while integrating both recycling and formal waste management.

Other physical infrastructure provision

For other municipal services and infrastructure, such as roads, drainage and flood protection, similar provision standard issues apply. These are often more serious than for water and sanitation, 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.

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, as noted in section III b above. 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.

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

Options for action

1. Municipalities need to stimulate the provision of appropriate primary health care to complement water and sanitation infrastructure.

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 modest, achievable 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 health care provision with other neighbourhood infrastructure

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)

ISSUES

City-Wide Integrated Municipal Services Planning, Programming and Delivery

The environmental impact of isolated neighbourhood upgrading alone will be limited in the absence of an effective hook-up to city-wide infrastructure/services systems. Problems are often encountered at the trunk end of the municipal infrastructure provision, for instance in organising safe final garbage disposal sites, in developing effective city-wide drainage and sewerage systems, including adequate treatment facilities.

Additionally, there is the issue of service interrelationships: parallel sectoral planning and programming has often lead to mismatches between supply and demand. The cost-effectiveness of municipal service delivery is potentially improved if the above services are planned, programmed and delivered in an integrated way. This is intuitively evident in a physical sense: e.g. the effectiveness of a drainage system is obviously enhanced if solid waste management deficiencies are simul-taneously addressed, so that new drains will not immediately get clogged as a result of indiscriminately dumped garbage.

Likewise, a sewerage system will not function without levels of water consumption /supply adequate for self flushing of the sewers by the waste water generated from the households. Perhaps more important, however, are the potential socio-economic and financial benefits through improvements in the effectiveness, equity and transparency of inter-sectoral priority setting for investments and O&M.

Options for action

1. Increase community participation in planning and development

Municipalities should increasingly plan and programme the development of municipal services in an integrated and participatory way, with the maximum extent of community participation possible. To do this effectively, in many cases the planning, programming and budgeting capabilities of municipalities must be enhanced.

Municipalities particularly need to enhance the intrinsic cost-effectiveness of community-based sanitation and solid waste collection schemes by ensuring that such neighbourhood schemes are adequately linked into major trunk infrastructure. In this pursuit, municipalities need to perceive communities and NGO/CBOs as potential partners in the planning and programming process, inter alia, to facilitate the search for innovative solutions.

Such integrated planning and programming may explicitly provide for the design of infrastructure and services that are upgradable over time.

2. Integrate infrastructure provision with land development

Provision of municipal infrastructure and services such as local roads, electricity and water supply, drainage, sewerage/sanitation, garbage collection and disposal, and public transport needs to be carried out in conjunction with and in support of new residential land development to maximise the benefits of infrastructure and services supply and to facilitate efficient land utilisation.

Through infrastructure and services provision/denial the local government will be able to guide the direction and pattern of urban growth away from areas where settlement is dangerous (e.g. hill-sites where there are substantial risks of landslides) or provision of services prohibitively expensive. This provision policy needs to be unambiguously clear and consistent, and needs to be supported by the regulatory framework concerned with land titling/subdivision and planning and building control.

Further Information

UMP 17Strategic Options for Urban Infrastructure Management. William F. Fox
ISBN 0-8213-2826-3, 88 pages, published June 1994

UMP 18 Toward Environmental Strategies for Cities: Policy Considerations for Urban Environmental Management in Developing Countries. Carl Bartone, Janis Bernstein, Josef Leitmann, Jochen Eigen. ISBN 0-8213-2827-1, 116 pages, published June 1994

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IVb URBAN PUBLIC HEALTH

BACKGROUND

Urbanisation and health

The health impact of living in cities has often been held up as cause for concern. This is particularly so for those with low incomes who may be forced to live in dense, environmentally poor and poorly serviced areas. Indeed, it was one of the stimuli for the earliest town planning legislation in Britain. The clauses and stipulations of that legislation still provide the basis and the model for many of the current planning regulations of cities around the world.

There is a direct link between the living environment and the health risks and diseases that a person may be exposed to. However, the actual level and state of health depends on a large number of complex and inter-related factors. Of these, a 1992 study[26] emphasised the following four

- The physical/biological environment;
- Disposable income
- Behaviour
- Availability of quality health care services

The paper cautioned that "the effect of these four factors are so closely intertwined that it is misleading to consider them in isolation. In particular, the impact of the physical environment on health is mediated largely by human behaviour, and the effects of changing income on both these is very important[27]."

In summarising its findings, the paper noted that "notwithstanding the obvious gaps in the information available and the uniqueness of each city's health status, the review does suggest a stylised urban health profile that provides a useful point of departure for analysing health conditions in a specific city.

- In contrast to higher income urban dwellers and some rural populations, the urban poor have a lower life expectancy at birth and a higher infant mortality rate.
- The relationship of infant and child mortality to the quality of and access to water and sanitation is significant – children from households using public standposts and cesspools are several times more likely to die of diarrhoea than those with in-house piped water and sewerage.
- Urban poor households sometimes have worse nutritional status that rural households contributing to ill-health related nutrition.
- Female children in slums are further disadvantaged compared with males in terms of differential nutrition, health care, and mortality.
- When a child from a slum is old enough to move independently about the city, he or she may become increasingly exposed to death associated with violent features of modern urban environments, for example motor vehicle accidents (5-14 years) and homicides (15-19 years).
- In some cities, for youths and young adults, mortality differentials may be due to communicable diseases and violence in males, and obstetric causes for females.
- From 15 years onwards, trauma and chronic diseases play a substantial role in mortality and morbidity; one particular problem may be the occupational exposure associated with informal, small scale and cottage industry, and exposure in the home." [28]

[26] Bradley, D. et al, A Review of Environmental Health Impacts in Developing Country Cities, UMP Discussion Paper, 1992
[27] ibid
[28] ibid

Box IVb) 2

Management of Polluted Urban Rivers - Peru

In August, 1998, UMP-LAC sponsored the first regional meeting of cities, which are carrying out city consultations related to the management of urban rivers. The general orientation in these consultations is to see the rivers as an integral element of the urban ecosystem, and to realize the potential of rivers in a city's quest for sustainable development. The group's initial members were Belem, Maranguape and Maracanau, Brazil; Luringancho-Chosica, an area of Lima, Peru; and Maracaibo and Ciudad Guayana, Venezuela. The representatives of the cities agreed to form a regional thematic working group whose central theme is the participatory urban management of urban rivers and streams. During the event, participants defined the initial objective of the group as that of supporting the education and training of local actors in the processes of managing cities with polluted rivers and to share their experiences with other cities of the region, in a process of South-South cooperation. Several other cities have expressed interest in joining the working group, such as Iquitos, Peru and Puerto Cortes, Honduras.

The city of Belem, Brazil offered to host a Latin American event on the theme of urban rivers, and to be the "chair city" of the group. This event, an international seminar planned for 1999, will unite Latin American cities who are dealing with the questions of the pollution, development, and use of their rivers. Cases of urban river management, not only from cities involved in city consultations but also from other Latin American cities, will be presented. Belem, the "City of 1000 Rivers," exhibits many of the challenges which urban rivers can present, and how they can affect poverty, environmental, and governance issues. Many low-income settlements along the riverbanks, where migrants from the countryside arrived during the 70s, are susceptible to flooding and mudslides, as they lack proper
drainage, infrastructure, and appropriate planning measures. Myriad wooden shacks overhang the city's canals, clogging them with solid waste and creating hygenic disasters. Most of the rivers are not fit for navigation, though their location and potential for transport are great. The city government has begun addressing these problems seriously and concretely, and in this context UMP-LAC's intervention was born.

Working group members have initiated a process of sharing technical know-how, exchanging information on their particular city consultations, and the circulation of materials and forms throughout the region to identify Latin American and Caribbean experiences in urban river management and to motivate other cities to join the group.

UMP- LAC

ISSUES

Limited resources of local governments

The central issue for urban management is not whether to take action on improving public health, but how to do so within the resources at their disposal. As is discussed in the options section below, there is a range of actions and interventions that municipal authorities can and should undertake, and that these are well within their remit and capability.

Interestingly, most of the measures outlined below should and would probably be undertaken by urban management as part of their overall objective of improving and upgrading the effectiveness and efficiency of their cities, irrespective of their targeting improvements in urban health.

Although some of the measures require the direct intervention by medical and health staff and institutions, the greater impact on public health is unlikely to come from such action. However, health personnel and institutions could obviously assist in both the identification of intervention that is likely to have a greater impact, and in ensuring that parallel, health care, preventive and curative measures are in place.

Other issues, particularly those connected with the implications for the poor have been raised in the section on Urban Infrastructure (III b). These call for the need to integrate public and primary health care policies, provision and delivery with other services relating to the well-being of neighbourhoods and communities. Programmes such as the Healthy Cities and work by many NGOs is increasingly becoming aware of this need. Health care and provision is no longer seen as an isolated service, but integrated with primary education, water supply and sanitation, as well as with such facilities as markets and recreation.

Options for Action

It follows therefore, that in order to reduce or overcome the negative health impacts on urban populations a series of measures need to be initiated to deal with the above in order to improve a city's urban public health profile. Given the interconnected nature of the factors affecting health, any proposals for improvement are also likely to be interconnected and interdependent. The overall impact will be the greater if more of the measures are implemented than if only one or two of them are. Similarly, it is not so easy to prioritise the measures or to rank them in order both because of their interconnectedness, and because of the particular situation and circumstances of the city, its population and its environment. These will create both different needs, offer different possibilities, and the impact of each type of measure will be different.

Factors that would have an impact on the urban health profile of a city are:

1. An increase in incomes,

especially for those in the lower earnings' percentiles, and vulnerable groups such as women-headed households. An increase in disposable income will enable households to be able to afford many of the measures that are outlined below. A reduction in the number of households at the bottom end of the income range, especially those near or below the poverty level, will also reduce municipal expenditures and perhaps allow the municipality to recover a greater proportion of the costs of it services. Reduced expenditure on social/income support activities would also increase the amount available to the municipality for the expansion of its other activities (section III a).

2. Municipalities can help

increase earnings and disposable incomes in two ways. First through access to credit, and the establishment of a regulatory and information framework supportive of the informal sector and small-scale enterprises, to help increase incomes and earning possibilities. Second through a reduction in the costs to households of productive and reproductive infrastructure and urban services. As noted, in many instances, the urban poor, without access to municipal services, may be paying 6 to 8 times the cost of water supply and other services than the better-off households (section III b).

3. Education and awareness programmes

aimed at providing households with better information regarding health and safety as well as nutrition and child-care (section III b). It is particularly important that such programmes reach and involve women. Such programmes will assist in better use and allocation of available resources as well as promote better standards of health and hygiene. It will also reduce the susceptibility of the poor to charlatans, quacks, and even qualified practitioners who prescribe unnecessarily expensive medicines.

4. Improvements in housing

relating to health and safety (section III b). For example, the incidence of tuberculosis could be substantially reduced through marginal expenditure on better damp proofing and ventilation. The better design of kitchens and cooking stoves would have a direct impact on women's respiratory and vision-related health risks. The relegation of such facilities to the "back" of the house also means that women spent the greater part of their time isolated in poorly lit and ill-ventilated spaces.

5. Improvements in infrastructure

facilities such as water supply and sanitation and the collection of solid wastes would have an immediate and direct impact on the health of households, particularly that of children. The reduction in time and effort required for transporting water would also have positive consequences for the welfare of women, as would any reduction in the time spent looking after unwell members of the household, especially the young. The improvement of access to infrastructure such as electricity, water and transport also has consequences for the earnings possibilities of households, especially women who are more likely to work from home (IIIb).

6. Improvements in social services

and facilities have a two-fold impact on the health profile. The first through the more obvious, direct impact of provision of or access to health care facilities and personnel. The second is through their impact on education, training and therefore income-generating capabilities. The provision of child-minding and crèche facilities also allows for the greater ability of women to take part in income-generating and other activities (section III b).

7. Improvements in the immediate environment

such as that of the air, water bodies and of land have a direct consequence on health by reducing the spread and growth of vectors and toxic gasses and emissions. In many cities, the siting and location of land uses has not had as much attention as it should. In some instances this is because land-use regulations have not been enforceable, or have been flouted, in others it is because the acceptable practices and levels have changed. The damage and impact of improper land-use juxtaposition has been caused as much by the development of housing and settlements next or near to environmentally polluting or endangering uses. Often this has been in order to be near sources or opportunities for employment, but also because of the lack of other equally cheap or uncontested land.

While new plant and processes are likely to be installed with some environmental consideration for their emissions and discharges, it is often the older plant and equipment, perhaps located within residential areas that is a cause for greater concern. Perhaps even more worrying is the fact that the environmental hazard is caused by a large number of small installations. On the one hand they may not be offensive on their own, but collectively create a hazard. On the other, the costs of introducing environmentally friendly mechanisms may be excessive, as may their policing. A case in point is the noise and fumes emitted by motorcycle rickshaws in Pakistani cities. The police do stop and impose fines on drivers of polluting vehicles. However, since the drivers are not the owners, the fines do not act as an incentive to reduce polluting emissions, especially as the vehicle they next rent may or may not have had a silencer or an exhaust renewed.

Largely, the continuation of illicit or polluting practices is a matter of economics and economic interpretation that places a higher value on personal rather than public welfare. However, it is also aided and abetted by a lack of understanding and education regarding both the effects of environmentally damaging practices and the possible ways of rectifying them. Often neither the polluter nor the workers or neighbours affected

by the practice are aware of the damage that may be being caused. Where such knowledge has been made available and a feasible alternative or modification suggested, it has been taken up.

8. A city consultation or dialogue

between the stakeholders should be the starting point of these actions, since most, if not all of the above interventions require collective action by a number of actors. This would help identify areas and set objectives as well as establishing priorities for action. The process would also help in allocating and understanding the role and responsibilities of each actor.

9. Local community-led actions

will also have to be discussed and devised as well as the city level consultations. Consultation should therefore also take place between the municipality and the NGOs and CBOs. This should be done at an early stage and perhaps even precede the city level consultations since they can provide detailed insights into the needs and requirements of communities and households.

10. Public awareness and education campaigns

are an essential necessity for public health programmes to be effective. The inclusion of women in the planning and implementation of such programmes is an obvious requirement. Not only are women in the best position to monitor and supervise the health and well-being of their households, they are the most knowledgeable about illnesses and diseases. To the extent that the major causes of public health concern food or water-borne vectors, the involvement of women is crucial, and should be ensured at all stages.

Given the interconnected nature of many of the suggested activities and the fact that they are likely to serve multiple objectives, the consultations and discussions and therefore any resulting proposals for actions should not limit themselves to public health issues and concerns, but cover the overall improvements of communities and households. As also noted in sections IIIb and IVa, as much as possible, primary and public health care and provision should be integrated with the provision of neighbourhood infrastructure affecting public health (water supply, sanitation, solid waste disposal, roads and foot-paths, drainage and flood prevention).

Further Information

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UMP 18 Toward Environmental Strategies for Cities: Policy Considerations for Urban Environmental Management in Developing Countries. Carl Bartone, Janis Bernstein, Josef Leitmann, Jochen Eigen. ISBN 0-8213-2827-1, 116 pages, published June 1994

IVc URBAN HERITAGE PROTECTION

BACKGROUND

The protection of urban heritage has direct and immediate implications not just for the fabric and structure of the city but also for the lives and livelihoods of those who live in them. Both as a direct source of employment in its construction and maintenance and as an indirect generator of incomes through an increase in tourism and culture-related activities, heritage protection is an important and integral part of urban management. Nor should the notion of civic pride be under-rated as a means of motivating popular action.

Cities as cultural capital

Increasingly it is becoming accepted that cities are the engines of growth that drive national economies. Cities usually produce more than their share of the national wealth and are where the majority of the country's people live and work.

However, cities are also storehouses of a nation's cultural capital. Not just in the museums and art galleries, but in the very buildings, squares and streets that make up the city are examples and instances that portray and reflect the country's history, achievements and aspirations. In the city too are housed the men and women that invent, shape and formulate the nation's culture through the arts and by cataloguing, analysing and interpreting it.

Cities are a living record of the way we were and an indicator of where we have come from and where we are going.

Of course, there are examples of culture and cultural achievement in the form of monuments, artefacts and structures located outside the city. Their siting is important for they mark a geographical feature or a location that has historical or cultural significance. In some cases, this may not be an isolated structure or feature but an extensive array of culturally valid and important objects. It is most likely that in that case, they are likely to have been cities, perhaps abandoned now, but important in their time.

The point being made here is that though there are other locations of cultural value and importance, it is the cities that house more of our recent, living culture, and not just in the special buildings and monuments they contain, but in the very fabric of the city. The design and layout of streets, the design and planning of buildings, these in themselves reflect and guide our society, our culture, the way we live, and therefore, they define who we are.

Changes in cultural heritage

Sometimes, the destruction or replacement of cultural heritage is a deliberate process by a new power expressing its dominance and conquest of the old. The colonialists from Europe used "civilisation" as their cloak for economic dominance and territorial conquest and it was not in their interest to retain evidence of previous civilisations amongst the peoples they colonised. When the Turks took over Constantinople they converted the churches into mosques, but were thoughtful to plaster over the stucco and the mosaics rather than deface them, and added minarets on the outside. Today it is possible to restore those buildings without too much difficulty, but not all conquerors were so understanding.

Globalisation

Today we are facing another danger. The colonialisation of our cultures is being done not by invading armies but by the process of globalisation whereby the cultural values of the economically dominant overwhelm all others, producing sameness the world over. It is becoming increasingly difficult to know which city or even which country one is, faced with identical building styles, shop fronts and other trade marks. The consumerisation of cultures has replaced style by brand names and identity by uniformity.

However, there are signs that there is a realisation that the wholesale and immediate destruction of our cultural heritage is counterproductive. Local action, diversity and dialogue may yet ensure that a more rational view of our cultural heritage will be taken, and that a more thoughtful alternative will prevail.

ISSUES

How and by whom should cultural capital be defined?

As has been indicated above, the biggest issue is how to decide what constitutes cultural capital and which structures, buildings and spaces best define it. Nor is it clear that we can agree on whether or not a particular structure or space should be preserved, or if it should be incorporated into the new developments, how that should be done.

It is not enough to merely catalogue, classify and identify areas and structures that need to be retained, conserved or preserved. It is necessary to develop ways and means of ensuring that economically feasible ways of doing so are found, that owners and users do not suffer financially or have to incur additional costs without being compensated for them. For societies that have few enough resources, the task of finding the funds for cultural protection are difficult to come by.

How to Deal with conflicting and competing uses?

There are also conflicts when there are alternative and competing uses for the same space. A narrow street may be full of character, but the needs of vehicular movement may call for it to be widened. Shoppers may want pedestrianisation, but shopkeepers and businessmen may want vehicular access to service their premises. The list of valid but conflicting demands and choices is endless, and examples can easily be found from any city.

Fortunately, it is also possible to find examples of compromise and innovation whereby the conflicting needs of individuals and groups, owners and users, regulators and developers have been resolved not just satisfactorily, but also imaginatively. In almost every case, dialogue, discussion and collective action have produced more successful results than projects implemented by force of economic power or even legislative right.

How to pay for conservation

The other major issue is how to pay for preservation and protection. While public monies may be readily made available for a few exceptional monuments, they are unlikely to be available for the preservation of substantial chunks of the urban fabric. In many instances, it is the very nature of the urban fabric – neglected, poorly serviced and badly maintained – that lowers its current market value, making it accessible to the poor. These occupants are the least likely to be able to afford the repairs and main-

Box IVc) 1
Heritage Protection: An Investment in the Future of Our Cities

Regenerating the cultural heritage of the Arab States region is an important present day challenge. The origins of many cities in the region extend far back in time. These cities have been the centres of successive highly developed civilisations with distinctive architectural styles. In recent times, this heritage has become increasingly threatened by haphazard, rapid and unplanned urban development. Structures possessing great aesthetic and historic value have been subjected to encroachment, partial or total demolition, misuse and neglect. At the same time, residents of historic areas often suffer from a lack of economic opportunities coupled with poor living conditions. There is growing recognition that the sound management of historic centres in the region is an effective means of revitalising local economies by attracting ecologically sensitive and culturally minded visitors from inside and outside the region.

In response to the challenge of protecting and revitalising this unique urban cultural heritage, the UMP-ASR has undertaken activities at both the national and regional levels. The Tunis Regional Consultation on "The Revival of Heritage in Arab Cities" (1995) explored the links between heritage protection and regeneration, business expansion, social development, and environmental improvement. The objectives of the consultation were to formulate national and regional strategies for heritage protection and revival. Provisions for the restoration and re-utilisation of historic buildings were discussed as well as the application of urban regulations designed to preserve the original characteristics of architecture in historic areas. The Consultation provided an opportunity for a valuable exchange of experience on heritage protection efforts, and underlined the need for a unified regional strategy for heritage protection and regeneration.

At the more local level, the activities initiated in the Gamaleya District, a section of Historic Cairo, provide an excellent example of efforts to integrate environmental improvement and heritage protection. The primary goal of the project was to foster community involvement in urban development and environmental preservation initiatives to ensure their sustainability over the long term. Phases I and II of the project involved the preparation and completion of physical and environmental surveys of the area. Phase III focused on building the capacity of district-level councils and community leaders, and developing public-private partnerships involving local businesses, NGOs, and local government staff. As part of Phase III, three workshops on community participation were conducted. The first workshop sensitised residents to the environmental and development issues in their area. The second helped residents identify and prioritise the main environmental and social problems in the district. The final workshop gathered eight community representatives identified as potential leaders and trained them in community participation and leadership methods. One concrete output was the creation of an NGO for program implementation and advocacy: the Sustainable Development Association of Gamaleya (SDAG). The NGO initiated community-based initiatives aimed at sensitising the local population to the value of the architectural heritage and to the importance of improving environmental conditions. This included an awareness campaign specifically tailored to local school children.

The Gamaleya activities were used as a model for the UNDP-sponsored Plan for the Rehabilitation of Historic Cairo. The plan provides a framework for promoting rehabilitation, upgrading, and conservation, as well as improvements in the quality of life of local residents. Efforts will focus on renewing the local economic base, increasing investment, and promoting the active participation of the local people.

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tenance that is required. On the other hand, if these structures were rehabilitated, their market value would increase, usually to a point above that which the current occupiers can afford. This is more likely to be the case where public or subsidised funds have been used for the rehabilitation. While the building stock may improve, the current occupants are unlikely to benefit unless particular care is taken to safeguard their rights.

However, it may often be possible to use the refurbishment and rehabilitation of the urban building stock to generate incomes and employment as a consequence. With the increase in urban tourism and a greater appreciation of local traditions and culture, there are more possibilities of marketing the urban heritage. Tourism and tourism-related enterprises are the more obvious choice of change-of-use for many of the buildings, squares and other public spaces. Individual buildings and their owners can also participate through initiating businesses servicing the tourist industry. Amongst such businesses, the most common are catering and hostelry establishments offering unique or exotic culturally significant experiences.

Options for Action

1. Building consensus

Some consensus has to be built regarding the areas and buildings of the city that exemplify and characterise culturally significant and historically important structures and spaces. This could be initiated or spearheaded by a small group, but should include wide consultation and discussion. More important than eliciting a product in the form of a listing, is to establish criteria and framework for a process or the identification, nomination and acceptance of areas and structures for inclusion. There is most likely to be the need to categorise or classify the list either by importance or by type or significance.

2. Publicising and awareness raising

The process should be given prominence and publicity and made as open and inclusive as possible. The initial identification, and to the extent possible, future negotiations and deliberations with developers, other private sector interests and conservationists should be in the form of consultations and multiparty dialogue and discussion rather than a one or two-sided meetings or ultimatums.

3. Sourcing funds

Where possible a source or means of funding should be sought that could be used by the city to buy into future development projects in order to protect and preserve its cultural heritage. This could be by setting up a fund, earmarking a particular tax or lottery, for example, or by public subscription.

4. Using "planning gain"

The city should use its powers of land-use regulations and planning permissions imaginatively to further its cultural heritage objectives through negotiating concessions in return for civic gain. Negotiation, collective action and imagination are the most likely way of achieving multiple objectives that allow all the actors to achieve most if not all of their ends.

5. Promoting and projecting cultural identity

To participate in and benefit from cultural tourism, a lead has to be taken at the national as well as the city level to identify, reinforce and promote a particular cultural image locally as well as internationally. It is not possible for individual owners or occupiers of buildings in a city to be able to create an industry or enterprise that uses culturally significant structures and spaces to service the tourist industry.

6. Developing a tourist industry

The establishment of an urban tourist trade requires good marketing and commercial intelligence to inform both the suppliers from amongst the local population and the consumers from the visitors. As with other business enterprises, this also means access to credit and sources of material and equipment. The municipality can play a pivotal role not only in instigating and promoting such enterprise, but also in setting standards and assuring visitors of their safety and security.

7. Providing urban infrastructure

The other area that is crucial to the development of a tourist industry and that could act as a stimulant and a basis for urban heritage preservation and protection, is the provision of infrastructure. This includes water supply and sanitation, as well as transport and telecommunications. Often the opportunity provided by a particular event – whether a sporting event or a significant cultural anniversary – can provide the investment necessary to develop the underlying infrastructure upon which individual owners and occupiers can piggy-back their own developments.

8. Consultation and dialogue

Finally, as with other urban development, especially one that relies on the efforts of a number of participants, there is the need to engage in dialogue and consultation. The involvement of the stakeholders from the earliest stage of the proceedings will help ensure both a better strategy design as well as more willing compliance with implementation and maintenance. Such participation and consultation should be as inclusive as possible and every effort should be made to involve all sectors and sections of the community, and specially women.

FURTHER INFORMATION
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