

Urban Governance for Poverty Reduction and Social Development: Tools, Techniques and Good Practices

Fourth Asian Mayors' Forum

8-11 July 2002, Bangkok

Executive Summary of Proceedings

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Introduction

1. This Fourth Asian Mayors' Forum and Regional Workshop focused on the exchange of tools and best practices for poverty reduction and social development in urban areas using case studies of participating cities. It was recognized that cities are confronted with new challenges such as rapid urbanization, economic globalization and an information revolution. As a consequence, new urban problems are emerging. The nature of these challenges and problems may vary from city to city, but many basic issues are similar. Local governments, municipalities and civil society are looking for new answers to those challenges and problems. Alone and in partnerships they try new approaches. Some cities have

found innovative solutions for their problems and translated them into good practices and procedures. There is an ever growing pool of knowledge about innovative approaches to urban problems. It is obvious that other cities may be able to learn from the experience gained.

2. For this reason the Fourth Asian Mayors' Forum was initiated. In addition to sharing their experiences, they also discussed what support cities need to replicate or adapt the experiences made and how to upscale the positive practices. The knowledge about best practices and sometimes also less successful approaches is underutilized as it is not sufficiently analyzed and shared among interested parties. Regional networks and international organizations have launched programs to promote good practices, however dissemination of those cases is still at an early stage.

3. Accordingly the objectives of the Forum were to:

- Identify critical factors for the success of good practices (components, conditions, actors and key lessons)
- Identification of opportunities for replication and up-scaling of good practices (constraints, support required and roles and responsibilities)
- Discussion of role of partners in implementing, replicating and up-scaling of good practices such as central governments, NGOs, training organizations or international organizations

- Designing of a knowledge management system for the replication and up-scaling of good urban practices across cities, countries and cultures

Summary of Case Studies and Key Lessons

4. The main lessons derived from case studies were summarized and commented on by central government officials, NGOs and training institutions. These discussions were followed by a presentation about knowledge management required when new and best practices are to be applied. The Forum concluded by establishing an “Asian Regional Knowledge Management Network”.

5. Over 30 case studies were submitted and some 20 discussed in the plenary session or during group sessions. Case studies were drawn from Bangladesh, Cambodia, PRC, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam. All studies can be accessed at Asian Mayors’ Forum homepage on ADBI website at www.adbi.org/asiancities/ and also on ESCAP’s website under www.unescap.org

6. The case studies (i) first addressed the issue of how to improve living conditions in cities in particular of the poor and (ii) then discussed how to improve opportunities and access to municipal services for the poor in cities. The case studies on improving living conditions in the city for the poor focused on improving housing quality, reducing environmental degradation, reducing illness and improving health and improving mobility and affordable transport. Case studies on providing opportunities and access for the poor in the city focused on access to employment, income generating opportunities, access to urban services and community amenities, access to credit and providing skills training.

7. From the case studies a number of lessons and issues were identified that are common to many Asian cities:

- (1) The importance of cities in national growth is generally underestimated and inadequately accounted for in city planning (for example the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Seoul exceeds the entire GDP of Indonesia)

- (2) Cities occupy just 2 percent of the world’s land surface, but they use three quarters of the world’s resources and discharge a similar percentage of waste. A regional perspective in planning needs therefore to be taken
- (3) Knowledge of urbanization processes and urban development remains scattered and fragmented
- (4) Investments in infrastructure and industries need to take into account local implications and require coordination and linkage planning
- (5) Policies to stimulate and regulate growth are ad hoc and ineffective in particular with regard to urban areas
- (6) Urbanization and city development remains a low government priority
- (7) Available information and the skill level required for urban development activities remain low. This also applies to coordination of activities among organizations involved
- (8) Financial resources required to maintain and develop urban infrastructure and services remain insufficient. Moreover, such financial resources are used unimaginatively
- (9) The legal framework and institutional structure is generally inadequate, management systems are outdated and organizations ill equipped
- (10) Most cities do not sufficiently address the poverty problem. The vibrant informal sector remains misunderstood and is often even neglected
- (11) Existing rules and regulations are frequently unimaginative, restrictive, lead to unauthorized construction and breed corruption
- (12) Efforts to involve and educate people and to raise their civic and environmental consciousness need to be enhanced. This should lead to stronger participation of the major stakeholders
- (13) Positive as well as negative impacts of globalization on urban development are still not well understood
- (14) With increasing natural disasters, most cities are ill prepared for disaster management
- (15) Environmental pollution and degradation continues to worsen in most cities. Technologies to reverse this trend exist but are not applied
- (16) The social aspects of urban living, stress, tension gender discrimination, marginalization, crime are not addressed adequately
- (17) Ecological and social sustainability in Asian cities are endangered

Fourth Asian Mayors' Forum: Case Studies Submitted

NO.	NAME OF CITY	TITLE OF CASE STUDY
1.	Rajshahi, Bangladesh	Good Urban Governance for Poverty Reduction and Social Development
2.	Phnom Penh, Cambodia	Women's Economic & Legal Rights Program
3.	Phnom Penh, Cambodia	Community Participation in Urban Development Process
4.	Changchun, China	Address of Mr. Zhang Anshun, Mayor of Changchun
5.	Nanchang, China	City, Population, Aid-the-poor Program
6.	Shenyang, China	Strengthening Environmental Governance
7.	Taiyuan, China	Historic Cultural Values and the Development of a Modern Educational Industry in an Ancient City
8.	Administrative Centre for China's Agenda 21	Regional Development and Poverty Alleviation in China
9.	Chennai, India	Urban Governance—Sustainable Chennai Project
10.	Udupi, India	Brief Note on Udupi City Municipality
11.	Bogor, Indonesia	Poverty Alleviation through Good Governance Management
12.	Pondok Perasi, City of Mataram / Lombok Indonesia	Urban Quality Programme
13.	Vientiane, Lao PDR	Vientiane Municipal Women's Union's City Consultation on Gender and Urban Poverty Reduction
14.	Penang, Malaysia	Participatory Decision-Making Process in Urban Governance: A Narration of SERI's Experiences and Approaches
15.	Birendranagar, Nepal	Moving Towards Urban Good Governance and Poverty Reduction
16.	Lodhran, Pakistan	Lodhran Pilot Project (LPP)—Case Study and Manual for Urban Sanitation
17.	Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines	Urban Environmental Governance Through SCP-EPM Process
18.	Makassar, Philippines	The Dealing with of Social Community Problems in Makassar City
19.	Mandaluyong, Philippines	The Mandaluyong—Pasig River Resettlement and Rehabilitation Project
20.	Manila, Philippines	The Role of the League of Cities of the Philippines in Promoting Good Urban Governance
21.	Muntinlupa, Philippines	Adopt a School Program
22.	Naga, Philippines	Putting Power in the Hands of Our People
23.	Pasig City, Philippines	Bayanihang Paluwagan Sa Pasig (Mutual Help Micro Finance in Pasig)
24.	City of San Fernando, Pampanga, Philippines	Case Study
25.	Sri Lanka	National Replication Strategy: Sustainable Sri Lankan Cities Programme
26.	Colombo, Sri Lanka	Green Star Home Project
27.	Colombo, Sri Lanka	Achievements through Benchmarking and Continuous Improvement in Solid Waste Management in the Underserved Settlements
28.	Dehiwala Mt. Lavinia, Sri Lanka	A Demonstration Project on Community Based Waste Recycling Project in Partnership with the Municipality and other Partners, Dehiwala Mt. Lavinia Municipal Council Area (DMMC), Sri Lanka
29.	Kotte, Sri Lanka	A Demonstration Project on Generation of Bio-Gas Using Market Waste
30.	Hai Duong, Viet Nam	Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships to Promote and Create Urban Employment
31.	Vinh City, Viet Nam	The Road to Good Urban Governance for a Balanced Sustainable Urban Development

8. From the lessons learned and issues outlined, it emerged that good governance is central for urban development and poverty reduction. Good governance in this context includes (i) a progressive perspective which is a function of good leadership which local authorities must provide, (ii) functional partnerships which are vehicles that enable cities to tap community resources and (iii) participation to ensure long-term sustainability by generating broad-based stakeholder and community ownership over local undertakings.

9. Another requirement considered necessary for good urban development in support of poverty reduction and social development was the solid and well-funded autonomy of local authorities.

10. Case studies also revealed the importance of accountability of governments and politicians for their actions. Accountability therefore requires governments to engage with its constituents—especially with those who are marginalized and poor. It was noted that the process of engaging communities in the formulation and implementation of public policy and development programs has evolved significantly over the several decades. There has been a four-step evolution of processes to involve communities and other stakeholders:

- 1 Consultation which involves telling communities what governments intend to do to implement certain policies and projects
- 2 Participation which involves asking communities and other stakeholders what they want and taking their views into consideration in the formulation of policies and projects
- 3 Engagement which allows communities and civil society to make limited decisions about matters that affect local or national interests and become involved in the implementation of projects under the umbrella of governments
- 4 Co-governance which devolves functions and powers of governments to communities and businesses to take actions on behalf of government

11. It was noted that most societies have reached step (2) of the above process. Some of the case studies showed that certain cities are already involved in step (3) and reported positive experiences with engaging communities.

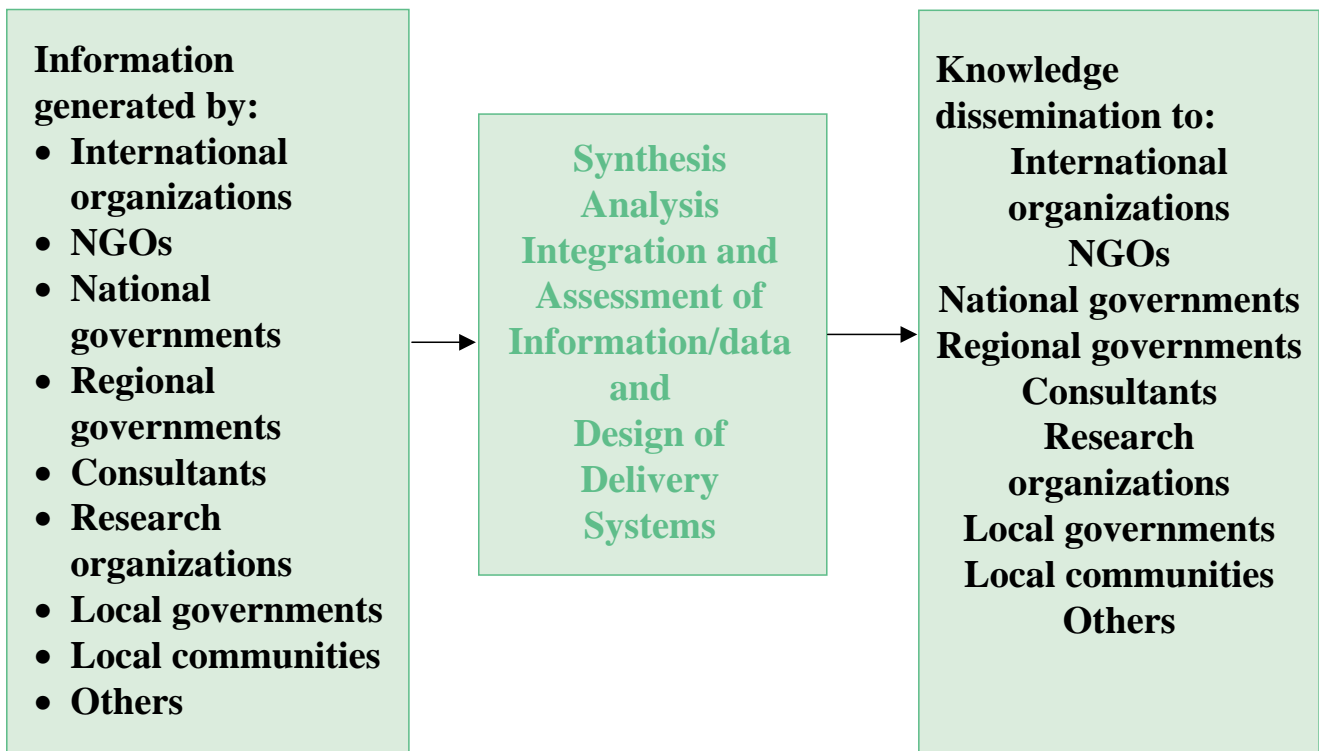
Critical Factors for Success

12. The case studies revealed that a number of preconditions have to be met if municipal programs are to succeed. First of all it was considered essential that local governments need to be fully responsive to any such project. Without active involvement of local authorities, projects are likely to fail. But local governments alone will normally not be able to ensure the success of a program. All stakeholders need to be involved and partnerships between the various actors initiated. This applies in particular to the poor, if they are to be benefited by a program. Unfortunately many actors are frequently insufficiently equipped with undertaking the tasks given to them in a specific project or program. Their capacity therefore needs to be strengthened prior to the project/program start. Social inclusion is also an essential factor for success. Frequently the interest and needs of certain groups of urban dwellers are not sufficiently taken into account. This applies in particular to gender issues.

13. From an administrative aspect, projects are often initiated without clear objectives or impact analysis. Another precondition for project success is therefore the preparation of proper project planning and management framework which would include an analysis of objectives and impacts, a problem analysis, stakeholder analysis, benchmarking, monitoring and evaluation.

14. The case studies revealed that interventions that focus on a single sector in support of community development and poverty reduction in urban areas do not normally succeed in achieving the desired impacts. Instead it was acknowledged that a multi-sectoral approach would be required in particular to overcome poverty in urban areas. This again will require strong coordination of activities between the various actors involved.

Chart 1. The Knowledge Management Process



Constraints and Opportunities for Replication and Up-scaling of Good Practices

15. It emerged from the case studies that there might be various constraints that may restrict replication of best practice examples. First of all there is frequently lack of awareness of opportunities within various possible stakeholder groups. Sometimes it may be simply a lack of information of existing good practices, but many times opportunities are also not taken up because of information overload. This happens in particular within government agencies which are regularly flooded with information. Better information management within municipalities and other local governments is therefore essential.

16. But even if the awareness of potential investment opportunities is present, there is frequently a lack of political will or consensus to introduce innovative practices. New practices are often considered risky to

implement and in particular political entities are frequently risk averse.

17. Even if local authorities are familiar with new and innovative practices, there is often a lack of understanding of local conditions. This applies in particular to the understanding of poverty in urban areas. As a consequence opportunities to introduce new approaches to poverty reduction are frequently missed. Again this calls for stronger participation and engagement of all stakeholders in all phases of a project cycle.

18. Another constraint for replication is the lack of capacity in local organizations to implement new practices. This may also occasionally include mistrust between the various actors involved about their motives and capacities. Training, capacity building and information dissemination is therefore essential.

19. Innovative projects are frequently not introduced due to their long-term nature. Politicians usually have

a short-term horizon until the next reelection campaign and many international organizations are mainly interested in meeting their commitment and disbursement targets set for a fiscal year. There is also a lack of direct contact between city-level organization and many donor agencies and a frequent shift in the priorities in particular of international donors. This makes planning of innovative projects and programs increasingly cumbersome.

20. Often programs are implemented without transparency and a lack of accountability. While this normally will result in a failure of the program, the learning effect from such failure also remains limited. And yet learning from mistakes may often result in excellent new approaches as the various stakeholders would then know what kind of mistakes are best avoided.

Role of Partners

21. Efforts to improve the quality of life within cities do not take place in isolation. Municipalities and local governments may initiate projects and programs, but they need the support and involvement of other stakeholders such as NGOs, the private sector or national governments. They can also draw on the know-how and expertise of other possible partners such as training and research organizations or international organizations. Such organizations are frequently willing to share experience gained and act as a broker to bring different cities together so they can learn from each other (twinning arrangements). Discussions of case studies also revealed the need for organizations to provide training and capacity building for local government organizations.

22. It was noted that direct contact between the project implementing agency on the local level and the funding agency is required. Unfortunately such direct contact is frequently hampered by national governments' requirements such as clearance procedures or lack of required counterpart funds.

Need for Knowledge Management

23. As a consequence of the constraints outlined above it was felt that more intensive knowledge management

would be appropriate for a better application and dissemination of best practice cases and innovative approaches in good governance and social development. Based on the assumption that knowledge is the foundation for equitable and sustainable development, cities are now challenged to apply sound practices of information management and organizational learning. Cities and other actors involved such as NGOs, training and research organizations, should locate and share information and knowledge internally and become learning organizations. They should share knowledge with other developmental actors including international organizations ensuring accountable development.

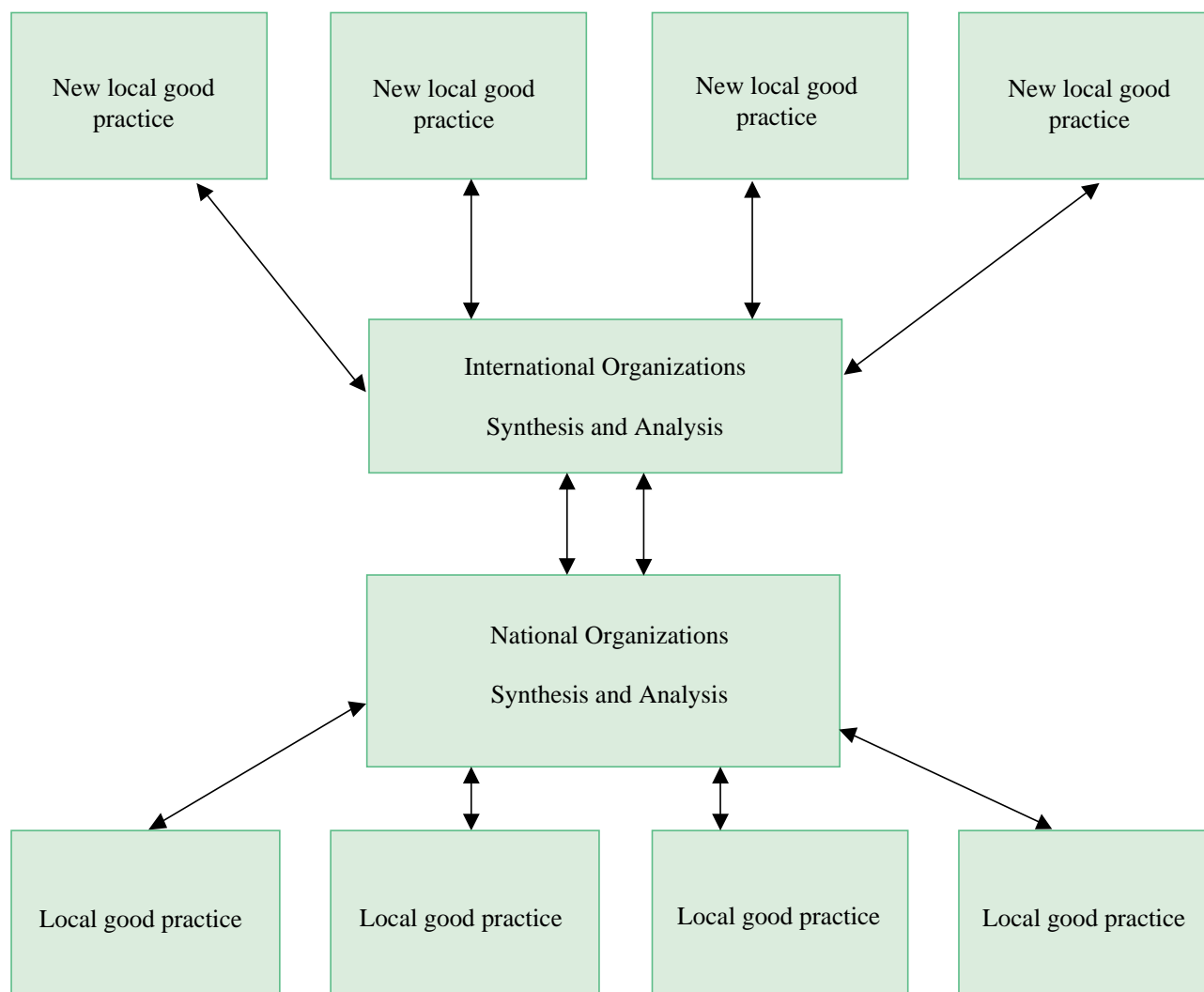
24. Knowledge management systems suitable for urban development in support of poverty reduction and social development should identify, analyze, develop and disseminate knowledge and experience on good practices for the sake of replication and up-scaling across cities, countries and cultures. Urban knowledge management has to collect appropriate information (data), translate good practices from a single project or program under particular conditions into wider applicable project conditions and create processes and networks that can learn and adapt to these good practices. A basic knowledge management process is proposed in **Chart 1** above.

25. Knowledge management therefore would need to consist of various steps and include:

- Information collection
- Knowledge generation through dialogue
- Networking in particular on national and regional level
- Knowledge sharing between communities and other stakeholders
- Cooperation between cities (such as through twinning arrangements)
- Capacity building and training of city institutions
- Facilitation by international organizations

26. Knowledge dissemination can be done through a number of channels such as workshops, seminars, distance education, books, manuals, videos, websites, CD roms, etc. To establish a knowledge management organization the entity's understanding of how it creates, accesses, uses, transfers, transmits and stores informa-

Chart 2. Regional Urban Knowledge Management System



tion has to be established, the knowledge work processes have to be improved and a knowledge-oriented culture needs to be built up.

Conclusion

27. The Forum concluded by emphasizing the importance of good governance, public participation and engagement for urban development and poverty reduction. There are, however, many obstacles that still hamper urban development efforts. These obstacles relate more to skills, knowledge and attitudes rather than finance. Investment in people should therefore be given priority over investments in hardware. Information sharing through knowledge management would be an essential element in overcoming these deficiencies.

The Forum on Good Urban Governance for Poverty Reduction and Social Development—Exchange of Tools, Techniques and Good Practices was held from 8 to 11 July at the headquarters of ESCAP in Bangkok. The Forum was jointly organized and sponsored by the following international organizations: Asian Development Bank Institute (ADB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asian Institute of Management (AIM), CITYNET, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Sustainable Cities Programme (Asia), UNDP The Urban Governance Initiative (TUGI), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the Urban Management Programme (Asia) and the Urban Partnership Foundation (UPF). It was attended by 220 participants, including mayors, other city leaders, central government officials, NGOs and representatives of academia and of international organizations.

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