

Call for Papers „Neighbourhood Development in the Global South“

Conference information

June 16-17, 2016, the Department of Urban Regeneration and Planning at the School of Architecture, Urban Planning and Landscape Planning of the University of Kassel will hold its annual conference on urban regeneration in cooperation with Trialog, the Association for Scientific Research into Planning and Building in the Developing World and the working group on urban regeneration at German-speaking institutes of higher learning. For this year's conference we call for papers on the subject of neighbourhood development and urban regeneration strategies in the Global South. Papers to be presented during the event may subsequently be published either in *TRIALOG – A Journal for Planning and Building in a Global Context*, or *Jahrbuch Stadterneuerung*, the urban regeneration yearbook, published by the working group on urban regeneration.

Target audience and expected format

Papers should relate to one or more of the following questions. As conference organizers we are especially interested in contributions that are scientifically grounded, able to sharpen problem perception, stimulate professional debate, or present research on urban regeneration policies and practices, including possible solutions for topical problems.

During the conference each speaker will be given 20 minutes to present his or her topic. Afterwards there will be a short discussion of each presentation. Contributions may either be made in German or English and should be suitable for subsequent publication.

Please submit an abstract of your paper of approximately 2,000-3,000 characters and a biographical note until 15.03.2016 to schimanski@asl.uni-kassel.de. The review process will take place until 05.04.2016.

Central questions

- Which urban regeneration policies and upgrading strategies are pursued by state and non-state actors, including those funded by international donors?
- Which national or local policies have contributed to the emergence of sustainable neighbourhoods?
- How did neighbourhoods, which emerged without basic urban infrastructure, develop into decent places to live?
- What are the technical, legal and fiscal challenges of formalizing, regularizing and retrofitting neighbourhoods that emerged without official approval, and how could they be overcome?
- How can educational and health standards in poor neighbourhoods be raised and what's the role of urban planners and architects in this context?
- What is the role of public space in neighbourhood development and which innovative forms of place-making could be observed?
- Which forms of governance and social organization have facilitated such upgrading experiences?
- How successful were they in terms of improving the lives of a given community while avoiding displacement in the process?
- Which were the most severe bottlenecks in the realization of promising renewal plans?

Thematic background

While residential areas in the cities of the Global North have largely been the result of state-subsidized, cooperative or profit-oriented housing development, most neighbourhoods in the rest of the world have different origins. Either they are a product of collective land occupation, illegal sub-division or, less often, state-sponsored sites-and-services schemes. Most of these settlements were self-built, while technical infrastructure was either rudimentary or missing altogether.

The way a neighbourhood came into being regularly conditions its social composition and organization, modes of governance and regulation. In many countries, state-subsidized housing has been reserved for members of the public service, and even where housing policy was meant to reach a broad segment of society, it rarely catered for the urban poor. In some areas, settler solidarity spurred neighbourhood organisations that provided local infrastructure solutions or managed to gain recognition and public funding for improvements. Other areas are ruled by

"land mafias" or drug-lords, rendering any neighbourhood development impossible that would threaten their profits.

Notwithstanding these differences, neighbourhoods have to fulfil a set of basic human needs. Since the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was drafted half a century ago, the "right of everyone to an adequate standard of living (...), including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions" was recognized by 164 parties which have signed and ratified the covenant. Twenty years ago, the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in Istanbul adopted an elaborate endorsement of these rights and made numerous commitments to improve the quality of life within human settlements.

In the year 2000, the UN Millennium Development Project set up ambitious targets to halve or substantially reduce poverty indicators across the globe by 2015. MDG Seven Target 11, the key goal for urban development, however, only called for the improvement of the lives of 100 million 'slum dwellers' by 2020 (despite recognizing that at least ten times that many people lived in similar conditions). Leaving out social or political aspects of neighbourhood development, 'slums' have been defined by UN-Habitat (2003) in terms of inadequate access to safe water; to sanitation and other infrastructure; poor structural quality of housing; overcrowding; and insecure residential status.

According to official figures, MDG Seven Target 11 has easily been met and "the proportion of the developing countries' urban population living in slums has declined from 39% (2000) to 32% (2010)" (UN-Habitat 2015). Yet, given the overall population growth and increasing urbanization, even a benevolent reading of these statistics will find that today more people than ever have to live with the deprivations mentioned above.

Critical academics and human rights activists have collected evidence that UN policies have done more harm than good. By lending itself to the slogan 'cities without slums', especially in Africa, the aforementioned target served as justification of 'slum clearance' rather than 'improving the lives' of the inhabitants of informal or deteriorating settlements (Huchzermeyer 2011).

The recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals made new commitments (amongst others) to "ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums", "participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management" (Goal 11); to "achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water" as well as "access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all" (Goal 6).

In the run-up to the 2016 Habitat III conference, *TRIALOG* and *Jahrbuch Stadterneuerung* would like to reflect on policies and practices of neighbourhood development in the Global South that hold the promise to provide growing urban

populations with safe and healthy living conditions without jeopardizing the natural resources required by future generations.

Contact:

Proposals may be submitted – preferably in electronic format – until 15 March 2016 to the following address:

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Additional information on *Jahrbuch Stadterneuerung* and the conference in June 2016 will be published at <http://www.uni-kassel.de/fb06/fachgebiete/stadt-und-regionalplanung/stadterneuerung-stadtumbau/>

Additional information on *TRIALOG – A Journal for Planning and Building in a Global Context* is available at <http://www.trialog-journal.de/>