C4D NETWORK – TOPICAL PAPER
C4D & URBAN

THE URBAN FUTURE

Urbanization has been one of the most significant driving forces of recent global development, with more than half the world's population now living in cities. And this proportion will continue to rise. It is estimated that by 2050 nearly 70% of the world's population will live in cities. Between 2000 and 2030, the entire built-up urban area in developing countries is projected to triple.

Urbanization has enabled economic growth and innovation across all regions, currently accounting for three-quarters of global economic production. At the same time, urbanization has also contributed to environmental and socioeconomic challenges, including climate change, waste and pollution, congestion, and the rapid growth of slums. [1]

Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG11) envisages future cities that are inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable for all. In addition, and in keeping with SDG11, the New Urban Agenda[2] is striving to ensure that future cities, towns and basic urban infrastructures and services are more environmentally accessible, user-friendly, and inclusive of all people's needs, including persons with disabilities.[3]

With this urban context in mind a key question is therefore 'What can be done to enable cities to achieve these goals, and how can Communication for Development (C4D) as an area of development practice contribute and add value?'

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE URBAN CONTEXT

Communication for Development or 'C4D' is about the strategic use of communication processes and tools for development goals.[4] Processes relate to diverse areas of C4D practice such as social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) - where analytical frameworks such as social norms analysis inform communication strategies, and where methods such as edutainment convey information and engender social change. Other areas include ICT for Development (ICT4D), offering a growing richness of digital innovations and two-way communication opportunities; advocacy, with a strong emphasis on policy influence as well as increasingly on resourcing local advocacy voices; and social mobilisation, with the community as the site of action and decision-making. All these areas and the plethora of communication and processes they offer are potential instruments for change. The channels

---

[1] Adapted from World Bank Sustainable Cities Blogs:
http://blogs.worldbank.org/sustainablecities/category/tags/social-inclusion
[2] New Urban Agenda: http://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/
[3] Adapted from World Bank Sustainable Cities Blogs.
http://blogs.worldbank.org/sustainablecities/category/tags/social-inclusion.
[4] World Summit C4D Definition: http://www.fao.org/communication-for-development/en/

they use are also tools that can be harnessed in diverse ways; these include the traditional – and still powerful - media tools of TV and radio broadcast and printed media, as well as new and emerging digital platforms and technologies, and not to be forgotten the elemental tools of interpersonal communications.

So, considering urban development what is the role of such 'C4D'? How are the uses of communication processes and tools being thought about and practiced?

URBAN DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES & C4D

In the 'Kuala Lumpur Declaration on Cities 2030', released after the ninth session of the World Urban Forum in Feb 2018, the signatories highlighted the limited communication opportunities by varied groups and sectors in the urban setting as a persistent challenge. They further noted the important need for these diverse groups to communicate and work together in urban planning, in the face of inequitable access to many aspects of the city; and the need for inclusive planning approaches and understanding of the potential of new technologies so 'no one is left behind'. **The Declaration also significantly highlights C4D communication processes and tools for participation and dialogue as 'key enablers for positive transformation'.** The Declaration states that: 'We believe that global, regional, national and local implementation frameworks of the New Urban Agenda being formulated since its adoption should be supported by key enablers capable of unlocking positive transformation, [these include]:
- Strengthening systems that ensure continuous dialogue among different levels of government and participation of all actors, and increasing multilevel and cross-sectoral coordination, transparency and accountability.
- Encouraging sharing of creative solutions and innovative practices which enable a shift in mindset necessary to drive change.
- Building inclusive partnerships and strengthening age and gender responsive environments to ensure meaningful participation and engagement at all levels.' [5]

To achieve inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities for all the theme of social inclusion is a top priority. It is also an area that is deeply related to C4D. Key communication for development approaches and tools contribute to the building of more inclusive contexts.

It is the role of people and the participation or exclusion of people (whether these are specific groups, local communities, authorities or other stakeholders) that determines the quality of developments. Many aspects of urban development relate to C4D because people are at the root of issues; and the urban strategies designed to respond to these issues should also be people-focused, even when their implementation may appear purely technical in terms of engineering and architecture, urban planning or the application of technology.

---

[5] https://unhabitat.org/tag/social-inclusion/

SOCIAL INCLUSION

Social inclusion in general refers to the involvement of a wide range of social groups (including vulnerable and marginalised groups that can easily be excluded) in different spheres of life by improving their accessibility to public and private services. Accordingly, socially inclusive planning puts the emphasis on the residents and their groupings and on the inclusion of the socially weaker parts of them.[6]

In the urban context, some of the key groups when considering social inclusion are defined by gender, age, condition and ethnicity or other marginalisation.

A Gender Approach
A gender approach to urban development can be aided by communication for development processes and tools; in promoting inclusive consultation in communities in ways that strongly seek out the equitable voice of men and women. For example, Oxfam's report on UK local government gender-sensitive participatory communications highlights strategies that are being used to promote gender equity in participation in urban renewal. '**To find out what really concerns both women and men, public participation needs to actively include them**.'[7]

Thames Gateway Forum, as a result of a new approach to participation, pioneered innovative ways of involving women in decision-making, in traditionally 'male' technical transport planning. Rather than restricting consultation on already agreed policy issues, women and men in the community were encouraged to raise their concerns. ….. Hearing from women and men: the specific needs of women and men need to be actively brought into "Statements of Community Involvement", now a statutory requirement in the new planning system. Practical issues such as when, where and how meetings are held, and a more open, proactive approach is needed, rather than a fixed agenda to comment on.'[8]

Indigenous Persons
In some countries of Latin America, the inclusion of indigenous people is an important area of focus. The World Bank's 'Inclusion Matters' report states 'that in order to ensure true economic and social inclusion, it is necessary not only to provide opportunities and access to services and markets, but also for societies to give excluded communities—such as Indigenous Peoples in urban areas—a sense of dignity ….. **Driving the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples in urban environments is not only economically smart, as an integral pillar to build more equitable, just, and prosperous cities,** but it is also the right thing to do, as the cultural

---

[6] Ivan Tosics, (ivan.tosics) URBACT Network: Article available in World Bank Sustainable Cities Blog archive.

[7] Author Clara Greed, Professor of Inclusive Urban Planning and Architecture at the Faculty of the Built Environment at University of the West of England. Oxfam .This briefing was commissioned by Oxfam as part of the ReGender project which trains regeneration practitioners, and influences decision-makers to include women's voices, and use a systematic gender analysis in regeneration programmes.

[8] ibid

diversity that these individuals and communities can bring will make Latin American cities more inclusive and resilient.'[9]

For example, in Argentina the rate of urbanization of its indigenous population is among the highest in the region, at over 82 per cent. In places as far away from their traditional territories as Rosario and La Plata, Qom communities not only demand fair inclusion, they also put forth proposals for self-development that can potentially expand our understanding of the urban landscape. 40 indigenous communities are officially registered in urban areas of the Buenos Aires Province, and as much as one quarter of all Indigenous Peoples in Argentina make a living in or around the Capital of Tango, whether in communities or not. What do they do? What conditions they are living in? What is happening to their unique cultures and languages? Are they losing connection with their ancestral lands? Is the special legislation protecting their collective rights relevant in the cityscape? In sum, how is the city changing them and, inversely, how are they shaping the urban landscape? [10]

Disabled Persons
The issue of inclusion of people with disabilities in urban development is also a significant one around the world, and the need for disability-inclusive urban development cities was emphasized at the Ninth World Urban Forum (WUF9), held in Kuala Lumpur. In an interview from the Forum, Sameh Wahba, World Bank Director for Urban and Territorial Development and Disaster Risk Management, emphasized the importance of **"ensuring access for all, not just in the sense of access to transport and infrastructure, but also in the sense of creating opportunities for all, in particular for persons with disabilities."** [11]

As already noted, in keeping with SDG11, the New Urban Agenda also emphasis the role of disabled persons; and is focused on ensuring that future cities, towns and basic urban infrastructures and services are more environmentally accessible, user-friendly, and inclusive of all people's needs, including persons with disabilities. [12]

Within this in mind the issue of how to support people with disabilities to communicate and be part of participatory processes is important. Are there projects and initiatives that can provide some shared learning about how this is being done well in some parts of the world?

SHARING LESSONS FROM MEDELLIN
Learning from each other is a central human activity and in the case of urban development and communication there are many lessons to be gathered and shared. One city that is often quoted as an example of learning is Medellin, Colombia.

---

[9] Adapted from this source. http://blogs.worldbank.org/sustainablecities/category/tags/social-inclusion.

[10] ibid

[11] Adapted from World Bank, Sustainable Cities Blog. http://blogs.worldbank.org/sustainablecities/category/tags/social-inclusion. Co-authors: Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo (@McNhlapo), the World Bank's Global Advisor for Disability Inclusion, & World Bank Director for Urban and Territorial Development and Disaster Risk Management, Sameh Wahba (@SamehNWahba).

[12] ibid

Although known during the 1980s and most of the 1990s as the most violent city in the world, the city is putting those years behind it by working toward building a more inclusive, vibrant, and resilient city. To do this the city of Medellin has successfully implemented an integrated and multi-sector approach that has included a combination of violence prevention programs and a deep commitment of its people to build a prosperous, inclusive and livable city. For that reason, the experience of Medellin in integral urban transformation and social resilience attracts intense interest from other cities around the world. [13]

Recently a 1000+ audience of C4D practitioners and thinkers at the largescale Social & Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) Summit held in Bali in April 2018[14] heard from a former Mayor of Medellin, Anibal Gaviria, about how central communications has been in the processes of urban change there, with the city being one of the often-studied examples of strategic urban change in recent years.

Gaviria outlined the 4 key principles behind the city's transformation: (1) planning, (2) transparency, (3) citizen participation, and (4) communication.

He noted that **citizen participation** was promoted through interlinking strategies, including as a transversal element through interventions in public space; through participatory budgeting; and most significantly through "participatory processes with the communities through dialogue and debate during the development plan"; and with such planning being given time "as a long-term territorial plan" – with consultations about how to 'occupy' the territory. "It [Medellin's development] was discussed over two years with more than 2,000 meetings."

When speaking about the fourth principle of communication he emphasised the many ways that people were kept informed about developments. "Communication is a basic principle, like a credo…to govern is to communicate. **Communication is not an option, but a constant obligation – a daily process where we communicate and receive communication from the citizens**." This links closely with the principle of transparency, "the process that Medellin has gone through was triggered by high levels of transparency, being honest and open with their citizens together with a clear accountability compared with other Colombian and Latin America cities."[15]

This type of external communication emphasises keeping open and well-used channels of communication between the community of policymakers, urban designers and strategists and the actual people of the city.

There is a continuum of 'communication' in this example that is common across development, and which is part of the paradigm shift from primarily information delivery to more

---

[13] World Bank Sustainable Cities Blogs

[14] www.sbccsummit.org

[15] https://c4d.org/communication-is-not-an-option-but-a-constant-obligation-2018-sbcc-summit-keynote-speech-by-anibal-gaviria-former-mayor-of-medellin-colombia

empowerment and participatory strategies. Both ends of the continuum have value it should be noted.

Within urban development this communication continuum is the imperative to keep people informed of urban development planning and activity on the one hand (and by doing so to advance buy-in and engagement), and on the other more participatory end of the continuum to integrally engaging many different types of people as communicators themselves; participating, expressing and leading urban development in settings of increased social inclusion. This follows the C4D paradigm continuum and shift from information delivery to participation that is strongly present in C4D practice as advanced by UN agencies such as UNICEF.[16]

AREAS OF IMPACT

The six main areas of impact for C4D that track the continuum from information delivery to participation are: (1) information delivery & awareness raising, (2) resourcing people through communication routes, (3) aiding development practice using communication processes and tools; (4) advocating and resourcing advocates, (5) supporting increased voice and expression, and (6) promoting empowerment through communication participation. In the context of urban development all these areas are relevant.

Information delivery & awareness raising:

Informing people and building knowledge and awareness has always been an important area in development and it continues to be so; particularly in areas such as public health, humanitarian response and citizen education.

In the urban setting this is just as true as in non-urban settings as the range of needs and development areas are broad. The Ebola crisis for example was arguably more severe as an urban issue due to population proximities than in less populous contexts. All the key development areas such as WASH, education, livelihoods, governance, peace and social cohesion are exacerbated in the urban context.

However, it is also often true that the options for communicating information and raising-awareness are more plentiful in the urban context and this is a rich area of practice; using mass media, public space, interpersonal communications such as street theatre and much more.

Resourcing people through communication routes:

A decade ago the roll-out of telecentres used to be a commonly quoted example of the application of good communication strategy for development, in terms of helping to bridge the digital divide and provide access to ICTs to as many people as possible. Increasingly with

---

[16] UNICEF C4D: https://www.unicef.org/cbsc/

smartphone penetration more people have their own mini-telecentres on their phones or they share in the household or group, but telecentres and resource centres of different kinds are still important and part of urban strategies. In addition, Wi-Fi networks and municipal free access are important infrastructure and communication areas of planning.

In the context of the city, digital access is a priority area, and issues of social inclusion and the digital divide are significant because 'leaving no one behind' means developing mechanisms for equitable access to communication resources.

Aiding development practice using communication processes and tools:

There are many ways that communication processes and tools aid broader development agendas; adding as they do the vital element of consultation, participation and engagement. Within the urban context consultative communication with citizens is an important area.

This is what former mayor, Anibal Gaviria, was highlighting when saying that citizen participation was a core principle in the Medellin case study of strategic urban development.

A recent study on participatory planning in 40 European cities by EU-funded project Green Surge[17], recently found that formal urban planning consultative processes are often weak on real participation. The research found that 'in all cities of Europe forms of consultation are very often formal, more output oriented (aiming to approach the different stakeholder groups) than result oriented (to ensure that the different groups have really been contacted and their ideas have really been taken into account). In most countries of Europe the guidelines imposed by the state only encourage consultation and the involvement of stakeholder groups into the planning process in the weaker, output oriented form.'[18]

It is generally agreed that according to planning guidelines the more participative urban planning is, the better the outcomes are. However, in reality the link between more/deeper participation of residents and more positive social and environmental outcomes is not at all straightforward – public participation has many pitfalls. [19]

Arnstein's "Ladder of citizen participation" (Arnstein, 1969)[20] is probably the most cited piece of the planning literature. According to Arnstein there are 8 rungs on the ladder of citizen participation, from manipulation to citizen control. Leaving the first two (manipulation and

---

[17] Green Surge (2013-2017). Green Infrastructure and Urban Biodiversity for Sustainable Urban development and the Green Economy. A Collaborative Project under the EU's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. www.greensurge.eu

[18] Ivan Tosics, (ivan.tosics) URBACT Network: Article available in World Bank Sustainable Cities Blog archive.

[19] In this article the potential problems of public participation will be illustrated by examples of public square planning in Budapest and Berlin. The analysis is partly based on results achieved in the Green Surge project funded by the European Commission Seventh Framework Programme (FP7). Another source of inspiration is the USER network of URBACT.

[20] Arnstein, S.R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. Journal of the American Institute of Planners 35, 216-224

therapy) out of consideration, as these are solely about spreading information without allowing any feedback, real interaction between the partners starts with the next three rungs. Informing, consultation, and placation refer to cases where citizens have the right to express ideas, but the decision is still up to the public actor. The most developed stages of citizens' participation are those upper rungs (partnership, delegated power, citizen control) where co-planning results in co-decision and co-implementation.[21]

One of the main critiques in the planning literature against the (otherwise very useful) Arnstein ladder is that it refers only to top-down planning, not dealing with the other ways in which citizens may influence planning. Another important critique is that it does not consider the content of participation – which can easily turn into the exclusion of others who would also have the right to participate but who are weaker or less interested in the planning process.[22]

Allowing for bottom-up ideas in the participation process might be a step towards more socially inclusive planning, especially if these ideas are taken into consideration in decision-making. [23]

Advocating and resourcing advocates:

Beyond informing, resourcing and consulting, C4D processes and tools can go further and be instrumental in advocacy. This advocacy may be direct, i.e. designed and implemented by civil society organisations or special interests groups themselves with no intermediaries – or in-direct, whereby the C4D work is focused on supporting others to advocate for themselves; for instance, building the capacity of urban youth to advocate for their own interests within a local setting.

The Green Surge study on participatory planning also found that '…. **to achieve the best results the local government has to work together with a civil society that is not only permitted to participate but which also has a fairly high level of capacity to act.'**[24]

The act of participating is not always enough, people and groups need also to be able to then do something with that participation – whether for themselves, or to advocate further, or to be part of subsequent processes of urban design and feedback.

But this is not always easy; and there are significant issues of access and privilege that work against the required social inclusion in action that goes beyond consultative participation in urban planning.

---

[21] Ivan Tosics, (ivan.tosics) URBACT Network: Article available in World Bank Sustainable Cities Blog archive.
[22] ibid
[23] ibid
[24] (Baker-Eckerberg, 2008:91). Ivan Tosics, (ivan.tosics) URBACT Network: Article available in World Bank Sustainable Cities Blog archive.

Examples of participatory communication approaches for urban planning in Europe:

In the last decades radical new approaches have been formulated to enhance the inclusive/social character of planning through citizen participation. On the basis of Bratt-Reardon (2013:359) these can be summarized in the following way:

***Advocacy planning,** an idea raised by Paul Davidoff (1965), aims to provide disadvantaged residents with opportunities to enter into negotiations with public officials and private developers. In this case the planner acts as "advocate" of the socially disadvantaged, gives them expert advice in planning matters, assists and represents them before official bodies. This might be a first step for a planner to give up the position of a value-neutral technocrat whose role is to carry out the plans of those in power. Instead, an advocacy planner assists multiple interests, with a particular focus on the poor and minority concerns, to argue their alternative proposals.

***Empowerment planning** goes a step further insofar as it seeks to enhance the capacity of community organizations to influence the investment decisions. The planner applies the planning skills so that people can make informed decisions for themselves, both regarding organizing and political strategies, as well as more traditional planning outcomes–programs, buildings, businesses ... the approach integrates participatory action research, direct action organizing, and popular education into a powerful social change process (Reardon, 2000; Kennedy, 1996)

***Equity planning** aims for changing the planning process itself towards more equitable outcomes, based on planners who work inside government and actively influence opinion, mobilize underrepresented constituencies, and develop, advance and perhaps implement policies and programs that redistribute public and private resources to the poor and working class (Metzger, 1996).

The above-mentioned planning approaches are more radical towards social inclusion insofar as they are giving up the 'neutrality' of planning, aiming at active support to be given to those population groups which would not be represented sufficiently in the participation process. The essence of these radical approaches is the understanding and empowerment of the disadvantaged groups, either through the planner or with the help of social workers and the aim to influence planning towards more equitable outcomes.
Source: Ivan Tosics, (ivan.tosics) URBACT Network: Article available in World Bank Sustainable Cities Blog archive.

Supporting increased voice and expression :

Helping to amplify local voices and aid individual and group expression is a key area of C4D and in the urban context this is just as relevant as elsewhere. Strategies promoting voice and expression in response to the urban context is something that is being focused on, particularly in relation to marginalized voices for increased social inclusion.

An important consideration in this area however is about the other end of communication – the receivers; it is all well and good to support increased voice and expression but if there are no avenues for these communications to be mediated and channelled to audiences to listen then these voices are just so many 'voices crying unheard in the desert'. '*The strong participation of some of the actors as opposed to no participation of others usually leads to the dominance of pressure groups*', notes commentator Ivan Tosics. [25]

This links to the earlier impact area of access – not just to information and resources but also to the means of production in communication – the communion channels and tools. Community media is important in this regard, as is digital media. But even if a blog or a video is made it may not be viewed. So C4D work that ensures the full journey from sender to receiver is important.

Promoting empowerment through communication participation:

C4D strategies that engender individual self-esteem and empowerment - by way of people becoming active communication agents in their own right - is a growing area of C4D focus.

In the urban context it is as important as elsewhere, particularly for marginalised groups and youth and women, who traditionally have been far removed from the centres of communication production dominated by mainstream media. Increasingly there are new channels and outlets, for example local community radio stations.

Within the context of urban development there are initiatives that strive for in-depth participatory processes, but it is not yet clear how many move beyond participation to deliberately foster 'empowerment' and agency. This requires further research.

LESSONS

LESSONS ABOUT THE USE OF CREATIVITY

Communication for Development (C4D) may be a strategic and robust area of development in terms of theory and processes, but it is also an area of great creativity, artistry and joy; and these aspects can be utilised for effective promotion of learning, participation and expression.

According to UNESCO the role of culture as a transformative driving force nurtures the vision and action plan set forth in the New Urban Agenda. 'Promoting culture-engaged, people-centered urban paradigms has been an important area of UNESCO's advocacy efforts over the last years towards the preparation and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda. The Organization's commitment resulted in the role of culture being reflected in SDG 11, particularly target 11.4, but also across a number of other SDGs and targets related

---

[25] Ivan Tosics, (ivan.tosics) URBACT Network: Article available in World Bank Sustainable Cities Blog archive.

notably to social cohesion, inclusive economic growth, sustainable environment, integrated territorial planning or urban resilience.

'Rapid urbanization present risks as well as opportunities for culture and creativity as major transformative drivers towards more people-centered, environmentally sustainable and economically inclusive cities.' – UNESCO.

UNESCO emphasis 6 strategies in response: (i) promote livelihoods and economic growth in culture and creativity, (ii) promote participatory decision-making mechanisms, (iii) promote social inclusion and social cohesion, (iv) foster sustainable consumption and production patterns to tackle environmental challenges, (v) innovate with urban design and territorial planning strategies and (vi) measure culture's impact on sustainable urban development.' [26]

Increasingly there are also immersive and creative approaches to participation in urban design being tested, for example through collective play with Lego, and through gaming via computer games such as Minecraft.

The example of the use of Lego as a modern urban planning consultative tool: Danish artist Olafur Eliasson set up a few tables in a bustling downtown square in Tirana and unloaded three tonnes of Lego bricks. The Copenhagen-born, Berlin-based artist, known for his enormous, immersive installations included simple instructions: residents of the crumbling Albanian capital, which was recovering from the end of communist rule in 1990, were to construct their visions for the city's future out of Lego. "Building a stable society," Eliasson said, "is only possible with the involvement and co-operation of each individual." Part art installation, part crowdsourced sculpture, part urban intervention, the success of the Collectivity Project was a sign, perhaps, of our desire to become more involved in imagining the possibilities for our cities, even if our bricks-and-plastic creations will eventually be taken apart and packed up in a box. [27]

The example of UN-Habitat programme using Minecraft for participatory urban design: A UN program uses the game to include youth, women and the urban poor in planning. Since 2012, UN-Habitat has been using Minecraft the computer game – in countries from Kosovo to Kenya – as a tool for involving more people in the design of their public spaces, such as sports fields, central squares, and parks. "Youth, women and the urban poor are groups that are typically excluded from public policy, participatory processes, and public engagement," said Pontus Westerberg, a Program Officer at UN-Habitat. "And often, even when people do get invited to public meetings, they're shy or don't speak. That was our starting point – we

---

[26] Creativity for Sustainable Cities: leveraging culture for social inclusion, economic development, and enhanced resilience
http://wuf9.org/programme/training-events/creativity-for-sustainable-cities-leveraging-culture-for-social-inclusion-economic-development-and-enhanced-resilience/.
Also see 'UNESCO Global Report Culture: Urban Future in 2016': Through 12 thematic policy papers and 120 case studies, this publication explores ways in which culture can stimulate urban sustainability across the world.
[27] https://amp.theguardian.com/cities/2014/dec/18/lego-toys-urban-planning-tool-architects-mit

wanted to give those people a voice." Each of the Block by Block projects starts with drawing up a model in Minecraft of a public space that needs regenerating. UN-Habitat then runs workshops in which they teach participants how to use the game and get them to brainstorm ideas of what they'd like the final design to look like. More than 17,000 people have now been involved in 42 workshops around the world. "We start off by brainstorming what's wrong with the space, then think about what they would like it to look like. The community lists their priorities, we sketch it out in Minecraft, then pass that on to the architect," said James Delaney, the Founder of a Minecraft consultancy firm, BlockWorks. "The end result is hopefully that final design being built, which normally takes about two years." [28]

LEASONS ABOUT THE USE OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Utilizing C4D tools such as ICTs can contribute significantly to urban social inclusion, for many groups, including marginalised groups such as the disabled.

For example, the World Bank notes that 'the use of accessible ICT in the transportation sector, education, urban development, and for citizen engagement – all form part of an eco-system critical for persons with disabilities to be included in skills development, have jobs, and contribute to society.'[29]

In many other areas of C4D, ICTs and technological innovation play a massive role – in providing information, in resourcing people with knowledge and access, in supporting participation, in aiding advocacy and raising voices and in developing impactful empowerment through people becoming their own communicators using the diversity of channels and tools available.

LESSONS ABOUT THE SUSTAINABILITY OF PARTICIPATION

An important lesson however arising from a review of C4D practice within the urban development arena is about the sustainability of participation. Issues around the sustainability of involvement have featured in a number of these urban C4D examples reviewed here, and this is common also in other settings where participation and voice is promoted but where insufficient consideration may have gone into the long-term strategy for sustaining such participation and expression.

---

[28] https://apolitical.co/solution_article/thousands-poor-young-people-using-minecraft-redesign-cities/

[29] Adapted from World Bank, Sustainable Cities Blog.
http://blogs.worldbank.org/sustainablecities/category/tags/social-inclusion. Co-authors: Charlotte McClain-Nhlapo (@McNhlapo), the World Bank's Global Advisor for Disability Inclusion, & World Bank Director for Urban and Territorial Development and Disaster Risk Management, Sameh Wahba (@SamehNWahba)

> **Example of Minecraft programme and limited sustainability of participation:** "We make all these people excited about participatory design and breaking down the barriers, then we leave ….. The UN program is great, but there are some problems in the sense that they don't seem to do much in the way of follow-up resources," said [project trainer] Delaney. "We sort of get air-dropped into a developing country for three days, we make all these people excited about participatory design and breaking down the barriers, then we leave and they don't hear from us again." For example, "on the last day in Indonesia, I had all these people coming around asking, 'Can we get Minecraft, can we continue this work? We want to take it to other schools and villages'. I had to say no, because the UN can't just give out licenses for Minecraft, they can't give out computers. There didn't seem to be a solid strategy in place for that," he added. Asked about this follow-up procedure, Programme Manager Westerberg emphasised that the focus is on the outcome, on taking the community's ideas to a designer and then concentrating on implementation. 'However, in some cases, the UN is able to ensure people remain engaged through community management models for taking care of the new space.'[30]

This is an area that would be valuable for both the C4D and the urban development communities to reflect on and consider solutions.

LEASSONS ABOUT THE NEED FOR RESEARCH

An example of recent research in scaling up participation in urban planning - and in how community involvement in urban development can help achieve inclusive cities - is the network of academics and civil society in Africa led by University of Manchester (UK). The network includes civil society alliances of organised groups of low-income residents whose participatory efforts at neighbourhoods have been presented as best-practice examples in urban poverty reduction; working in partnership with academic institutions who have previously conducted practice relevant research around topics such as informal settlement upgrading, service provisioning and participatory community planning. The Network notes that 'Multi-disciplinary approaches that build on local action and create strong partnerships are needed in order to advance initiatives and to address the SDGs. **This commitment to 'leave no-one behind' highlights the importance and strengthens the significance of citizen involvement in urban development.** Participatory planning has long been on the periphery of urban development. Achieving inclusive cities through scaling up participatory planning in Africa aims to develop the knowledge needed to move from participatory community-led neighbourhood planning to city-scale planning processes.' [31]

<u>**CONCLUSION**</u>

In conclusion, we suggest that there is indeed an important role for strategic and well-considered communication for development application in urban development. Across the

---

[30] https://apolitical.co/solution_article/thousands-poor-young-people-using-minecraft-redesign-cities/
[31] https://www.gdi.manchester.ac.uk/research/themes/environmental-urban-and-agrarian-change/scaling-up-participation-in-urban-planning/

key priority areas in urban development there is a golden thread of communication – communication for information delivery about urban strategies, communication between citizens and planners for collective planning, communication by people to different authorities and stakeholders about their own views and perspectives in the urban setting, and communication access, ability and empowerment that promotes and depends social inclusion – so that everyone has a voice and a role to play in their own urban futures.

This article has been written for the C4D Network - as a contribution to thinking and discussion about the role of communication for development within international development programmatic areas and priorities. It is part of a new series of occasional Topical Papers, and is shared on a creative commons open source basis, free to use for educational or not-for-profit purposes. To contact the Network with comments or additional references and information please contact info@c4d.org, www.c4d.org.