

Boletín CF+S > 7 -- Especial: MUJER Y CIUDAD > <http://habitat.aq.upm.es/boletin/n7/n7news.html>

Edita: Instituto Juan de Herrera. Av. Juan de Herrera 4. 28040 MADRID. ESPAÑA. ISSN: 1578-097X

Noticias

From: Nicholas.You@unchs.org

Date: Thu, 15 Oct 1998 13:09:17 -0700

Dear Mariano,

...Please find attached the some of the tentative conclusions that came out of our seminar on Learning from Best Practices held in Dubai on 4 October 1998. It presents the lessons learned from the presentation and discussion of the ten 1998 DIA award-winning best practices.

Please also note that the 1998 version of the Best Practices database is now available on <<http://www.bestpractices.org>>

Best regards,

Nicholas You, Coordinator

Best Practices & Local Leadership Programme

UNCHS (Habitat), P.O. Box 30030 Nairobi, Kenya

Tel: (254-2) 623029, Fax: (254-2) 623080

Learning from Best Practices

Conclusions of the Seminar

Amal Mohammed

Dubai Municipality

Dubai, 4 October 1998

Background

On 4 October 1998 an international seminar was hosted by Dubai Municipality, to present and discuss the experiences and lessons learned from the 1998 Laureates of the Dubai International Award for Best Practices. The main conclusions and findings are summarised below:

Empowering People

The award-winning best practices clearly demonstrate the value of empowering people and their communities in improving the living environment. The evidence of this empowerment is highlighted in several Best Practices where people, especially those living in low-income and squatter settlements have

been able to gain access to jobs, shelter, land and basic services. One example of how this was achieved is the Community Infrastructure Programme of Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania:

CIP, Dar-es-Salaam

Dar-es-Salaam City Council in realising that it could not meet all its residents' demands for basic services, developed a Community Infrastructure (Up grading) Programme to assist communities to improve their own neighbourhoods. The Programme, initiated in 1995, works closely with communities to enhance their planning, implementation and monitoring activities and with the City Council to improve its ability to work with communities to implement infrastructure projects. In Tabata, a low-income neighbourhood, the water supply system is being run and paid for by the residents themselves, and revenue generated is, in turn, helping to finance solid waste collection. In addition, the community is contributing 5 per cent of the capital cost of trunk infrastructure and by doing so, successfully negotiated a higher standard of road than initially funded by the World Bank. The strong sense of community responsibility is helping to ensure long-term sustainability of the Programme.

Equally compelling, however, are those examples where people have been allowed and enabled to take their fate in their own hands, to gain a sense of ownership and of control in decisions that affect the quality of their working environment.

Interface Inc

In 1994, Ray C. Anderson, the CEO and Chairman of Interface Inc, a large carpet and interiors manufacturer, decided to convert Interface to a "restorative" enterprise by achieving sustainability in all its operations. Today, within the company of 7,400 employees, managers are responsible for implementing sustainability within their own units and sharing best practices and challenges with other units. Their active involvement led to the unleashing of creativity and the implementation of new ideas on several fronts: eliminating waste and benign emissions; using renewable energy; closing the loop through cyclical material flows; making transportation more resource-efficient; redesigning marketing and service delivery; and creating a more environmentally-aware community. The programme has also extended to partners, suppliers and customers through such initiatives as "greening the supply chain" and networking through business associations, conferences and sustainability organisations. Since 1994, the company has saved an estimated US\$ 50 million and its stock price has quadrupled.

Formalising and Strengthening Mechanisms for Participation

One of the criteria used for defining and selecting a Best Practice includes sustainability in terms of lasting changes to decision-making and management processes. One of the key lessons learned from several Best Practices is the necessity to strengthen and formalise participatory decision-making processes.

Furthermore, the need for such strengthening is equally evident at the city-wide level as in Naga City, Philippines, or in dealing with a particular issue such as in Medellin, Colombia.

Naga City

The 1991 Local Government Code mandated local governments to promote people's consultation and participation in local development planning. Naga City, however, found that it lacked the capacity to enforce the Code. In December 1995, it enacted the "Empowerment Ordinance of 1996", which officially recognised grassroots organisations, under the umbrella of the Naga City People's Council (NCPC), as legitimate actors in local development planning. The Ordinance institutionalised people's participation in urban planning and management, thereby facilitating a working partnership between the public-private and

community sectors. As a second step, the Naga City Participatory Planning Initiative was launched. As a result, people's participation in local development has been greatly enhanced, thereby heightening citizens' sense of ownership in urban programmes and projects.

Medellin, Colombia

Considered one of the most violent cities in the world where urban crime and violence have quadrupled in the last decade, largely due to a sharp rise in drug trafficking, rapid population growth and economic stagnation. In 1990, a process of consultation that involved the central government, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), non-governmental organisations, academics, researchers and community leaders resulted in an action plan to cope with the critical insecurity created by narco-traffic. The initiative resulted in a community-based model of public participation in local administration. Sub-centres in various low-income neighbourhoods promoted education, health, nutrition and civic participation. Through these sub-centres residents are working in partnership with the government, the local authority and the private sector to reclaim their communities and neighbourhoods.

Transparency, Trust and Openness

Once participatory processes have been established for a specific project or initiative, the need for maintaining and nurturing these processes remains an ongoing challenge requiring increasing levels of transparency, trust and openness. The returns can be, however, very rewarding, as the same processes can be applied to solve other and often more complex issues and problems and perhaps more importantly, to transcend the vagrancy of periodic political change.

Xalapa, Mexico

On the outskirts of Xalapa in the State of Vera Cruz, Mexico, a low-income squatter community successfully negotiated with city and State authorities to improve its living environment. In 1991, the Union of Tenants and Housing Applicants, a community organisation, developed a Plan for 80 low-income neighbourhoods in Xalapa's periphery, which was approved by the State and city authorities. Approval of the Plan was a major breakthrough allowing for the squatter community to be officially recognised as part of the city. To implement the Plan, the community has since received support from the Ford Foundation and NOVIB, a Dutch NGO, for training on housing and planning issues. Building on the strength of this recognition, in 1997, CENVI, a Mexican NGO, initiated an Integrated Social and Urban Improvement Plan, which included a housing project, a women's credit scheme and nutrition and education projects in the area further strengthening the direct involvement of people and communities in deciding on the ways and means of improving their quality of life.

Zabbaleen, Egypt

In Cairo, the *zabbaleen* (garbage collectors or scavengers) are not only selling products made from garbage they have collected and recycled, but are successfully influencing government policies for the urban poor. The *zabbaleen* collect and recycle over 600 tonnes of domestic waste a day, or approximately one third of the waste produced by the residents of the city. Revenue generated from recycling activities have been invested in housing, infrastructure and basic services, thereby contributing to the health and welfare of the community. A joint effort of the private sector and NGOs, this initiative serves as an excellent example of how solid waste collection can not only become an income-generating activity among marginal groups, but also help improve the urban environment as a whole and the living environment of the urban poor. The initiative is now embarked on a new phase of expansion including separation of domestic waste by a residential neighbourhood and building and operating a new industrial

complex devoted to recycling.

Strategic and Comprehensive Planning

The Habitat Agenda and Agenda 21 clearly recognise the need to address social, economic and environmental problems in a holistic manner. This requires forward-looking policies and visionary strategies backed up with indicators for assessing progress and effectiveness along the way. Both Malaga, Spain and Zhuhai, China are preserving their cultural and historical heritage while addressing the demands for rapid expansion and a healthier living environment.

Malaga, Spain

During the last 20 years, the city of Malaga in Spain has experienced a rapid growth in its tourist industry, doubling its population to over half a million people and contributing to the deterioration of its urban infrastructure and environment. In 1995, the City approved the Malaga Green Charter which focuses on rehabilitating the historic city centre, providing environmental services throughout the metropolitan area and the environmental remediation of a toxic waste site to be converted into a waterfront park. As a result, several historic buildings have been conserved, public spaces, including parks, have been created, a waste water treatment plant has been built and a beach has been recovered. Moreover, indicators are regularly used to monitor progress of the plan. In this way, the city has illustrated how Agenda 21 and the Habitat Agenda can be implemented at the local level.

Zhuhai, China

Once a poor fishing village, Zhuhai in Guangdong Province, Southern China, has become a model city for comprehensive urban planning and environmental management. In 1980, the Zhuhai municipal government constructed a new urban district covering 56.2 square kilometres, improving the city's infrastructure, expanding its space for further development and improving the city's air and water quality. The success of the initiative -- dubbed the "Destiny Project" -- has not only won the city many national honours, but has encouraged other cities to replicate Zhuhai's efforts at urban renewal and environmental management.

Leadership and Change

Every Best Practice has overcome a worst practice with the latter too often equated with "accepted practice" or "business as usual".

Leadership, including the courage to "think outside the box" to effect changes in attitude, behaviour and standard operating procedures has proven to be an essential ingredient to effecting change.

Surat, India

Surat Municipal Council was regarded as one of the most moribund municipalities in India. Its inability to perform adequately was demonstrated in September 1994 when a plague outbreak hit the city and the municipality was unable to contain it. At the time only 45 per cent of the city's residents had access to water and sanitation services and the maintenance of drains, streetlights, parks, roads and schools was erratic at best. In May 1995, the Municipality designed and implemented a comprehensive and participatory plan, including 47 projects focusing on road systems, traffic management, water supply, sewerage, storm water drainage, gas, electricity, slum upgrading, etc. An upgraded management system, instills accountability, ensures transparency and creates public awareness. In a span of 18 months, Surat

was judged the second cleanest city in India. Just before receiving the 1998 Dubai International Award, Surat City was put to the test again by severe flooding. This time there was no epidemic and life returned to normal after only a week.

Often, this leadership role, is assumed by an external change agent or product champion as is the case with the Kipepeo Project in Kenya.

The Kipepeo Project

Arabuko-Sokoke Forest on Kenya's north coast is per-urban island of bio-diversity threatened by both subsistence farming and tourism development. Harbours six globally-threatened bird species (and rated the second most important forest in Africa for bird conservation), four threatened mammals and unknown number of other species, it was surrounded by farmers, whose mean *per capita* income was less than US\$ 50. A 1991 survey of those living near the forest revealed that 96 per cent wanted to chop it down, owing to wildlife crop raiding and the need for more land. Such an event would have been considered "business as usual" in a region where nature and wildlife conservation is often perceived to be at the expense of the livelihoods of a rapidly growing population. The Kipepeo project responded to this challenge by demonstrating that maintaining bio-diversity can not only benefit the community but also constitute a viable model of rural-urban co-existence. The project has trained 150 farmers to rear forest butterflies using tree leaves. The butterfly pupae are exported to Europe and North America. Since 1994, Kipepeo has earned over US\$100,000 in foreign exchange for Kenya and has paid out over US\$ 35,000 to farmers. A 1998 survey of the farmers showed a major turnaround in attitude: 84 per cent now want to preserve the forest. Moreover, monitoring has shown no adverse impact on the wild butterfly population.

Boletín CF+S > 7 -- Especial: MUJER Y CIUDAD > <http://habitat.aq.upm.es/boletin/n7/n7news.html>

Edita: Instituto Juan de Herrera. Av. Juan de Herrera 4. 28040 MADRID. ESPAÑA. ISSN: 1578-097X