

Ongoing Informal Settlements in Democratic Republic of Congo: Implementing New Urban Policy for Creating Sustainable Neighborhoods

Misilu Mia Nsokimieno Eric¹, Earl Bailey¹, Mpinda Tushiminine Martin², Carleen Abraham³, Jiangfeng Li¹ & Liqin Zhang⁴

¹ School of Land Resources Management Studies, Institute of Public Administration, China University of Geosciences, Wuhan, China

² School of Environment, Institute of Environmental Engineering, China University of Geosciences, Wuhan, China

³ School of Land Resources Management, Institute of Human Geography, China University of Geosciences, Wuhan, China

⁴ School of Environmental Studies, Institute of Land Resources Management, China University of Geosciences, Wuhan, China

Correspondence: Misilu Mia Nsokimieno Eric, School of Land Resources Management Studies, Institute of Public Administration, China University of Geosciences, Wuhan, 388 Lumo Road, Wuhan 430074, Hubei, China. E-mail: miansoki@gmail.com

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Abstract

In Democratic Republic of Congo, informal settlements are still increasing. These irregular neighborhoods adversely affect the quality of urban life. Cities fail to take control of their urban development. New urban policy is necessary for recapturing the capacity building. As an inclusive approach, capacity building strengthens the community capacity to create houses and services that meet the shared vision of all stakeholders. It develops strategic planning for managing growth and change. The study explores the problem of informal settlements in Kinshasa. The study provides a framework for a successful urban development.

Keywords: capacity building, informal settlements, new urban policy, strategic planning

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview

In Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the rise of informal settlements is one of the prime concerns within cities that need to be tackled in order to build sustainable neighborhoods. Informal settlements are one of the problems caused by urbanization. Since the independence, DRC suffers from a chronic shortage of housing compared to its rapid urban growth. Its overpopulated cities fail to provide shelters. Therefore, informal settlements are still increasing, and importantly they encroach upon open spaces.

Informal settlements refer to the communities living in poverty. In the urban context, the term <community> describes a neighborhood, which is a part within the city where inhabitants share the spatial proximity and some degree of interaction. Moreover, urban poverty includes the limited access to employment opportunities and income, inadequate and insecure housing and services, violent and unhealthy environments, few or no social protection mechanisms, and limited access to adequate health and education opportunities (Note 1). Clearly, informal settlements show the rupture of good living conditions; they undermine the urban quality of life.

Manifestly, DRC's cities have no longer the sense of livable communities. A livable community is not a static entity that merely maintains the status quo. On the contrary, such a community acknowledges where it is in its own life cycle and where it is going. Over time, new needs arise in addition to, or in place of, earlier ones. A livable community will provide support for its population and institutions as they grow and change in a manner that expands choices (Note 2). The lack of planning weakens the capacity of communities to identify priorities and opportunities to target at rebuilding neighborhoods.

Arguably, DRC's cities seem to be unprepared to manage growth and dynamic change. Explicitly, they lost control of their urban development, architectural design, and future. There is a growing need for a new urban policy. This is a much-needed mechanism for strengthening the community planning. Today, cities appear as important locations for setting up actions to help the goals of sustainable development (Jenks et al., 1996). It is imperative that cities should make steady progress towards sustainability.

New urban policy accommodates strategic planning for achieving the capacity building. The basic principles of strategic urban planning are the model of governance for the development and implementation of public policies, that is, citizen participation and public-private cooperation between actors of the city as a method of adapting to the new demands and those imposed by the current complexity on improving the quality of urban life (Barton, 2006; Krels, 2007; United Nations, 2003). New urban policy planning is dictated by the living building challenge. Since 2006, living building challenge is a philosophy, advocacy tool and certification program that promotes the most advanced measurement of sustainability in the built environment (Note 3).

Kinshasa the capital city is the DRC's largest city. As such, it highlights the problem of informal settlements. Also, it cements its place at the forefront of the country's urban reform for the foreseeable future. Drawing on the assertion that cities remain places of problems- solutions, Kinshasa has to deal with the vagaries of urbanization. This means that Kinshasa has to succeed in implementing new urban policy for the modernization. At last, Kinshasa's experience can be extrapolated to other cities.

1.2 Background

During colonial era, Kinshasa was the country's top manufacturing city. After the independence, this factor was the trigger point for rapid urbanization. There has been a massive move of thousands people from rural regions to move to the city in the search for jobs. However, DRC is still deficient in institutional capacity in order to balance the demand and supply of infrastructure. Authorities (at national and local levels) still show serious limits to manage growth and change.

Today, Kinshasa's population is about 9.5 million. It happens that the lack of planning, poor subdivision practices, excessive land values, ineffectual zoning, archaic streets, and inadequate transportation have created a condition of congestion, unplanned and incompatible mixed land use, and economic distortion that render whole section of the city in a process of built-in physical decay and social disintegration (Eisner, 1993, p. 494). Particularly, the increasing informal settlements badly damage open spaces.

Open spaces are seen as a common heritage. They include parks, rivers, wetlands, forests, coastal plains, green spaces, public spaces, agriculture land, and so forth. Open space is land that is not intensively developed for residential, commercial, industrial or institutional use (Note 4). Open space can be a public property or private property and it serves many purposes. A livable city depends upon the quality of open spaces. Hence, it optimizes the use of available land in order to keep open spaces. This is to maintain the balance between the built- up areas and the natural habitat.

However, the problem of informal settlements interrupts the general principle of open space conservation. In fact, the insecure land tenure perpetuates improper land use changes. In other words, land management remains totally inappropriate to urban development. Hence, informal settlements adversely affect the urban quality with the destruction of environment.

This situation echoes with the question of what to do to improve the quality of life in Kinshasa. As people have become increasingly aware of the radical changes inherent in late modern society, there has been a growing desire to find new ways of thinking in order to reach new modes of understanding (Note 5). It is contended that cities are better places to live and work. How to solve Kinshasa's problems with an integrated approach to the different challenges? How to interpret a new urban policy? What is the component of new urban policy? In what ways this component can be seen, measured, and understood in action?

The study focuses on the capacity building to redress the social and physical consequences of inappropriate public housing planning since the independence. It explores the practical experiences of community planning. It suggests a framework for land redevelopment towards building sustainable communities. The main purpose of is to lay the foundation of the commitment to the reconstruction of housing including the renovation of the existing neighborhoods, the creation of new neighborhoods, and if necessary the conversion of buildings into shelters so as to provide decent and affordable housing for poor people.

2. The Pattern of Informal Settlements

2.1 Analytical Description of (Human) Settlement

Table1. Analytical description of (human) settlement

| (Human)Settlement | | |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| Types | Rural Settlement (Villages) | Urban Settlement (Towns and cities) |
| Function: Activities | Primary activities: Agriculture, mining, fishing, forestry, etc. | Secondary and Tertiary activities: Sports, trade, health, administration, commerce, education, communication, tourism, transport, industry, culture, recreation, etc. |
| Characteristics | Residential area | Commercial, industrial, and residential areas |
| | Built Environment | Infrastructure: banks, bridges, buildings, hospitals, ports, streets (cleaned and paved streets), schools, sidewalks, sewer lines, roads and railway, housing (affordable and accessible houses), public transportation, water (clean drinking water), electricity, open spaces, services (municipal waste), etc. |
| | Local place | Cosmopolitan Place |
| | Population | Native (Indigenous) people |
| | Low density | High density |

The table 1 shows the difference between urban and rural settlements. Rural settlements (villages) compared to urban settlements (towns, cities) are not very developed. Often, roads and streets are unpaved. There is no public transportation. Moreover, rural people mainly practice agriculture. Also, they are more attached to the traditional culture. Urban settlements are densely populated and well structured.

2.2 What to Know about (Human) Settlement

A settlement is seen as a location where a group of people agree to establish their living space. It is a place where people live, ranging from a small to a large community. In other words, it represents a purpose-built site for shelter and socioeconomic activities. It serves as industrial, commercial, institutional, and residential places. Hence, it determines the built environment. As known, built-environment is the human-made space in which people live, work, and recreate on a day-to-day basis (Note 6). Succinctly, a settlement refers to a village, town, and city.

It must be granted that urban design shapes human settlements with a coordinated and planned arrangement of basic amenities. It prepares plans for the constructions of roads, streets, houses, bridges, buildings, public spaces, etc. Basically, urban design facilitates connections between people and places, movement and urban form, nature and the built fabric. Definitely, urban design involves the design of buildings, groups of buildings, spaces and landscapes, and the establishment of frameworks and processes that facilitate successful development (Note 7). Its large field of application is the city.

Cities are places with distinctive identities and lifestyles. Whatever their size, form, functionality, they have to meet the standard of livability. Livability is defined broadly as suitability for human living (Merriam-Webster, 2011). A livable community will provide support for its population and institutions as they grow and change in a manner that expands choices (Note 8). It can be deduced that a livable city makes steady progress towards the provision of adequate infrastructure which is the key component of socioeconomic competitiveness. Often, cities

describe heterogeneous and cosmopolitan settlements with an appropriate system of governance ensuring wealth, healthy and prosperity.

Paradoxically, DRC's cities are dysfunctional, retrograde, and more vulnerable. Urbanization has notably caused uncontrolled rapid growth and sprawl, big deficit in infrastructure supply, poor sanitation, loss of open space, overcrowding, poverty, inequality, destruction, pollution, slums, wastes, and importantly the weak governmental capacity to direct the process. Such urbanization is similar to developing countries, particularly those in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).

With the globalization, DRC has the benefit of science, technology, and innovation, advantage to reverse this urbanization of poverty. From a logical standpoint, DRC must strive for sustainable urbanization. Since their adoption at the United Nations Millennium Summit in 2000, the Millennium Development Goals have become the international standard of reference for measuring and tracking improvements in the human condition in developing countries (Note 9). No doubt, DRC needs to formulate a new urban policy to eradicate informal settlements. This is to adopt strategic planning to enhance built environment in ways that promote the infrastructure development, which is the key component of socioeconomic growth.

Among developing countries that remain actively engaged in shaping built environment, China is the best example. Nowadays, China is an impressive model of urban change. Chinese governments (central and provincial) have carried out far-reaching progress for urban renewal. China's experience in reconstruction is a considerable success in urban policy with a positive collaboration between public and private sector to advance modernization of cities. As a result, many Chinese cities are listed among world competitive cities.

2.3 About Informal Settlements: What Are Informal Settlements?

Informal Settlements can be defined as irregular neighborhoods that do not meet the standards of living conditions. These are communities where inhabitants live in less desirable conditions. Succinctly, informal settlements represent unhealthy communities.

According to UN Habitat, informal settlements are:

- Residential areas where a group of housing units has been constructed on land to which the occupants have no legal claim, or which they occupy illegally;
- Unplanned settlements and areas where housing is not in compliance with current planning and building regulations (unauthorized housing).

Drawing on UN-Habitat definition, informal settlements can be identified as slums, illegal construction, unconventional dwelling, non-permanent structure, shanty town; marginal, squatter, spontaneous, and unplanned settlements, etc.

Table2. Analytical description of informal settlements

| Informal Settlements | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Cause: rapid unplanned and uncontrolled urbanization (urbanization of poverty). Overpopulated cities. | Effect: natural, health, political, and socioeconomic risks | | |
| Materials | Corrugated cardboard, mud-brick hut, rusty roofs; used stones and bricks; scrap metals, plastics, and woods, etc. N.B: Houses built by poor people and people limited means. | | |
| Vernacular architecture | Built form (square or rectangular form): Huts, shacks, Hall plan houses, etc. | | |
| Irregular Neighborhoods | Legal | Anarchic and chaos: land speculation ,irrational real estate, inappropriate land conversion | |
| | Determinants | Physical | Poor living conditions: A total lack of clean drinking, sanitation, electricity, roads, drainage, schools, health centers, market places, rubbish collection, etc. |
| | | Social | Poor inhabitants or people limited means. Migrants: rural-urban, and urban-urban. |

This table gives the classic interpretation of the informal settlements. It must be noted that informal settlements are self-constructed neighborhoods.

2.4 Informal Settlements Development

Presently, the majority of the world's people live in cities. According to the United Nations, the global urban population will grow from 3.3 billion people in 2008 to almost 5 billion by the year 2030 (UNFPA, 2007). If developed countries are well equipped to control urbanization, developing countries, ill-equipped, suffer from it. Their overpopulated cities are compounded by chaos, slums, and poverty.

According to UN Report Prospects, 924 million people, or 31.6 % of the world's urban population, lived in slums in 2001. The majority of them were in the developing regions, accounting for 43 % of the urban population, in contrast to 6% in more developed regions (Global Report on Human Settlements). It turns out that sub-Saharan Africa had the largest proportion of the urban population resident in slums in 2001 (71.9 %) and Oceania had the lowest (24.1 %). In between these were South-central Asia (58 %), Eastern Asia (36.4 %), Western Asia (33.1 %), Latin America and the Caribbean (31.9 per cent), Northern Africa (28.2 %) and Southeast Asia (28 %) (Note 10).

3. The Challenge of Informal Settlements across DRC: The Case of Kinshasa

3.1 Rapid Growth of Kinshasa

Kinshasa the capital city illustrates the large scale of population growth in DRC. It is the second largest city in SSA.

Table 3. Evolution of Kinshasa's population (1920-2015)

| Years | Population | Years | Population | Years | Population |
|-------|------------|-------|------------|-----------|------------|
| 1920 | 1600 | 1959 | 402500 | 1994 | 4655313 |
| 1936 | 40300 | 1967 | 901520 | 2003 | 6786000 |
| 1938 | 35900 | 1968 | 1052500 | 2005 | 7500000 |
| 1939 | 42000 | 1970 | 1323039 | 2015 est. | 12000000 |
| 1947 | 126100 | 1984 | 1323039 | | |
| 1957 | 299800 | 1991 | 3804000 | | |

Source: World Gazetteer, Africa: largest cities and towns and statistics of their population

Table 4. Evolution of Kinshasa's population (1960-2005)

| Years | Population | Surface (ha) | Density (hab /ha) | Years | Population | Surface (ha) | Density (hab /ha) |
|-------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 1960 | 400000 | 6800 | 59 | 1981 | 2567166 | 20160 | 127 |
| 1967 | 901520 | 9470 | 95 | 1984 | 2653558 | 26000 | 127 |
| 1969 | 1051000 | 12903 | 81 | 1995 | 4719862 | 31007 | 102 |
| 1973 | 1323039 | 14600 | 91 | 2000 | 6000000 | 39518 | 151 |
| 1975 | 169091 | 17992 | 93 | 2005 | 7500000 | 43414 | 173 |

Source: Evolution of the population, the extent of Kinshasa and its density (Sources: Lelo Nzuzi, 2008; Yebe Musieme, 2004; Delbart et al., 2002; Mbuila Matot, 2001)

The tables 3 and 4 show the constant stream of people to Kinshasa. And, the table 5 shows the distribution of population according to the prospection of the national statistical institute in 2004.

Table 5. Distribution of Kinshasa's population in 2004

| Kinshasa | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|---------------------------|------------|-------------------------------|
| Districts | Towns | Surface(Km ²) | Population | Density(hab/km ²) |
| Funa | Bandalugwa | 6,82 | 202 341 | 29 669 |
| | Bumbu | 5,30 | 329 234 | 62 120 |
| | Kalamu | 6,64 | 315 342 | 47 491 |
| | Kasa-vubu | 5,05 | 157 320 | 31 152 |
| | Makala | 5,60 | 253 844 | 45 329 |
| | Ngiri-ngiri | 3,40 | 174 843 | 51 424 |
| | Selembao | 23,18 | 335 581 | 14 477 |
| Lukunga | Barumbu, | 4,72 | 150 319 | 31 847 |
| | Gombe, | 29,33 | 32 373 | 1 104 |
| | Kinshasa | 2,87 | 164 857 | 57 441 |
| | Kitambo, | 2,72 | 106 772 | 39 254 |
| | Lingwala | 2,88 | 94 635 | 32 859 |
| | Ngaliema | 224,30 | 683 135 | 3 046 |
| Mont-Amba | Kinsenso | 16,60 | 386 151 | 23 262 |
| | Lemba | 23,70 | 349 838 | 14 761 |
| | Limete | 67,60 | 375 726 | 5 558 |
| | Matete | 4,88 | 268 781 | 55 078 |
| | Mont- Ngafula | 358,92 | 261 004 | 727 |
| | Ngaba | 4,00 | 180 650 | 45 163 |
| Tshangu | Kimbanseke | 237,78 | 946 372 | 3 980 |
| | Maluku | 7 948,80 | 179 648 | 23 |
| | Masina | 69,93 | 485 167 | 6 938 |
| | N'djili | 11,40 | 442 138 | 38 784 |
| | Nsele | 898,79 | 140 929 | 157 |

Source: National Institute of Statistics (2004)

3.2 Unplanned Growth and Change

Urbanization in Kinshasa is paradoxical. Despite the collapse of its manufacturing industry, Kinshasa continues to welcome thousands migrants in the search of jobs. This is urbanization of without industrial development. Surely, the industry is the key component of socioeconomic growth. It is the main source of livelihoods. In other words, it is the generator of jobs and services. And, the city is the privileged location of industries.

After the independence, the discontinuity in manufacturing industry development accelerated the economic recession. It happens that the economic degradation increases urban poverty. Africa's urbanization is increasingly characterized by endemic poverty levels, fragmentation of the formal economy, weak institutions, declining employment and non-existent or deteriorating service provision (Clarke, 1995; UN-Habitat, 2009). The failure of governance plunged Kinshasa into crisis. This is the unceasing rise of informal settlements.

Table 6. Classification of informal settlement in Kinshasa

| Informal settlement in Kinshasa | | |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|
| Irregular Neighborhood | Location: Open spaces | Category |
| Deprived neighborhoods Slums, squatters | High-risk zones: Industries properties, railroad domain, electric service areas, etc. | Poor inhabitants, and workers class |
| Spontaneous neighborhoods | Wetlands, underdeveloped land, waters areas (alongside rivers), agricultural land, | Migrants:Rural-urban,urban-urban |
| Illegal neighborhoods | Public spaces: greenbelts, sports, cultural, and recreational spaces, | Authorities, so-called rich people |

This table shows the classification of informal settlements, their location and the category of inhabitants. The current situation of informal settlements determine the failure in land management, the demand for new housing that increases faster than the production. Also, Kinshasa is characterized by rapid, unstructured and unplanned development. Often, informal settlements show the level of poverty in city.

Often, informal settlements are the manifestation of urban poverty described as follows:

- A low income to afford basic needs: Given that the salary's base is under the average, and sometimes unpaid, workers class, people limited means, and poor cannot afford to buy food and healthy shelters. Already in 1999, about 50 to 57% of Kinshasa's population lived with less 1\$ a day, and 85 to 89% spent more than 50 % of their income on food (FAO,2008).Today, it is claimed that more than 95% of active inhabitants have low-income whilst 90% are jobless. Inevitably, unemployment increase crime and violence. Some studies have found a strong linkage between high levels of violence and lack of work and vice versa. These studies also found that in general, high rates of violence make mobility within the community dangerous, resulting in reduced access to education and lack of investment in communities (World Bank, 1997).
- Poor living conditions: Households use unsafe water; they are lacking in electricity. Their main source of energy is the firewood or charcoal. Often, they steal connection through main electric cables with high risk to their health. Moreover, the scarcity of toilets facilities is flagrant. Hence, many households share single pit toilets.
- Social exclusion People living in informal settlements are qualified as the poorest class of community. They are close to the rural life than urban life, because their untidy place is an unconventional urban lifestyle. Besides, the high level of injustice and inequality interrupts the social cohesion. It also increases sociopolitical unrest with crime and other forms of conflict.

To sum up, the decline of Kinshasa dates from the mid-1970s, largely due to the economic crisis and civil strife. The situation has been aggravated by the war since 1998 with associated massive population displacements (FAO, 2008). Instability with successive armed conflicts persists in the country. And importantly, the country shows the passive role of central government to deal with urban problems. As logical consequence of lack of planning, informal settlements aggravate the vulnerability.

3.3 Risks and Vulnerability

As a matter of fact, informal settlements are often located in open spaces; this means that they invade public domain such as railway, wetlands, agriculture land, industries zones, large drains, greenbelts, recreational spaces, alongside rivers, etc. Inevitably, inhabitants are exposed at risks. These risks can be classified as follow:

- Natural risks: floods, landslide, rainfall (heavy rain), deforestation, land degradation, rise sea level, etc.
- Health Risks: pollution (air and water), solid wastes, accidents, disability, diseases (e.g. malaria, typhoid), etc.
- Social Risks: crime, domestic, expropriation, hunger, hucksterism, prostitution, violence, street gangs, etc.
- Political Risks: disparity, discrimination, inequality in wealth distribution.

Risks such as described render communities more vulnerable. On the one hand, floods, landslides, and rise sea level increases can lead to the homelessness with destruction of irregular neighborhoods. Moreover, they cause the loss human lives. On the other hand, deforestation and pollution increase the loss of natural habitat, and land degradation. There is also the scarcity of public domain. Here, scarcity describes a physical or socioeconomic problem in which a society fails to cover the shortfall of productive resources to meet wants and needs of its people.

Health risks arise from wastes, garbage disposal, lack of sewage and drainage, air and water polluted produced by households and industries. Informal settlements are rife with diseases (epidemics, malaria, typhoid, grave infections, etc.). Health risks increase the rate of mortality.

Social risks are anarchism, immorality and insecurity. Political risks are irresponsibility absence of policy for social integration (social exclusion for poor and low income groups), absence of opportunities, etc.

Admittedly, informal settlements are less desirable places to live. Notwithstanding, institutional and cultural organization patterns show very limited capacity to respond to disasters, to mitigate impacts, and to recuperate from catastrophic events (Simioni, 2003). The most important factor that limits progress in improving housing and living conditions of low-income groups in informal settlements and slums is the lack of genuine political will to address the issue in a fundamentally structured, sustainable and large-scale manner (Note 11).

It is thus crucial to adopt strategic planning to enhance the built environment in ways that promote the land redevelopment for sustained socioeconomic growth. This is to implement new urban policy to tackle the problem of informal settlements. United Nations Millennium Development Declaration of 2000 has brought informal settlements, or slums as they are often referred to squarely onto national and international development agendas. One of the Millennium Development Goals is to significantly improve, by 2020, the lives of 100 million slum dwellers globally (Note 12).

4. Implementing New Urban Policy in DRC

4.1 The failure of Governance

Some definitions are presented to understand the meaning of governance: The governance refers to the process whereby elements in society wield power and authority, and influence and enact policies and decisions concerning public life, and economic and social development. It is a broader notion than government. At last, governance involves interaction between these formal institutions and those of civil society (The Governance Working Group of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences 1996).

The questions such as; how institutional authorities work to satisfy the needs of people, how they react or anticipate to societal problems determine the appraisal of governance capacity. Just to say, the governance capacity is evaluated on how a government proceeds to serve the society. From a logical standpoint, a country's government has to adapt to the changing conditions in order to satisfy the needs of interests of its people. Drawing on this view, the government has the task of enhancing governance capacity is the prerequisite for sustaining the modernization and development.

Governance capacity involves the enforcing of rules and laws; improving public administrative and regulatory systems. It also includes the performance of public services, such as roads, water, and electricity. There is also the provision of public goods and services such as foods, health, education, construction, tourism, etc. From this evidence, the weak institutional capacity reflects the failure of governance. When a country loses its governance capacity, it sinks into disrepair. This situation can be perceived as a blind in charge to drive a bus at the destination.

Since the independence, DRC's governance is misguided and misplaced. Successive governments are very selective about what to do, and often they serve just those closer to the decision-making circles at the expense of communities. Existing laws and regulations seem to be theoretical and decorative. The country is rife with corrupt practices and a culture of impunity. Additionally, public services are ill-equipped, and importantly lacking human resources.

Besides, planning system is archaic and still centralized. This procedure is related to different scales of decision-making (national, provincial and local). As such, it remains controversial due to asymmetrical information among authorities in different levels of decision-making. Lack of agreement on priorities among the various actors might lead to a rejection of the plans and, in turn, a failure to implement. On the other hand, agreement on vague or unclear priorities also leads to implementation failure (Note 13).

4.2 Effective Governance for a Successful Urban Development

With the strong and good will, DRC's authorities can improve the governance. The change should be motivated by concern for the community well-being. The starting point is to reinforce the decentralization. Decentralization is an organizational model to redistribute responsibilities at the central, regional and local levels. This is a procedure for involving local governments next to central government at all stage of the decision-making process.

Hence, local governments have the co-responsibility to coordinate and manage communities at local level. Decentralization stimulates the search for program and policy innovation, first of all because it is, per se, an innovative practice of governance. Second, because through its implementation, local governments are required to assume new and broader responsibilities in order to provide public services for all. The assumption of new responsibilities through decentralization often requires improved planning, budgeting and management techniques and practices; the adoption of new tools; and the development of improved human resources to operate the decentralized programmes (Note 14).

Decentralization is the proper character of sociocultural evolution. Decentralization in government, the topic most studied, has been seen as a solution to problems like economic decline, government inability to fund services and their general decline in performance of overloaded services, the demands of minorities for a greater say in local governance, the general weakening legitimacy of the public sector and global and international pressure on countries with inefficient, undemocratic, overly centralized systems (Note 15).

Definitively, decentralization is a top-down approach to decision-making for achieving common goals. Therefore, local government plays a key role in creating new opportunities for strategic planning. Today, DRC must reconsider the principles of decentralization to support the dynamic vision from the top to the bottom. Accordingly, the new urban policy seems to be an innovative approach to facilitating strategic planning.

4.3 How to Interpret New Urban Policy

New urban policy undertakes to redesign and reorganize governance to increase collective actions. New urban policy leads to reestablish the capacity building. Capacity building is the continuing process of strengthening of abilities to perform core functions, solve problems, define and achieve objectives and understand and deal with development needs (UNDP, 1995, UNDP, 1998, UNESCO, 2005).

Capacity building combines organizational, human resources, institutional and legal framework development. Looking at what happens to other countries about city management, the successful urban change depends upon the capacity building. Looking at what happens to other countries about city management, the successful urban change depends upon the capacity building. This one develops strategic planning based on <participatory planning> or <community planning>.

These terms are interchangeable. Participatory planning refers to the full commitment of all stakeholders to the management process of human settlements. Its goal is to harmonize views among all of its participants as well as prevent conflict between opposing parties. In addition, marginalized groups have an opportunity to participate in the planning process (Note 16).

It can be said that capacity building is the key component of community planning. Community planning is defined as the general trend towards the involvement of different stakeholders (local authorities, private and public sector, experts or planners, and importantly inhabitants) in decision-making. When dwellers control the major decisions and are free to make their own contribution to the design, construction or management of their housing, both the process and the environment produced stimulate individual and social well-being (Thomas Jefferson).

In addition, capacity building represents as a technical tool to succeed in creating livable neighborhoods. A livable neighborhood is a living environment that permanently ensures the equitable access to the infrastructure and housing for all inhabitants. Explicitly, a livable neighborhood is place that maintains the continuous provision of basic amenities (such as; electricity, clean drinking water, safe foods, sanitation, schools, health care (hospitals), paved roads and streets, as well as convenient shelters) and open space spaces. Suffice to say, healthy communities are the prerequisite of the quality of life in a city.

New urban policy holds the capacity building to gather the shared vision of modernity in DRC: Rebuilding cities to create sustainable neighborhoods in accordance with the interests of all stakeholders. Particularly, capacity building maximizes the indigenous people of developing countries to carry out development processes successfully by empowering them through strengthening domestic institutions, providing domestic markets, and improving local government efforts to sustain infrastructure, social and commercial institutions. (Note 17).

clearly, new urban policy boosts efforts to redeploy or refocus whatever is necessary for the continuous progress towards the new settlement in sustainability.

4.4 New Settlement Project: Creating Sustainable Neighborhoods

Following analysis, the creation of new settlements seems to be the solution to the problem of informal settlements. This new settlement focuses on the neighborhoods revitalization. This means it forecasts the production of shelters. Hence, it combines operations of construction, reconversion, relocation, and resettlement.

The advantages of new settlement project are as follows:

- It can provide new neighborhoods with an architectural design reflecting local culture. New houses have to meet the requirements of safety and health. Affordable and accessible houses (It is important to promote moderate incomes for formerly homeless families units, very low- income households, poor). Moreover, it prepares the relocation to preserve existing open spaces; however it can also prepare the reconversion of land to avoid the full relocation.
- It can improve the quality of work that leads to an increased sense of owner, self-esteem, self-and the realization of outcome desired; also it allows the possibilities for integration social;
- It can create and strongly heighten nature of the livable communities. A livable community recognizes its own unique identity and places a high value on the planning processes that help manage growth and change to maintain and enhance its community character (Note 18).

5. Conclusion

New urban policy emerges from what has failed in the past to manage urbanization. Hence, its implementation is the prospective way to recapture capacity building. Capacity building combines expertise, resources, and creativity of all citizen groups to contribute to the progress. This proves that new urban policy refines the forms of institutions and planning in order to regain strategic planning.

Strategic planning strengthens the cooperation and collaboration ranging from the top to the bottom to catalyze initiatives for modernization. In the quest to improve conditions in urban, suburban, and rural communities, citizens are becoming ever more engaged with elected officials and government agencies in public processes (William A. Gilchrist, AIA). The acceptable role of government is the commitment to the shared vision of modernity relating to delivering sustainable neighborhoods.

With new urban policy, local government has a prominent role in directing infrastructure development. It tends to carry out collective actions to create livable communities reacting against informal settlements. Local government holds the task of improving the quality of life in cities and importantly the achievement of Millennium Goals.

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Notes

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