

INTERPLAN

THE APA'S INTERNATIONAL PLANNING INITIATIVES

Jeff Soule,
APA Policy Director

A Letter to International Division Members

Dear International Division Members:

As APA members who have taken a special interest in international planning, I'd like to bring you up to speed on where APA stands right now internationally, what we have accomplished, and where we hope to go with international programs.

As the oldest and largest educational organization in the world, APA is in a very good position to respond to the



Shanghai, China

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increasing challenges of globalization and urbanization. By 2025, UN Habitat estimates 65% of the world's population will be urban. This means hundreds of millions more people will place demands on existing urban centers, large and small, as well as create opportunities for new towns and cities.

APA's goals are both moral and practical in terms of advancing the cause of good planning and the interests of our members. While the moral responsibility is really universal wherever there are issues of resources and human settlements, we need two other dimensions to make the work possible: interest on the part of the international organizations or govern-

ments, and financial support to ensure the program does not impact member dues. Below is a comprehensive list of internationally-focused products and services where I believe these two dimensions are coming together:

- International Exchanges and Study Tours. Study tour programs can be very rewarding. A very successful China Study tour just concluded in June, involving members and students. The next China Study Tour is planned for early Fall 2008, leading up to the World Urban Forum in Nanjing.
- Training Courses. The Chinese mayors' training program is a successful model for training that has led to influ-

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ence and other activities.

- **Global Organizations.** APA has become more visible in global activities. One of the outcomes of the activities prior to the 2006 World Urban Forum and World Planners Congress was APA's leadership in establishing the Global Planners Network (GPN) (www.globalplannersnetwork.org). APA is recognized as an official Non Governmental Organizational (NGO) member of the United Nations Sustainability Committee. In the area of cultural and historic preservation, APA just became an official ex-officio member of the board of US International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). We are planning our participation in the 2008 WUF scheduled for October 2008 in Nanjing, China by once again joining our

Note from the Vice Chair, Special Projects

Greetings, everyone! It's a pleasure as the Vice Chair for Special Projects to share with you news about our recent International Division activities.

This spring, we were pleased to unveil the International Division's 2007/2008 Grant Program. The Division will award three US\$500 grants to undergraduate or graduate students pursuing a study abroad program, doing research, or participating in an international internship program approved by their school or department. Our program is relatively flexible to recognize students' varied needs.

To be eligible, you must be currently enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate planning program, have academic support in the form of at least one academic reference and be a member of the International Division. Non-members may contact the Division to discuss joining the division prior to submitting a grant proposal. For complete details about the program, please visit the division website at <http://www.planning.org/international/>. So far, we have awarded a grant to Jennifer Venema. She's in Kenya right now interning with the United Nations. Her first report back to the Division is on page 6 of this InterPlan.

For those of you who attended the National Conference in April, we hope you had the opportunity to attend the two conference sessions sponsored by our Division. Check out the article on page 5 about our fascinating and well-attended sessions on the subjects of disaster prevention and cultural preservation in the international context.

We're in the process of putting together sessions for the 2008 National Planning Conference, to be held next April in Las Vegas. The Division leadership is reviewing all ideas submitted and will select two proposals as our Division sessions; all remaining selections will be considered for general sessions. We hope you'll join with us in making the 100th consecutive National Planning Conference the best one yet!

Sincerely,
Beth Offenbacher
Vice Chair for Special Projects

fellow planning organizations at the GPN Congress, two days prior to the WUF.

- **Technical Assistance and Promotion of Private Sector Planning and Design Firms.** In 2005, APA received a cooperative marketing grant from the US Department of Commerce to support our efforts to bring more American planning and design firms into contact with Chinese leaders and organizations.
- **Translations of Technical Reports.** Our Site Planning Fundamentals course, in Spanish, funded by HUD, is a good example. Currently we have a cooperative agreement with the Chinese Architectural and Building Press allowing them to translate and publish three APA Planners

Press books.

Decisions on whether to become involved in international activities involving APA resources are guided by a simple set of guidelines. We try to advance any and all of the following objectives:

- **Member Benefit.** Examples of benefit might be the opportunity to learn about best practices in other parts of the world, or a chance to participate in an exchange program or conference. APA should also provide support for members looking to do business abroad.
- **Budget Impact.** Does the activity pay for itself? Does the activity pursue new

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“Walk!” Through Italy (and earn AICP professional development credits)

By Bill Steiner

As planners, we all need inspiration. The need varies from time to time, but the longer we do our work, the more difficult it is to remain inspired. Inspiration comes in many guises. Often times, it is something subtle like simply re-framing what we know, or seeing it through a new lens. Travel to another place often provides that new lens or frame. It is this potential that inspired me to create and run “learning trips” for planners in 2003 that allows them to experience Orvieto, Italy.

For tour participants, cultural exposure and immersion in Orvieto provides the backdrop for more formal study. The old part of Orvieto is medieval and human-scaled, sitting on a plug of rock elevated above the modern town. Clearly, we are not going to transpose a medieval city into the US. But it is full of transferable lessons on the qualities that create wonderful human places.

Tour participants are sent into the city twice a day with assignments that expose them to Orvieto’s multi-faceted human-scaled environment. We then gather to talk about our observations. The interchange is particularly valuable because we all see differently. It is like having many pairs of eyes, each with a different focus that builds a deep, full understanding. The understanding grows during the week as things observed early on gain new meaning with continued exposure.

Orvieto’s strategic plan was created “for the betterment of the lives of the citizens of Orvieto” and all planning policies flow from it. On the Walk! tour we gain an understanding of Orvieto and Italy not found in your Frommer’s or Lonely Planet guide books. This is possible for several reasons:

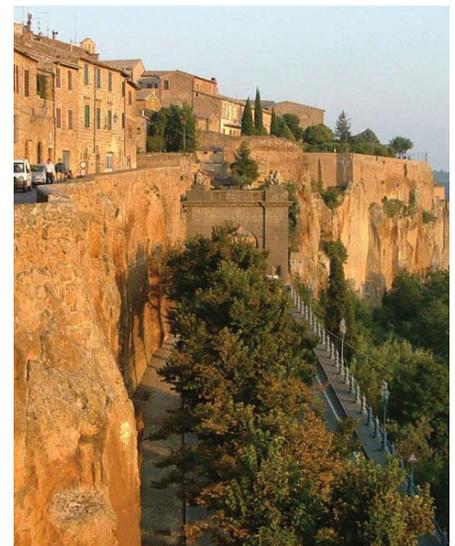
- We meet with members of CittaSlow, an outgrowth of Slow Food to understand how and why they focus on quality of life in Orvieto. Headquartered



in Orvieto, CittaSlow has over 100 member cities where planners are committed to focusing on living well. CittaSlow staff share what they consider important aspects of Italian life and how it manifests itself in everyday living.

- We study and discuss the physical qualities and use arrangements that make Orvieto a great place.
- We participate in and study the local market held twice a week—a true community event.
- We visit a local vineyard where the vintner insists that the taste of his wines reflect the qualities of the area.
- We participate in the passeggiata—the evening walk where locals meet and greet, building a sense of community.

The students’ home away from home is a beautiful convent. The rooms are modern and each has its own bathroom, yet the convent is a centuries old building complete with garden, courtyard, loggia, frescoes, and ballroom. Our visit and financial support help the three nuns running the convent keep things going. They treat us like family, deepening the cultural experience. Sometimes they surprise us with limoncella (a homemade liquor) or dessert, or other treats. It’s quiet.



Creating great places for people to live is, after all, the end goal of the planning we do. Removing ourselves for a week, and studying and feeling the characteristics of superb “people places” are part of the trip. So too are cultural insights into Italy. It all comes together in inspiring us to return home with passion for the planning we do each day.

The tour earns 30 hours CPD from AICP. It is listed as the Discovery Tour by AICP.

Bill Steiner is a planner living in Columbia, South Carolina. He was born overseas, and has lived and traveled abroad often. Bill specializes in downtown revitalization, historic preservation and community planning. For more information about Walk! Keys to Lovable Communities please visit <http://www.playce.biz/Orvieto-Italy.html>. You can also e-mail Bill at bsteiner@playce.biz.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MATTHEW KAHN, AUTHOR OF *GREEN CITIES*

Green Cities

Urban Growth and the Environment
 Matthew E. Kahn
 Brookings Institution Press 2006
<http://www.brookings.edu/press/books/greencities.htm>

Matthew E. Kahn is a professor at the Institute of the Environment, and the Departments of Economics and Public Policy at UCLA. He has published widely in the fields of environmental and urban economics. He blogs on environmental and urban economics at greeneconomics.blogspot.com.

IP: Can you briefly describe the premise of *Green Cities* to our readers?

MK: Does economic growth hurt or help the urban environment? By growth, I mean rising per-capita income, more people living in cities and people spreading out within cities (i.e. sprawl). My one word answer to my question is “both”. This matters because by the year 2030, 60% of the world’s population will live in capitalist cities. *Green Cities* is a balanced, politically neutral investigation of the costs and benefits of capitalist urban growth.

IP: How do you define a “green city”?

MK: Green cities have clean air and water and pleasant streets and parks. Green cities are resilient in the face of natural disasters, and the risk of major infectious disease outbreaks in such cities is low. Green cities also encourage green behavior, such as the use of public transit, and their ecological impact is relatively small.

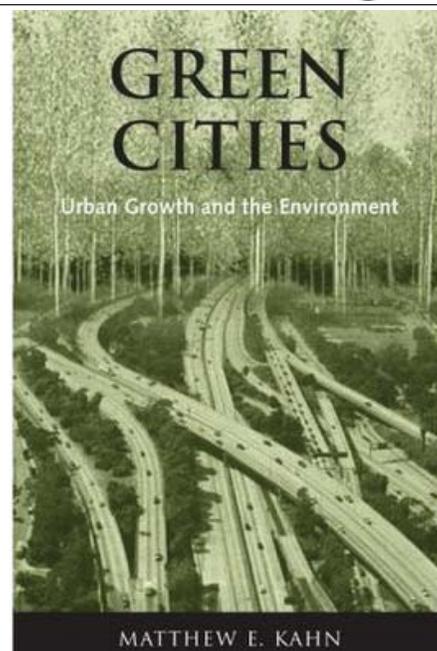
The challenge arises when a city has clean air and water but creates large amounts of greenhouse gases. Such a city would be “green” on local criteria but “brown” on global criteria. On net, is this a “green city”? The answer hinges on whether you prioritize immediate public health threats (such as air pollution) over long term global environmental challenges (such as greenhouse gas production).

IP: What is the greatest environmental challenge posed by urban growth to cities in developing nations? To cities in developed nations?

MK: In the developing world, I worry about the capacity of government to provide basic urban infrastructure such as clean water and garbage pickup in the face of urban population growth. Recent migrants to cities (from rural areas) are often poor and live in high density squatter communities. Such communities suffer from high levels of disease risk. Such densely populated areas also face risk from natural disasters such as flooding and earthquakes. In the absence of a well functioning, credible regulatory system, urban growth scales up the number of cars and factories in a city contributing to higher levels of air and water pollution.

The developed world’s cities now have achieved significant gains with respect to local challenges such as air and water pollution. For example, consider Los Angeles smog levels. The number of days per year exceeding the federal one-hour ozone standard declined from nearly 150 days per year at the worst locations during the early 1980s, down to fewer than 20 days per year today.

The developed world’s cities have not been good “global citizens”. In particular, urbanites in the developed world’s cities are major greenhouse gas producers. Cities foster specialization and trading. Such trades increase a person’s real income. Richer people consume more energy than poorer people and in the absence of credible carbon taxes and incentives to economize on greenhouse gas production the net result has been rising greenhouse gas emissions as incomes have risen. A second factor fueling rising developed cities’ production of greenhouse gases is sprawl. Relative to in the past, more people today are living and working in the low density suburbs. The net result of this trend is



more driving, less use of public transit and people living in larger homes that require more energy.

IP: In fast growing cities in developing nations, rapid population growth and density can impair environmental quality. How can the impacts on the environment be mitigated?

MK: Water treatment plants are very costly. They require enormous upfront investments in pipes and infrastructure. Recent research in development economics has documented that healthy children are more likely to attend school and do well in school. Such findings provide an intellectual justification for organizations such as the World Bank to subsidize construction of infrastructure that will improve public health.

A second “green city” policy that cities in the developing world should consider is encouraging the dirtiest industries to locate away from the densely populated cities. In the United States, cities such as Pittsburgh have experienced large environmental gains as dirty industries such as steel have declined. Developing nations should provide incentives for dirty industry to migrate to smaller cities where the social costs of its pollution affect fewer victims.

IP: How would you describe suburbaniza-

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tion's impact on urban sustainability?

MK: In compact cities such as downtown New York City, people can walk to see friends, commute and shop. In the suburbs, this is impossible. A suburban population will be a car based population. Such self interested voters have no incentive to raise their taxes for public transit improvements. In this case, population suburbanization helps to undermine public transit both by reducing demand and also by reducing the willingness of the tax payers to pay taxes for a service they do not use. This creates a "death spiral" such that public transit deteriorates in quality and even fewer people use it.

In addition, in the absence of carbon taxes --- suburbanites, who live in larger homes than urban dwellers (where the price of land is higher), consume more energy in their day to day life.

An open question pertains to suburbanization and the degradation of "open space". Does suburban growth encroach on open space? I am optimistic that new markets that allow farmers to sell their development rights to environmental groups will provide rural land owners (such as farmers) with better incentives to consider the environmental benefits of not selling their land to a suburban housing developer.

IP: Why is income growth such an important factor in achieving greener urban governance?

MK: A richer nation will have a larger tax base to fund a more credible environmental protection agency. Economists worry that government can sometimes be a "paper tiger" with impressive laws on the books but if these laws are not enforced --- either due to corruption or due to insufficient "manpower" at the regulatory agency --- then pollution problems will continue to grow.

In a nation that hires high quality regulators and gives them the resources to do their job, polluters will be aware that they can't get away with malfeasance. Such polluters, whether they are Exxon trying not to have a second Exxon-Valdez oil spill, will have a greater incentive to invest in anti-pollution precautions.

IP: Can economic growth address global environmental consequences? What does this suggest about the relationship between urbanization and climate change?

MK: An optimist would argue that economic growth will create the resources to conduct basic research and development to create new alternatives to fossil fuels such as a "hydrogen economy". An optimist would say that urbanization helps to slow world population growth because this trend increases the labor market opportu-

nities for women.

IP: In Green Cities, you never definitively conclude whether economic growth either exacerbates or improves the urban environment. Why does a conclusive answer remain elusive?

MK: There are too many different types of cities and too many dimensions to what the word "environment" means. Some cities face significant natural disaster risk (think of New Orleans) while others suffer from terrible particulate problems (think of Santiago, Chile or Beijing). Different cities face different challenges due to their geography, history, industrial structure and many other factors.

My book was quite ambitious in the sense that I discuss all cities in both the developed and developing world and I analyzed a wide array of environmental issues spanning both local and global green challenges. The price of such ambition is that the topic grows a pinch unwieldy and there isn't really a neat way to tie all of the pieces together into a single punchline.

In my current work, I'm focusing on a very narrow indicator of environmental quality --- namely a city's greenhouse gas production per-capita. By focusing solely on this indicator of environmental quality, I'm optimistic that I will have a more forceful "bottom line" conclusion to offer your readers soon!

APA CONFERENCE 2007:

Division Hosts Sessions on Disaster Prevention, Cultural Preservation

This year the International Division sponsored two exciting panels comprised of international experts at the 2007 National Planning Conference in Philadelphia, PA.

Hats off to International Division Chair Jennifer Lindbom who organized a session called Catastrophe? Disaster Prevention, Response, and Reconstruction that was moderated by Suzanne Nienaber of ACP Visioning & Planning, New York, NY. Panelists included James C. Schwab, AICP (APA, Chicago, IL); Kenneth C. Topping, FAICP (Topping Associates International, Cambria, CA); Deborah Wood Matherly,

AICP (Louis Berger Group, Inc., Washington, DC).

Our second Division session was on the topic, Balancing Cultural Preservation with Growth and Redevelopment. Panelists included Sujata Govada, AICP (Urban Design & Planning Consultants, Ltd, Admiralty); Michael McClelland (ERA Architects, Inc., Toronto, Ontario); Michael J. Bennett, (Gideon Toal Architects/Planners, Fort Worth, TX); Randall F. Mason (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA); Beth Offenbacher, International Di-

vision Vice Chair, Special Projects (Waterford, Inc, Alexandria, Virginia) served as panel organizer and moderator.

Many thanks to the organizers, moderators and panelists who shared their knowledge, expertise and experiences with us for the benefit of our Division's members. Stay tuned this fall for news about the Division-sponsored panels selected for the 2008 National Planning Conference, to be held next April in Las Vegas, Nevada.

NOTES FROM ABROAD

Jennifer Venema, International
Division Scholarship Recipient

My First Exposure to Public Transportation in Nairobi

Standing on a crowded street corner and choking on the fumes of a diesel haze, I tried to regain my focus. Jesus Christ, with a lamb held in each arm, was painted on the back of a neon green bus that was swerving out of eyesight through the congested street. Barely having recovered from this surprising street scene, a lifelike Tupac Shakur (a popular American rap musician who died in 1996) was soon to follow. He was painted on the rear window of a small van with the question “How long will we mourn him?” inscribed beneath. This was illuminated by purple lights from inside the van.

Not far behind the van, a sweaty, shoeless man with bare chest surged forward in the traffic, pulling a wooden cart behind him loaded high with vegetables. Throughout this vehicular madness, hordes of people were exiting buses in the middle of intersections, weaving their cars through traffic and stepping out unexpectedly from street corners. This describes my first encounter with the diversity of transportation modes in Nairobi.

The fantastic vehicles decorated with portraits and proverbs are called matatus. These diverse vehicles dominate transportation in Nairobi. Matatus can be characterized as decorated vans with attitude. They share few commonalities with public transportation in North America. Numbers designate the eventual destination of each matatu, but these numbers are not always visible or easy to discern. They are a privately owned form of public transportation. Matatus pull in and out and are packed bumper to bumper, scraping past one another, with porters yelling and people piling in and out. Dust and voices swirl in the air as everyone pushes through, working to continue on their journey.

The matatu exudes an entrepreneurial air, navigating the turbid streets of Nairobi. Horns braying, Kiswahili rap and American pop blaring, and with a ludicrous variety of stickers and slogans distinguishing one from another, the matatus are creatures in a class of their own, without compare in America. They come in a variety of colors: grey, yellow, red, and pink, with colored patterns or stripes and plastic seat covers. Each produces a putrid plume of black diesel exhaust that adds a taint of filth to the Nairobi air. These vehicles race around like stout, determined beasts created for the explicit purpose of transporting as many people as quickly as possible. They are remarkably efficient. Prices to ride the matatu are dependent on the time of day.

In the Netherlands, a novel form of mixed transit has been proposed and executed, in which pedestrians, autos, and cycles coexist peacefully in shared transit lanes with no clear demarcation. This is meant to slow traffic and create an active environment. Nairobi has also achieved a form of this mixed traffic, yet it is not the result of deliberate crafting of any planner. Here it seems to be a manifestation of the diversity of the city and the multiplicity of lives and incomes it supports. Sidewalks here seem to be an afterthought which pedestrian activity has evolved apart from. People cross streets anywhere they can, advancing through traffic. This is as true on small peaceful streets as it is across the six lanes of one of Nairobi’s main roads, Uhuru (which means Independence in Kiswahili). Often people ignore sidewalks entirely, and walk in the street alongside speeding cars and matatus. People dominate the city and seem to have achieved a precarious sort of coexistence with autos. Eventually I worked up the courage required to weave myself through traffic and stand alongside a dangerously swerving passenger bus. Somehow, as dangerous as it was, it worked.

Of course, this is the romanticized retelling of my experiences getting around Nairobi the last few weeks. On a recent Friday evening I tried to go home from the main matatu corral downtown and it took nearly 45 minutes to obtain a ride in the highly sought after Number 106. Plus, getting hit by a car is a very real possibility, as the

performance of most automobile drivers is as bad as the matatu drivers. The matatu would hardly be an ideal form of transport for someone who is sick and travelling with children, or for someone who is travelling with groceries. But people here make due.

Jennifer Venema is an undergraduate student studying City & Regional Planning and Political Science at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo. In addition to her busy life in academics, she works as the Student Business Manager at her school’s newspaper, the Mustang Daily. She is also involved in activities of the City & Regional Planning Department and the Mortar Board Honour Society. She is currently in Nairobi, Kenya with her husband, where she is interning at the Global Urban Observatory of UN-HABITAT.

Bimkom: Planners for Planning Rights in Israel

By Becca Nagorsky

Bimkom, the Hebrew word for “instead of,” also plays on similar sounding words for “in a place,” an idea with clear relevance for planners. Israeli architects and planners chose Bimkom as the name for an organization they started based on the principle of putting citizens at the center of the planning process. In order to achieve this goal, Bimkom strives to enhance equity in decisions regarding resource allocation and development, ensure transparency in the planning process, and promote public participation.

Neighborhoods and villages turn to Bimkom to provide viable planning alternatives against municipal policies they find unjust or unclear. Its use of community-based planning, especially in the existing context which makes inclusive approaches especially unlikely, is commendable and could serve as a viable template for local governments and community groups

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APA INTERNATIONAL PLANNING INITIATIVES (cont. from page 2)

markets for products or services?

- **Humanitarian Motives.** Does the activity provide resources, knowledge, or training to areas of the world that desperately need it? Many areas of the world have little or no planning ethic, capacity, or knowledge.

- **Positive Image.** Does the activity contribute to the positive image and prestige of APA as a dynamic, resource rich institution dedicated to excellence in urban and regional planning?

- **Influence on Globalization Impacts.** APA has participated in a variety of international organizations aimed at applying our experience and expertise to issues of great impact such as global warming, cultural conservation and heritage, and human needs.

APA's international outreach initiatives to date have focused on the following geographic areas:

- **Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean.** As one of the three members of NAFTA, Mexico is rapidly establishing closer social and economic relations with the U.S. APA has worked in three Spanish-speaking nations in this region: the Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

- **South America.** If APA were to focus on the Spanish-speaking nations of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, it would make sense to also include as a secondary audience the nine Spanish-speaking countries of South America. Although this area has potential, we have not yet made inroads here.

- **Asia.** APA's experiences in China to date indicate that it should continue to be a primary focus of our international outreach initiative. However, China is not the only Asian country where APA has been involved in recent years. Taiwan's Ministry of Interior invited APA Senior Research Associate Jim Schwab to travel there to speak on "The Evolution of American Planning for Post-Disaster Recovery" in November 2006. This connection has opened some new relationships through which APA can foster ongoing dialogue with the Taiwanese planning profession. In addition, after the South Asia tsunami

in 2004, APA joined the American Institute of Architects, the American Society of Landscape Architects, and the American Society of Civil Engineers in staffing an eight-member team that traveled to Sri Lanka at the invitation of the Sri Lankan Institute of Architects. The team prepared a report with suggestions for long-term reconstruction that covered design, planning, and recovery management.

- **Europe.** There are many aspects of planning for which Europeans and Americans could usefully exchange ideas. Urban design, parks, transit, housing, roads and highways, land conservation, historic preservation, environmental protection, and many, many more challenges are shared on both sides of the Atlantic. Despite the persistent notion that much of Western Europe is better planned, Europeans continue to be intrigued by how American cities seem to get things done. Helping Eastern European nations grapple with planning statute reform is another focus area. Drawing on its experience in developing a Legislative Guidebook on planning statute reform for legislators in the U.S., APA Research secured a contract to help the Czech Republic modernize its national laws governing how city and regional planning is done.

- **Canada.** In many ways, our international relations are most developed with our neighbor to the north and this relationship will continue. The largest number of APA members outside of the U.S. reside in Canada.

APA's China Program (www.planning.org/apainchina)

More than any other country, APA is helping to shape the future of planning in China, where urbanization is occurring at a pace never before seen in human history. The planning discipline as we understand it in America—comprehensive, open and strategic—has captured the attention of more and more Chinese planners and officials who "get it." While China has not traditionally had the kind of non-profit sector we do in the U.S., China does have a Society of Land Science, an Association of City Planning and an Urban Planners

Society. APA has developed cooperative memoranda with each of these organizations to establish a framework for long-term cooperation.

In addition, we have established cooperative agreements with cultural and natural resource organizations and several top ranked Chinese educational institutions. Our approach to China has consisted of three major strategies: developing strong relationships with specific government agencies and specific locations; providing a comprehensive educational approach that involves introductory exchanges and more intensive training; and hands-on work projects that demonstrate the application of specific planning practices while building local capacity. This three-pronged approach has been successful in several places in China over the past six years. China is now making its planning market more open for APA members consultants. We are in a better position to compete in the market because of America's long history with urbanization. As a rising economy major with 1.3 billion people, in the next 10 to 20 years, China will have the largest planning market in the world.

We recognize there are areas absent any meaningful APA involvement: the entire African continent, the Indian subcontinent, other Asia nations, or the Middle East. APA members have been involved in important work in all of these locations, and APA should continue to seek strategic opportunities in these areas. Perhaps APA's involvement in the Global Planners Network will lead to effective collaboration in places where APA, by itself, has not had a presence. I look forward to increasing cooperation with the International Division and its members. Together we can continue to build on an already strong foundation. Please contact me with your ideas and suggestions. And with all of your experience, I sincerely hope that you would consider volunteering, when the opportunities arise, to meet and host training delegations visiting the U.S.

Jeff Soule
APA Policy Director
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Planning Rights in Israel

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around the world. In this article, I profile one of Bimkom's largest projects, in East Jerusalem's Isawiyya neighborhood. My intention in writing this profile is not to comment on politically controversial situations, but to present an interesting model that can potentially bridge gaps among planning, politics and people.

While in Israel from 2004 to 2005, I attended a forum Bimkom held on the future of East Jerusalem and was impressed with the dialogue Bimkom initiated on extremely sensitive and controversial political issues. There are so many religious, cultural, and political intricacies inherent to planning in Jerusalem. Bimkom planners make a concerted effort to handle them responsibly.

Isawiyya

Isawiyya is located next to the Mount Scopus campus of Hebrew University. East Jerusalem, the largely Palestinian half of Jerusalem, was annexed to Israel's Jerusalem municipality following the Six Day War in 1967. Because of the continuing uncertainty of the future of East Jerusalem as it relates to Israeli-Palestinian final status negotiations, municipal planning for East Jerusalem has been limited, and restrictive growth limits have often been imposed. Other political concerns have stymied comprehensive planning, ultimately resulting in a situation where growth has been stunted, or has occurred illegally in terms of Israeli code in neighborhoods like Isawiyya.

In 1991, the Jerusalem municipality approved an outline plan for Isawiyya, but it did not allow for sufficient growth, particularly for community buildings and commercial areas. Additionally, the plan left out some areas and designated others as open space, thereby making existing structures in those zones illegal and in danger of condemnation.

Bimkom began its work in Isawiyya in

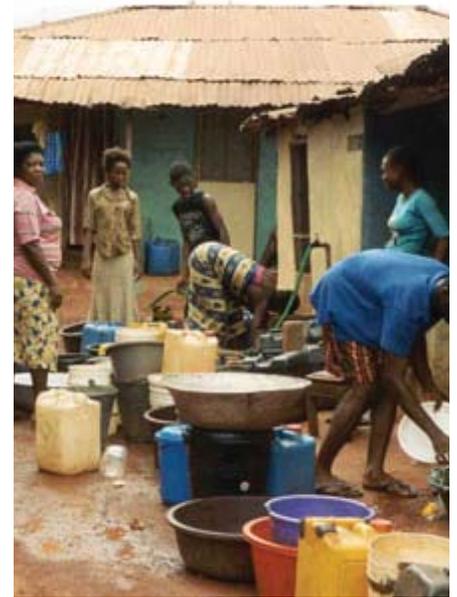
2004 by meeting with community and business leaders to get a sense of the community's needs and the way they felt about their neighborhood. Planners then conducted a community-wide seminar, attended by 80 residents, to gauge what they liked about Isawiyya and what aspects of their neighborhood they wanted to retain within the context of the new plan. From here, the work became more specific and committee-focused.

Public lands emerged as the biggest source of conflict. Residents of Isawiyya did not have a realistic mechanism for expropriating land for public purposes and had difficulty deciding if it should be a voluntary allocation from property owners or if a larger power such as the municipality should be responsible for acquiring land. Other disagreements surfaced over whether commercial spaces and public spaces should be concentrated in a central location, or dispersed throughout the community.

The plan that resulted from the collaboration between Bimkom and Isawiyya is now viewed as a model for planning in East Jerusalem. Because it achieved "buy-in" from Isawiyya residents and leaders, the plan has legitimacy on the ground, and Israeli planning institutions see it as a feasible option. Most importantly, it introduced the idea of community-based planning to Israelis and Palestinians, and included a population not often involved in the political process. By producing a truly viable vision, Bimkom and Isawiyya set an example for locations, in the Middle East and beyond, where collaborative urban planning has never been practiced.

More information on Bimkom is available at www.bimkom.org.

Becca Nagorsky received a masters degree in urban planning from New York University in 2006. She spent a year in Israel immediately prior. In September, Becca is moving to Israel permanently and hopes to pursue a planning career there.



'Home-grown systems should not be regarded as illegal'

Developing a People-centred Approach to Urbanization in Africa

Text and Photos By Carole Rakodi

THIS ARTICLE WAS ORIGINALLY PRINTED IN THE UN CHRONICLE: www.unchronicle.com

About 40 per cent of Africa's population currently live in towns and cities, according to the UN Population Division estimates, and over 50 per cent will do so by 2025. While the overall population growth is expected to be 2.1 per cent a year between 2000 and 2030, despite declining fertility and the impact of HIV/AIDS, the urban population is expected to grow initially at 3.3 per cent. This conceals a considerable variation, with some urban centres increasing from 4 to 5 per cent per annum, while others grow at slower

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Urbanization in Africa

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rates.¹ Although presently Africa is the least urbanized region, by 2030 its urban population is expected to exceed the total population of Europe. Over half of the continent's urban population lives in urban centres comprising fewer than half a million people. Beyond these estimates, it is extremely hard to be precise; lack of resources, conflict and political difficulties mean that census data is patchy and unreliable. Some large countries like Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo have no reliable population figures. For example, although we think that Lagos and Kinshasa are among Africa's largest cities, we do not know how many people live there. In addition, economic crisis, conflict and drought lead to fluctuations in urban populations that are often not captured by census figures. Conventional wisdom has it that the incidence of poverty and its severity and depth are greater in rural areas. Urban residents, it is alleged, benefit from the opportunities offered by urban labour markets, a greater availability of utilities and better access to education and health services. In the period of economic growth and public sector expansion in the 1960s, that was true in some countries: import-substitution industrialization policies led to growing employment opportunities; the public sector expanded; utilities installed during the colonial period had not yet broken down under the pressure of rapid urban growth; and committed post-independence governments found it easier to deliver free social services in accessible urban areas. However, the oil price increases of the 1970s, followed by the debt crisis and the adoption or imposition of structural adjustment policies (SAPs) in the 1980s, soon changed the situation.

Urban people, inevitably more integrated into the cash economy than those living in rural areas, were hard hit by inflation and private-sector stagnation, even before the policies typical of the SAP "short sharp shock" treatment, such as price decontrol, job shedding by public and private sectors alike, reduced expenditure on services, reduction or elimination of subsidies and increased user charges.

Driven by a hypothesis that "urban bias" in policy and investment was an important contributor to the failure of African countries to develop, the supposedly privileged urban population was to have its advantages eliminated. SAPs were, therefore, deliberately anti-urban in their effects. The extent to which there really was urban bias, whether it persists or has an adverse impact on economic development, remains controversial. Some allege that it continues, but the limited research undertaken has been unable to demonstrate the magnitude of the effects of urban bias or their implications for growth and poverty, since investment returns may also vary between urban and rural areas, being potentially greater in the former.¹ Unfortunately, in the 1980s, SAPs were generally blind to equity implications. Even when attempts to collect poverty data were launched, these were based on national sample surveys and could rarely be disaggregated sufficiently to permit intra-urban analysis.

Average urban incomes are no doubt higher than average rural incomes. The proportion of people living in poverty is smaller and the standards of service provision per person are higher in urban than in rural areas. However, available figures indicate that income and consumption inequality is generally greater within urban areas. The presence of services does not mean that the poor can access them, and rates of impoverishment were significant in some urban areas during the 1980s. Many analysts believe that price decontrol, public sector downsizing and subsidy reduction impoverished large sections of the urban population, whereas rural people could always produce their own food even though they never had good access to subsidized services. The incidence of poverty is generally higher in secondary cities than in the largest urban centres, but where data are available they show an increase in both, for example in Côte d'Ivoire between 1985 and 1995.² Urban people who were adversely affected included the already poor and the so-called "new poor"—those who lost their jobs or whose declining real incomes were no longer sufficient to support a family.

Although economic growth has picked up in some African countries since the 1990s

and national trends show some decrease in the incidence of poverty, many urban dwellers continue to live in extreme poverty. Official figures show that half or more urban residents are poor. Where they show a lower proportion, this may reflect a failure to allow for higher cost of living in urban areas, where residents need to pay for rent, transport, water and sometimes the use of public toilets.³ It is argued that if urban life realities are taken into account, the situation of the poor is as severe as in many rural areas. Poor urban people have incomes insufficient to meet basic needs, lack assets and secure tenure, live in poor and overcrowded housing conditions, have inadequate access to infrastructure and services, have no social safety net and are powerless to influence decision-making.

It is estimated that about 60 per cent of Africa's urban labour force are in the informal sector, many earning low and irregular incomes. For many, the need to diversify income sources to improve security hinders investment in their enterprise to increase its scale and profitability. In many urban centres, households' economic and social links straddle urban and rural areas. In some cities, for example, many are split households, in which the husband migrates for work while the wife continues to farm. Elsewhere, especially when successive generations have been urban dwellers and chronic poverty has eroded the ability of poor households to maintain rural ties, claims to rural land and kinship links have declined.

Most poor and many not-so-poor urban dwellers live in informal settlements, known as "slums". According to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), these are characterized by the lack of basic services, inadequate housing, high densities and overcrowding, unhealthy living conditions, insecure tenure, poverty and social exclusion. In 2001, it was estimated that 72 per cent of Africa's urban population lived in slums and the annual average growth rate of the slum populations was at 4.5 per cent between 1990 and 2001, nearly double the total urban population growth rate (2.7 per cent per annum).⁴

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These living conditions are reflected in indicators of access to services and health outcomes, which need to be disaggregated within cities and by city size. Overall in sub-Saharan Africa, 28 per cent of urban households lack safe drinking water, and about 50 per cent or more do not have adequate sanitation.

The average proportion of urban people lacking access to three basic services—potable water, improved sanitation and electricity—has been estimated at between 44 and 63 per cent of the poor and 34 per cent of the non-poor. Health indicators demonstrate the impacts of poor living environments. For example, under-five mortality and morbidity rates are higher in Nairobi's slums than in the entire city and equal to or higher than in Kenya's rural areas—11 per cent of children living in slums die before they reach the age of five, compared to less than 1 per cent in non-slum areas.⁵ High mortality and morbidity rates and poverty are exacerbated by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the prevalence of which is invariably higher in urban than rural areas. In high-prevalence locations, it affects every family directly or indirectly through illness, death or an increased burden of care for orphans and the sick. The vicious cycle of poverty and HIV/AIDS is reinforced by risky sexual behaviour. It has been found that poor women in Nairobi's slums engage in sexual activity at an earlier age and with a larger number of partners than elsewhere due to high unemployment and low and unstable incomes.⁶ In addition to gross inequalities within cities, provision in smaller cities and towns lags behind that in the largest cities.

Life for the urban poor is unpredictable: piped water is unreliable, informal settlements are susceptible to flooding, illness and death may affect people at any time, and eviction, crime and violence are prevalent. Many believe that privations of slum life have a destabilizing effect on households, leading to a vicious cycle of breakdown and impoverishment. The prevalence of slum conditions is a testament to the inability of poorly-resourced local government and public-sector

agencies to keep pace with rapid urban growth.

The first step in addressing these challenges is to improve understanding of the realities of life in African cities: how the urban poor understand poverty and deprivation, how they attempt to develop secure and adequate livelihoods and what holds them back; and, in conjunction with other urban actors, how they have evolved ways of delivering and accessing goods and services they need. In contemporary African cities, only a minority of workers are in formal employment. In practice, households support themselves by a mixture of income-generating activities, mostly in the informal sector, and self-provisioning, for example urban agriculture, building on the resources to which they have access, such as labour power, education, health, land and housing, basic services, transport, savings and credit. Their assets and ability to undertake various livelihood activities are differentiated by individual characteristics—age, gender, religion, ethnicity—and the composition of households.⁷ An understanding of how people use their limited resources to cope with adversity or improve their well-being, and how wider economic changes and policies can erode people's resources and hinder their ability to develop secure livelihoods, can point to appropriate policy approaches.

First and most important is to avoid damaging policies and regulatory practices. The availability of livelihood opportunities depends above all on economic growth. However, experience demonstrates that if the distributional effects of economic growth are not considered, its potential benefits in terms of employment opportunities and poverty reduction may not be felt, while particular policies may actively hurt the already disadvantaged. It is clear that relying solely on the market or user charges to provide services exacerbates poverty. Falling school rolls and deteriorating health indicators in the 1980s led to recognition that without State intervention, access by the poor will fall, and that regulatory environments not conducive to business will hinder investment and economic growth. Similarly, at the local level, pricing policies for services may exclude those most in need, and



damaging regulatory policies, such as harassment of informal-sector enterprises, evictions and demolitions of slum settlements, exacerbate deprivation.

Second, there is scope for policies to support economic growth and the livelihoods of the urban poor. The public sector has a key role in facilitating economic growth by ensuring macro-economic stability, instituting a more conducive regulatory environment for business and improving service delivery. Policies can provide modest support to livelihood strategies of the poor and enable them to improve their well-being and accumulate resources that can increase their resilience in the face of shocks and stresses. The scope of households for investing in human, physical and social capital is determined by the educational, health and environmental services available, security of tenure and the right to organize and exercise political voice. For example, even if water is charged for, more efficient provision resulting in decreased prices releases resources to meet other needs. Also, access to financial institutions can enable people to borrow, and environmental hazards can be reduced by working with informal entrepreneurs and developers to improve practices and standards.

Third, for supportive and regulatory policies to be designed and implemented, urban governance systems appropriate to African circumstances of limited financial and administrative capacity, as well as limited state legitimacy and private sector development, are needed. These need the capacity to foster economic development and provide services to the urban populations. Larger cities have the most diversified economies and are best placed to attract non-primary domestic and foreign investment. They have great potential to raise a significant proportion of their

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BOOK REVIEW: EVIL PARADISES

Dreamworlds of Neoliberalism

*Edited by
Mike Davis and Daniel Bertrand Monk*

Reviewed by David Godfrey

Imagine skiing in the desert (Dubai's indoor snow mountains, complete with ski lifts and polar bears, for instance); a backyard full of buffalo (Ted Turner's 2 million acres of ranch land with 40,000 bison for example); and a world where some consider being poor a crime (Johannesburg and other cities). These are just some of the vignettes presented in *Evil Paradises: Dreamworlds of Neoliberalism*, a new tome edited by Mike Davis and Daniel Bertrand Monk, which strives to answer the question: "toward what kind of future are we being led" by rampant capitalism?

The extent to which you enjoy (or not) *Evil Paradises* will depend on how much you agree with the leftist views espoused by Davis in his previous works. However, because the book contains good reporting and interesting stories, no matter your stance on neo-liberalism, you can still learn something from *Evil Paradises*.

Each essay examines a different problem attributed to the Dollar (or Dirham, Pound, Yuan, or Rial). Readers are presented with the missteps of Egypt's economic restructuring and the fantasy of Dubai. We're taken to a free-trade zone in the heart of the Iranian desert and shown a landscape redolent of southern California. And of course we visit the "ecologies of fear" (the title of Davis's previous book) that dot our landscapes.

Marina Fort's look at Arg-e-Jadid in Iran is more a presentation of facts rather than a hammering home of conclusions. That a relatively wealthy and free (no internet censorship) village could sprout in Iran is testament enough to the power of international commerce. The watchful eye of the central government generally stays closed in Arg-e-

Jadid. This special economic zone is so eager to attract foreign capital, including that of the Iranian diaspora, that the city provides amenities lacking in most of Iran. Here gourmet fusion restaurants serve residents of suburban tract homes connected to broadband internet.

Other essays are not so apolitical. The piece on Egypt lays the blame for that country's problems squarely on the government's attempts to appease the United States and the International Monetary Fund. Perhaps Egypt's problems would have been just as bad without foreign guidance? The homegrown corruption seems as if it would have done just fine if left to its own devices. Another author's weekend at a friend's house is an invitation to look at gated communities in Asia. The Disneyfied Palm Springs community in Hong Kong, where Filipina maids sleep in prefabricated sheds on top of suburban tract homes, is yet another example of the surrealist environments that ensue when East meets West.

China Mieville's piece on floating tax-havens enlightens readers to the follies of the libertarian rich. They sometimes ask themselves: Now that my existing off-shore tax-haven no longer satisfies, should I just build a new one? Melville shows how the ideas of the rich, from making sovereign nations out of sand atolls to building floating cities, are grander than their ability to actually bring a plan to fruition. Thus, many of their schemes, even after large investments of time and money, fail to make the transition from the dream-world into reality.

The quality of the writing in *Evil Paradises* is variable, though the points are well made. The research is generally strong and the footnotes are aplenty—though the opinions come through quite strongly at times. All in all, this is a good primer to the downsides of the Washington Consensus; in short, a Fodor's guide to the neo-liberal excesses of our global economy.

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EVENTS CALENDAR

September 19-23
43rd Annual ISOCARP Congress
Antwerp, Belgium
www.isocarp.org

September 23-26
International Federation for Housing and Planning (IFHP) World Congress
Copenhagen, Denmark
www.ifhp2007copenhagen.dk

October 1-5
2007 International Conference on the State of Safety in World Cities
UN-Habitat/ Monterrey Forum of Cultures
Monterrey, Mexico
www.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=545

November 1-3
25th Annual International Conference on Urban Waterfronts
Boston, Massachusetts
www.waterfrontcenter.org/conference

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revenue needs, provided they have the legal basis and political autonomy to do so. National governments have traditionally let their fear of alternative political and administrative power bases outweigh their willingness to encourage the development of accountable and effective city management, leading most urban governments to have unfunded mandates. They depend on central government for funds and therefore lack wide support and legitimacy in the eyes of urban residents and businesses. The economic health of smaller cities and towns depends on their functions in surrounding regions, such as provision of financial and business services, higher level of education and health services, administration, the supply of agricultural inputs and consumer goods, markets for agricultural produce, agro-processing, etc. While the scope for local revenue generation in small centres is probably less than in larger cities, they are no less in need of predictable central-local financial transfers and democratic local government structures.

It is clear that without effective urban management in Africa's towns and cities, the Millennium Development Goals will not be achieved—especially the MDG targets to attain universal primary education, reduce child mortality, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, halve the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe water and improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020—unless they are met in urban areas. Indeed, tackling the issues in urban areas has advantages because, although concentrations of people and waste in the absence of infrastructure increase environmental health risks, economies of scale and proximity can also facilitate cost-effective service provision.⁸

What is the way forward? It is clear that if economic policies deliver their anticipated benefits and if economic growth resumes, we can expect increased urbanization, since activities associated with urban areas are likely to play important roles in economic recovery and diversification. Also, if this positive scenario comes about, Governments should aim to enable poor urban residents to take advantage of economic opportunities by equipping

them with education, skills, good health, a secure residential base and adequate public transport. Increasing their assets, analysts suggest, enables them to improve the adequacy and security of their livelihoods. Human capital improvements, in particular, require better basic infrastructure and services, such as water, sanitation, solid waste management, public transport, land registration, education and vocational training, and health care and financial services. Redesigning approaches to urban management and supporting improvements to infrastructure and services require competent governance. Research demonstrates that competent governance also requires an organized civil society, supporting residents' efforts to exercise their political rights, a political commitment at central and local levels, and adequate resources from a combination of local revenue and central-local transfers.⁹

On the face of it, few African countries and urban centres have seen much progress towards developing responsive and accountable political and administrative structures or a capable bureaucracy. However, resourceful residents, public-sector employees and local officials have evolved ways that often work on a large scale and are widely understood and accepted, including systems of informal residential land delivery, retailing and market trade, social networks based on kin, religion or neighbourhood, water vending and governance of neighbourhoods and markets. These evolving “home-grown” systems should not be regarded as “illegal” or the cause of urban problems or barriers to their solution. Instead, they and their relationships with State structures should be understood and built upon, and their weaknesses mitigated.

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Notes

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