

# Placemaking

exploration, research and reflection on cities , public space, urban design , urban planning and landscape design

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Tuesday, May 17, 2011

## policy agenda for a sustainable urban future

City in the Developing World – it is one of the reference topics to focus and centre my attention on why urban leadership is increasingly needed and how can our daily decisions be linked to a holistic perspective. A particular them in this topic that has always intrigued me is urban policies.

### So what about urban policy?

Urban policy needs to be assessed in the context of development policy as a whole. But, since the 1980's, policies took the neo-liberal turn which encouraged free market shaping urban space and its components. In that sense, policy shifted away from a policy of urbanisation containment to strategies which enabled the increase in urban areas overall productivity.

Increasingly, international development agencies are also encouraging structural adjustment programmes that link macro – economic performance of nations to the urban management programs focusing on economic, social, demographic and environmental conditions.

The thinking behind this is stated in a famous paper prepared by the World Bank in 1990 – urban policy and economic development –it explains the interrelationship between urban economic activities and the gross domestic product of nations.

The United Nations development program agrees in that increasingly, urbanisation is contributing to a stable economy –it is a major shift from neighbourhood policies that revolved around slums upgrade, housing provision, municipal services connections and housing finance schemes.

It is the city wide reforms that are capable of translating macroeconomic objectives and economic development strategies into tangible initiatives and projects that will contribute to city development.

To increase productivity, there is also a need to look at infrastructural deficiencies

- outdated building codes,
- governance structure for housing markets
- improvement of the municipal system and financial institutions for urban development.

Government shifts from the role of provider to enabler by creating the adequate regulatory and financial frame within which private sector, SME, community associations play an active role in fulfilling their needs.

Urban concentration is a reality that brings with it the hegemony of urban productivity. Such emphasis might impact social inequalities and may affect the urban space quality in between city regions. There will be an increased pressure on the environment due to newly formed urban nodes

Policy makers will need to balance the enormous demand for urban housing due to the increased importance of cities in national economies and the challenge of social integration and inclusiveness.

Posted by [nadine bitar chahine](#) at 10:24 AM

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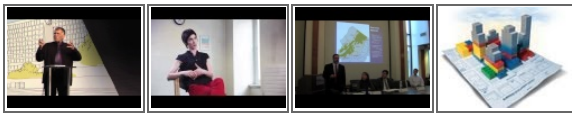
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