What is the use of a master plan for Kabul?

VIARO, Mario Alain

Reference

Development of Kabul
Reconstruction and planning issues

10th Architecture & Behaviour colloquium
Monte Verità, Ascona, Ticino, Switzerland, April 4 to 7, 2004

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Kaj NOSCHIS, Editors
The Colloquium was organised by
Colloquia (Parc Scientifique à l’Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne, PSE-C, 1015 Lausanne, Switzerland)

As the
10th Architecture & Behaviour Colloquium

with support from:

Faculty of Natural, Architectural and Built Environment, Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne (ENAC, EPFL)

Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC)

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Cantone Ticino

The Colloquium was organised at the joint initiative of Kaj Noschis (EPFL) and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Geneva. Jolyon Leslie and Anna Soave (AKTC, Kabul), Babar Mumtaz and Kaj Noschis worked on the programme. Kaj Noschis coordinated the Proceedings and Lalita Mumtaz worked hard to refine and standardise the papers.

Cover picture: View of Kabul from the TV-hill, credit KN

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Imprimé par / printed by:
Imprimerie Chabloz S.A.
Lausanne

Imprimé en Suisse
ISBN 2-940075-09-3
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DEVELOPMENT OF KABUL:
RECONSTRUCTION AND PLANNING ISSUES.
INTRODUCTION

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“Urban history and development of Kabul: Reconstruction and planning issues today” was the theme of the 10th Architecture & Behaviour Colloquium, from 4 to 7 April, 2004, that took place in Monte Verità, Ascona, on the Swiss shore of Lake Maggiore. It was organized by the Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne (Dr. Kaj Noschis), in collaboration with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and also with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, as well as the Canton of Ticino.

Architecture & Behaviour Colloquiums address the relationship of dwellers and users to the built environment, therefore discussing an urban and social reality facing major immediate problems that urgently demand a planning response seemed a unique opportunity for moving from academic and educational concerns to concrete, solution-oriented responses. This was a very challenging perspective for a 10th Colloquium!

The Colloquium

In post-war Kabul, where solutions for housing, transportation and infrastructure needs have had to be thought about, decided upon and implemented in an ad hoc and urgent way, the question obviously also arises about the necessity of having a general urban planning approach for a coordinated development of the city. Questions around a new Master Plan were evoked in presentations and discussions and these were quite openly debated during the Colloquium. It became clear that a Master Plan, as such, did not appeal to the participants, as it seemed too much a reminder of planning practices issued from offices that do not dare nor want to be in contact with the realities of a fast-moving urban fabric such as that of Kabul today. Furthermore, there is an existing Master Plan of Kabul that has a somewhat
ambiguous status but is used by the Municipality in considering building permissions and spatial decisions made in the city today.

A more specific issue, and one also raised by previous Architecture & Behaviour Colloquium topics, was how to articulate “bottom-up” and “top-down” approaches in the context of Kabul’s rehabilitation, considering also the public pressure and the political context. But, regardless of how these are resolved, there still remains the question of how to proceed?

Several authors in the present proceedings address this question with suggestions stemming from experiences from other contexts or from observations on the ongoing dynamics in Kabul. The responses deal mostly with various processes and procedures for bringing together the actors involved, effectively and efficiently. Many seem potentially fruitful, but will require political willingness and power, coupled with swift action, if they are to be realized successfully.

It was fortunate that some of the key authorities from Kabul involved in its planning and (re-) construction, as well as representatives from NGOs and implementing agencies who have been involved in current, post-war decision-making and the formulation and execution of urban projects, were able to take part in the Monte Verita Colloquium. This makes us hope that these Proceedings might become a document of practical utility in the ongoing processes of urban planning and reconstruction.

In line with preceding Architecture & Behaviour Colloquiums, the discussions were interdisciplinary and grounded on research, but on this occasion with a special concern for an immediate built, and economic, reality with its ongoing dynamics and immediate necessity for intervention. The Colloquium also brought together international expertise with experiences from other comparable (post-war or post-destruction) contexts. In this respect, the unique contact network of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture facilitated the coming together of urban planners and architects with a specific expertise on cities and contexts relevant to those in Afghanistan. Colleagues from previous Architecture & Behaviour Colloquiums also added their expertise for a successful gathering.

The preparation of the Colloquium required a major effort to bring together data on Kabul’s situation today, including field experience from ongoing rehabilitation and planning projects as well as political and technical expertise. Although the effective presence of several participants was uncertain until the last minute, and eventually the Municipality could not be represented, we were very pleased to be able to bring together representatives from most of the significant forces involved with the huge and requiring reconstruction and planning tasks.

The eventual programme of the three-day Colloquium was a joint effort, where a group of collaborators of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Kabul played a major role. Special thanks are due to Jolyon Leslie, Abdul Najimi and Anna Soave, who also arranged and facilitated essential preparatory meetings in Kabul for us.

The Colloquium itself saw a number of presentations (see the programme) that became the object of intensive debates. We asked all participants to contribute to these issues from their own backgrounds, be they currently involved in the field in Kabul or from their previous experiences in other contexts. Furthermore, everyone was asked to contribute by writing a few pages of Notes, after the Colloquium. These notes make up the bulk of these Proceedings, with the authors literally giving forward their re-summarised thoughts, after the Colloquium itself. Our sincere wish is that they can provide a useful input to the ongoing discussion and decision-making on Kabul’s future and on the issue of a Master Plan.
Reliable data on Kabul today are still missing – for instance authors in these Proceedings refer to the population of Kabul as 2 or 3 or 3.5 millions depending on their sources – and there is certainly a need for establishing such a databank. It could be one follow-up to the Monte Verita Colloquium, and the present Proceedings could serve as an incentive in this respect, given the frankness with which the authors address the present urban problems. In fact, some of the contributions do provide precious and up-to-date data, and show how they are a necessary basis for any good analysis and project.

Let us reiterate that we intend these Proceedings mostly as a working document rather than an academic or conclusive book on the questions addressed by the Colloquium. Some of the contributions are even provocative in their tone and we have voluntarily decided to respect the authors’ varied views and references to the same realities. As already mentioned, many of them are personally involved in the reconstruction of Kabul and we find it important that difficulties, obstacles and frustrations are clearly voiced as overcoming them is the only way out for constructive solutions. We believe that an important quality of this document is this “first hand” and “right now” description as it can open the way for solving difficulties. During the Colloquium, the debate was clearly oriented towards constructive criticism aimed at changing for the better the current administrative and decisional dynamics in planning and implementing changes in the city.

The Contributions

During the last day of the Colloquium a proposal was made to submit the contributions according to the headings of a circular scheme summarizing the themes that seemed important for the actions to be taken on planning issues for Kabul. Contributors were thus given the possibility to refer their papers explicitly to one of the following headings:

- Social needs, Livelihood, Infrastructure, Land, Cultural heritage, Housing, that made up the “Outer circle”;
- Governance (participation), Resources, Competence, Relationships, making up the “Inner circle”; or
- Vision, which constituted the “Centre” of the scheme.

Some authors have indeed taken up this scheme in their papers and we therefore refer to it, but, with the contributions in our hands, this did not anymore seem the most attractive way of grouping them. If we did, many headings would have been left without contributions and others overwhelmingly filled. So we have opted for another classification, and arranged the papers in sections that we hope the reader will find easier to follow. Though some of the papers could also have been assigned to another section, we have made our choice considering them all together and keeping in mind the colloquium aims and discussions. In fact, this arrangement comes close to the original structure of the Colloquium and we are pleased to be able to show that participants have responded to what was the initial impetus for organising this 10th Architecture & Behaviour Colloquium (www.colloquia.ch).

The 19 contributions are grouped in five sections, along with the colloquium programme and the list of participants. In the electronic version, available for reading and downloading on the Internet, the reader can also find the presentations made at the Colloquium itself, including the supporting diagrammatic and visual material.

**Past and Future of Kabul** is the first section and contains three contributions. First,
Marcus Schadl cogently summarises the history of Kabul, stressing that the city has a long and rich past and that it is only lately that it has become the centre of a real population explosion. To have a historical perspective in mind seems essential for all planning views on Kabul.

The Colloquium was honoured by the presence of Qiamuddin Djallalzada, Deputy Minister and Acting Minister of the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, who, on the first day, gave an overview of the ministry’s current challenges, actions and difficulties. His comment in these Proceedings addresses the urgent issues of the future of Kabul while reminding us that it is today one amongst many “booming” cities in Asia.

Zahra Breshna, from the Department of preservation and rehabilitation of Afghanistan’s urban heritage with the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, presents a programme for the rehabilitation and development of Kabul’s historic centre that she is responsible for. The rehabilitation strategy that she presents gives a clear view not only about the context and the challenges facing such a programme but also about the need to reinforce the existing political structures for such efforts to become “a workable planning document”.

The second section, Social Challenges for Kabul, contains descriptions and views on needs to be attended with respect to the major social challenges facing Kabul today.

Jo de Berry presents some results that are remarkable in several respects, from surveys and participatory experiences in Kabul with an important group of city-dwellers, namely children, who are often overlooked by planners. Yet, if children feel to some extent empowered as to their possibilities to be active in their city, they will grow into civically conscious citizens and certainly also feel concerned and responsible once they are adults.

Dad Mohammad, with the long experience of an insider, proposes a rapid overview of social and infrastructural deficiencies that need urgent attention in post-war Kabul.

Stefan Schutte relates the first results from a survey conducted by the Afghanistan research and evaluation unit, on “vulnerable” and “poor” urban groups. There is dissatisfaction and anger but also self-help and mutual support that if recognised and integrated in a planning perspective could become an important positive element for the future positive involvement of citizens in their city’s life.

Jurjen van der Tas addresses the question of finding a balance between “the local reality, a certain level of flexibility and a keen eye for opportunities” on the one hand, and “a hard core of basic principles to give a plan the right level of legitimacy in the eyes of the public”. He sees land-use, infrastructure and social needs as the main regulating tools for city development.

Tom Schacher, himself an architect, reminds us that cities are not built by urban planners but by money and power. This sets a particular challenge for involving all citizen groups in planning the future of a city. Schacher, by reference to Hernando de Soto, suggests, among other perspectives, to locate the “wealth of the poor” and suggests that under any circumstance the establishment of lean and efficient structures to register and guarantee one’s possessions are extremely important.

The third section, Lessons from Kabul, is of immediate relevance in the current context as the authors build on their own experiences and interventions during the most recent post-war years in Kabul.
Abdul Najimi puts in perspective the development of Kabul’s different neighbourhoods. He then addresses some of the dramatic post-war changes and current difficulties – including those of a political nature - when wanting to take concrete action for a more durable improvement in rebuilding the city. During the Colloquium, Najimi presented a more detailed account of the rehabilitation of one historical quarter.

Anna Soave follows up on this issue by arguing how a significant building can play a crucial role in giving a sense of place and roots to citizens and thus contribute to a sense of continuity and engagement of those concerned. This seems notably the case in the reconstruction of the Timur Shah Mausoleum - the project she refers to, and whose development is still fraught with difficulties.

Mohamad Sharif discusses the forthcoming implementation of a community-based strategy for urban community upgrading. It is based on the on-going experience of creating community forums as means of empowering rural communities in other regions of Afghanistan. The project relies on its adoption by the Government, specifically as a programme of support to a process of rebuilding by the people themselves.

Eberhard Knapp who has a longer experience of work in different urban contexts with some similarities to those of Kabul, addresses explicitly the issue of a Master Plan and refers in this respect to experiences from the re-unification of Germany. He advocates the need for “one urban vision” and “many master plans”. He also relates the discussion to issues arising from the problems faced by the impending extension of one of the recently rehabilitated structures, the Aishe-e-Durani secondary school for girls in Kabul.

In the fourth section, Lessons from Other Places, three authors use their extensive experience from work in other geographical contexts to make suggestions as to how Kabul could learn from experiences elsewhere in looking for innovative solution to Kabul’s urgent urban problems.

Veikko Vasko tackles the question and argues for the importance of land and property issues in contexts that may parallel those of Kabul. He also stresses the importance of acting in a way suitable for local social and cultural conditions. Reference is made to a cooperation project with the Palestinian Authority that aimed at getting the informal housing sector under control, that ended up prioritising and implementing a land ownership and registration procedure. Reference is also made to an Egyptian cadastral information management project as another possible source in considering land management matters in Kabul.

Halina Dunin-Woyseth, basing herself on an example from a city in Norway, argues for the importance of image-making, notably for processes related to the definition and adoption of a Master Plan. “A set of images for the future” of the city was developed by a private agency on the basis of information gathered from different sources using participatory processes. One set of such images then made the case for a Master Plan that was subsequently adopted by the city. Dunin-Woyseth argues for the use of such a procedure as one step in a planning process for Kabul.

Akbar Zargar, referring to his involvement in the reconstruction of post-war Iran, among other aspects, stresses the connections between rural and urban settings, and suggests, “city reconstruction has to start from the rehabilitation of villages”. He also insists on the importance of “capacity building”, the importance of involving and training local people, as foreign experts are bound to leave, sooner or later. Such reminders might indeed also be useful in the context of Kabul.
In the fifth and final section, *Guidance for Planning*, four authors develop suggestions that might prove useful in bringing into focus some of the factors and perspectives that could be central for the future of planning in Kabul.

Peter Gotsch presents some ideas, proposals and recommendations for tackling the challenges facing planning in Kabul. Gotsch sees six central issues in this respect and discusses them briefly: Urban realm/right to the city, identity and image, informality (self-organisation, appropriation and participation), hybrids, centre and periphery, and the master plan as an open development strategy.

Suha Ozkan argues that any visible improvement in the urban conditions of Kabul will generate confidence among the inhabitants for the local authorities, as has happened elsewhere. One aspect of this process is the development of a strategic master plan that Ozkan calls for in the form of a dynamic planning instrument.

Babar Mumtaz insists on the necessity for a city to maximise and assure income generation opportunities for its inhabitants and simultaneously to be pro-poor and poverty-reduction oriented. After surveying the main employment sectors defined as trading, service sector and construction, Mumtaz looks at how livelihood strategies may be improved and strengthened by appropriate urban planning.

Alain Viaro first takes a historical and general look at urban planning in Kabul before discussing the Master Plans initiated by Afghan experts in the 1960s assisted by Russian consultants and further implemented, in a third version, during the Soviet invasion in 1978. Viaro shows how this Master Plan still plays a concrete role today, and how it is mainly an instrument for power and profit. He also reminds us of the dramatic and urgent needs of Kabul, and the difficulties in coordinating the actions of different actors and stake-holders and discusses a programme developed by the International Solidarity Fund of Cities Against Poverty. Open to criticism, Viaro shows how the Monte Verita Colloquium became the occasion for reformulating a project that, however, cannot become reality without a coordinated effort from the side of the Government and the Municipality of Kabul.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

In conclusion, let us reiterate that these contributions don’t pretend to offer more than some stimulating thoughts and ideas that, we hope, will be of some assistance in the gigantic task of the reconstruction and management of Kabul’s present and future. We see this as happening in three ways:

First, by providing an input, and in some cases the impetus to the dialogue and discussion that is taking place, and must go on, in Kabul regarding the growth and development of the city. One forum where this can, and to some extent is taking place is in the regular meetings of the urban focal point. The Ministry for Housing and Urban Development, assisted by UNHabitat, meets with other aid and donor agencies and organisations to review progress, share views and voice concerns and chalk out programmes for action. Up to now, most of the time has been spent concentrating on crisis management and project co-ordination, but, with increasing stability and the return to normalcy, more attention will have to be put towards the short and medium term planning and development of Kabul. Eventually, this discussion will also have to be joined in and informed by a larger and wider audience, including the academics and professionals and civic society.

Secondly, there is a wealth of practical knowledge, advice and insight contained within
these contributions that could be useful in developing the vision, identifying the needs and developing strategies and solutions. As they stand, the papers are neither comprehensive nor consistent – written as they were, individually. They provide building blocks for the development of the city. The first step to make them into a comprehensive structure would be to extract from them that which is useful and consistent. One way to do this would be to develop a matrix, perhaps based on the one below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Governance</th>
<th>Social Needs</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Transport</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 2</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Housing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 3</td>
<td>Housing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Land</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each Paper would be treated as a Source and trawled for ideas and suggestions relating to the various Sectors regarding Vision (what things ought to be like), Governance (How things ought to be done – processes and procedures), what Social Needs they should be addressing, and what Strategies could be employed. Not all papers will address all sectors, nor would each sector necessarily always have all of - Vision, Governance, Social Need or Strategy – there are bound to be gaps.

From this initial matrix, a number of other matrices could be developed, where the different suggestions under each head would be collected and sorted to weed out duplicates. Contradictions and inconsistencies would be highlighted as well as gaps identified. Thus, for example, under Vision – all the ideas relating to the city could be brought together. Or under Housing, all the suggestions could be assembled.

Thirdly, this wealth of information of the matrices would be useful material for each of the sectors and to the formulation, evaluation and development of future projects and programmes and policies. Similarly, the ideas under Vision could be used to provide inputs for the discussions of the Policy group.

These matrices could also provide a useful basis and background for one or more follow-up Colloquiums or Workshops in Kabul. The emphasis would be on discussing, debating and further refining, and eventually agreeing on and adopting the Vision, policies and strategies that then emerged.

We feel that although there is much that needs to be done, there is also a lot of knowledge, experience, capacity and goodwill in Kabul and elsewhere that could and should be mobilised so that the lessons of experience can be taken on board, and a more acceptable and effective process and procedure can be evolved for the development of Kabul. We hope that these Contributions will prove to be a useful – albeit modest – one in that evolution.
HISTORIC NOTES ON KABUL

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When the inter-factional fightings of the early 1990s came to an end, much of the historic fabric of Kabul was laid to ruin. By then, the city and its environs could look back to a documented history of two millennia. Devastations and successive starts from anew, however, have always been decisive elements in the historic development of Kabul.

Today, the city of Kabul with its estimated 2-3 million inhabitants stands out as the unrivalled metropolis and capital of a still predominately rural Afghanistan. Whilst its history as an urban settlement has been recorded since the second century AD, its current position as paramount over the country’s other major cities, Kandahar, Herat and Mazar-Sharif, is fairly new. Until the late 18th century, Kabul had hardly been more than a provincial but important trade-town on the silk-route. Caravans from Central Asia crossed the Hindukush passes innumerable times, while those from Persia reached Kabul via Kandahar and Ghazni. From here they then descended to India. Others journeyed in the opposite direction. Trade has been the backbone of Kabul’s development through the ages.

At an altitude of 1800 m, the Kabul Valley is exposed to an overall mild climate, with short, hot and dry summers and cold winters. The fertile meadows between the Sher Derwaza-mountain and the Kabul river must have been permanently settled in Vedic times. Following two centuries of Archaemenid rule, the lands of the Hindukush were conquered by Alexander the Great in 329 BC. Since then we have written proof of an urban settlement in “Parapamissos”, as the lands surrounding today’s Kabul were called by the Greeks. Diodorus of Sicily notes about the local houses, that they “have roofs made of bricks, which form tapered domes. In the center of the roof there is an aperture that allows light to enter and smoke to exit at the same time. The house is built strong on all sides, so that the inhabitants are well sheltered from the cold.” Strabo and Pliny refer to a town named Ortospana, while only in 150 AD Ptolemy first identifies “Kabura on the Kophen River, the capital of the Kabolitae”.

However, during the successive reigns of the Seleucids, the Buddhist Mauryas, the Bactrians and the Kushans over Parapamissos the importance of this town was overshadowed by the fame of Alexandria-ad-Caucasum and the later Kapisa, situated in the north of the Kabul Valley. Even in the early 7th century, on the eve of the onsetting Islamization, the renowned Chinese traveller Hsuen-tsang writes extensively about Kapisa, but only briefly about Kabul.
Nonetheless, Kabul must have been a formidable Buddhist settlement in the first centuries AD. The oldest remaining monuments in the vicinity of the city date from the Kushan-Sassanian period (1st–5th c. AD): The stupas at Guldarra and Shewaki and the recently collapsed Minar-e Chakri give similar proof of the era’s cultural splendour as the Tepe Maranjan-monastery complex close to the city.

With the nomadic invasions from Central Asia in the 5th century AD the peaceful times came to an end. The White Huns were to rule the country and the city. The fortifications of the citadel of Kabul, the Bala Hissar, as well as the defensive walls along the ridges of the Sher Derwaza- and the Asmai-mountain supposedly date back to their rule. By then, the walled-city of Kabul expanded to a size of nearly 4-5 ha, which remained its limits until the late 19th century.

Thereafter, Kabul was constantly experiencing unrest. It fell, temporarily, again under Sassanian dominion. Even after the Arab Army had swiftly crossed Persia in the name of the new faith and captured Kabul in 664, it was only loosely dependent on the Caliphs of Baghdad for another two centuries. Finally in 871 the Saffarids crushed the rule of the Hindu Shahi over Kabul and brought Islam to the city. Whereas the following centuries saw powerful empires with elaborate and famed architectural styles arise on Afghan territory, Kabul developed into a mediocre trade-post and military garrison. The Ghaznavids, the Ghorovids and the Timurids alike gave Kabul little attention. It only shared equally the destruction through the vandalizing Mongols in the 13th century.

In the early 16th century, the city of Kabul reached an unprecedented cultural peak. The young Timurid prince of Ferghana, Babur, chose the provincial town as the capital of his newly established kingdom in 1504. During the following two decades, Kabul developed to full splendour until Babur departed for India in 1525. As Babur himself reveals in his memoirs, he took great delight in residing in Kabul, drinking its vines and enjoying its pleasant climate. He embellished his capital with numerous gardens, of which his favourite should later become his final resting place. After Babur’s conquest of Northern India the imperial residence was moved to Agra. His beloved Kabul was left fairly peaceful in the north-western province of the Moghul empire for the next three centuries.

Kabul continued to flourish quietly under Babur’s successors Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, who all came on visits. On these occasions the city was further embellished with buildings and gardens. The most outstanding example is located close to Babur’s simple tomb: a small, but remarkable marble mosque, which Shah Jahan ordered to be built in 1646. But also the city itself was reorganised and beautified. Shah Jahan’s celebrated governor of Kabul, Ali Mardan Khan, was responsible for the construction of the famous Chahr Chatta bazaar, a covered market place renowned for its architectural quality and exotic merchandise.

With the power of the late Moghul empire on the wane in the early 18th century, Kabul fell back again to less tranquil times. In Kandahar, the Ghilzai chieftains tried to rebel against the yoke of Persian-Safavid rule, but eventually the Persian general and self-proclaimed king Nadir Shah Afshar recaptured first Kandahar and finally Kabul in 1738. Here, he stationed several thousand of his most entrusted Shi’a-Qizilbash troops in garrisons. Chindawool, within the old boundaries of Kabul, was then a separate, walled Qizilbash-quarter.

After the assassination of Nadir Shah in 1747, his young and merited Afghan general Ahmad Shah Abdali, later called Durrani, was crowned in Kandahar as King of the Afghans by the tribal chieftains. In the eyes of most historians, this event marked the birth of Afghanistan
as a nation. Times of stability and prosperity came back to Kabul, especially after Timur Shah succeeded his father on the throne in 1773. Three years later, Timur Shah moved his residence to Kabul in reaction to local rivalry and unrest in Kandahar. Back then, the city was populated by merely 10,000 people. With the seat of royalty now in the Bala Hissar, today’s historic core of Kabul thenceforth developed.

When Timur Shah died in 1793, he left no designated heir and quarrels for the succession brought again unrest to the city. The ever-unfinished state of Timur Shah’s mausoleum, situated on a slope of the Kabul River, is a visible sign of these chaotic times. Nevertheless, Kabul’s population had already rapidly grown to an estimated 50-60,000 inhabitants at the turn of the 19th century.

In the course of the 19th century, the Emirate of Kabul came gradually under foreign influence. With Russian control gradually expanding into Central Asia, Britain had a vital interest to influence the politics of the Emirate bordering British India. An increasing number of European visitors entered the mysterious capital at the Hindukush and gave written account of their observations. G. T. Vigne, who visited Kabul in the 1830s, describes the city vividly:

“Let the reader conceive a broken succession of houses, composed of mud walls of different elevations, pierced here and there with wooden pipes to carry off the rain from the flat roofs, which it would otherwise injure; then let him imagine a few square low doors, opening under the eaves of the first story, projecting over a sort of *trottoir*, formed by the wearing away of the middle of a road, so irregular that no wheel-carriage could be driven along safely; now and then a larger door interposing - the entrance to the residence of some great man - with a mulberry tree occasionally peering over the wall; add to this a thick crowd, and he will form a good idea of a Kabul street. The Bala Hissar or fort, the beautiful little white marble mosque near Babur’s tomb, and the great bazaar are the only buildings worth notice in Kabul.”

And his contemporary Charles Masson: “The appearance of Kâbal as a city, has little to commend it beyond the interest conferred by the surrounding scenery. […] The houses of Kâbal are but slightly and indifferently built, generally of mud and unburnt bricks. The few of burnt bricks are those of old standing. […] The city is divided into mallas, or quarters, and these again are separated into kúchas, or sections. The latter are enclosed and entered by small gates. In occasion of war or tumult the entrance gates are built up, and the city contains as many different fortresses as there are kúchas in it. […] The principal bazaars of the city are independent of the kúchas, and extend generally in straight lines; the chief objects of attention, they are when tracing out the plan of a city, defined with accuracy, and the mallas and kúchas are formed arbitrarily upon them. […] There are no public buildings of any moment in the city. The masjíts, or places of worship, are far from being splendid edifices, although many are spacious and commodious […]. There are some fourteen or fifteen séraís, or kárâvanseráís, for the accommodation of foreign merchants and traders […].”

Twice, from 1838-42 and again from 1878-80, the British interests in Afghanistan in the course of the “Great game” called for an actual deployment of troops. Kabul saw British occupation, Afghan retaliation and British vengeance. The famed Chahr Chatta bazaar was destroyed and the city put to the torch in 1842. In 1880 the Bala Hissar was blown up. While escaping direct British rule, Afghanistan’s new Amir, Abdur Rahman Khan (1880 – 1901), had to expose loyalty to his British neighbours as well as abdicate any independent foreign policy. However, the Amir used his internal independence to conduct a ruthless campaign to unify all of Afghanistan once again, and Kabul now became truly the country’s cultural,
political and administrative center. During these last two decades of the 19th century, Kabul’s population rose from 100,000 to 140,000.

As the old residence at the Bala Hissar was laid to ruins, the Amir gave order for a new palace, the Arg, to be built north of the Kabul river. This proved to be decisive for the further development of Kabul, as Kabul’s aristocracy started to build Manor houses with spacious gardens close to the Arg. The river was no longer the city’s natural boundary. The city walls north of the river were torn down. Several palaces and summer pavilions, at Babur’s Garden, Sharara, Chilsitoon, Paghman, Bagh-e Bala and the Bostan Seral outside the Arg-complex, served the Amir’s luxurious lifestyle. Prior to his death, the works on the Id Gah mosque were initiated east of the old city. And at the defile of the Asmai- and Sher Derwaza-mountain, Kabul’s first industrial complex, an ammunition factory, was built.

Abdur Rahman’s son and successor Habibullah Khan adopted the pomp of his father. Unfinished constructions were completed, the Arg was enlarged, Haremserails were built near Deh Afghanan and, most importantly, electricity was introduced to the city. The prevailing architectural taste followed western models. The traditional, introverted courtyard-architecture, which optimally responded to cultural and climatic requirements, was slowly replaced by European-style villas in the midst of walled gardens. Public buildings were oriented with their facades to the streets, as generally speaking the public space gained importance in the city’s outline and the daily life of its inhabitants.

This development was furthermore accelerated under Amanullah Khan, who seized power after his father’s assassination in 1919. A brief conflict with Britain brought full independence. In manifestation of the newly gained sovereignty, the construction of a new capital city for the Nation was begun in Chardeh at Darulaman, 6 km southwest of the old city. A trolley line was laid to connect Old Kabul with the new city. The increase of motorized traffic demanded a widening of the streets and Sherpur, the former British cantonment during the 19th century-occupations, was turned into Kabul’s first airstrip. European architects were invited to build the new Kabul, first building regulations were introduced and planning authorities installed. When Amanullah had to leave Afghanistan for exile in 1928, open rebellion and chaos broke out in the capital city. Darulaman remained incomplete.

Nadir Shah, and after his assassination, Zahir Shah managed to restore order. The city administration was successively extended. New residential quarters were built on previously agricultural lands north and west of the city: Shar-e Nou in 1935, Kart-e Chahr 1942 and several other new quarters in the 1950s. In 1949 the Jad-e Maiwand was brutally broken through the core of Old Kabul. By then the city’s population reached 200,000.

In 1964 the first Master-plan for Kabul was developed with the help of the Soviet Union. Later, in 1971, the original plan was slightly revised. Simultaneously, the first Soviet-style apartment blocks with prefabricated elements were raised in Mikrorayan. By the mid 1970s the city was inhabited by approximately 750,000 people. According to the Master-plan, Kabul should have been adequately remodelled and enlarged for an estimated population of 1.4 million people between 1978 and 2003, less than half of today’s estimated figure. Soon after the implementation of the plan had started, the shadow of war and destruction fell on Kabul and the rest of the country for the next 22 years.

Today, Kabul is booming again, but flourishing in chaos. The city in ruins has never been populated by as many people. Within the context of a still unstable Afghanistan, it is a place of security and personal opportunities, a thriving city that slowly awakes from the trauma
of war, in search of identity and a peaceful future. In this search, Kabul - young and old at the same time - should recall its respectable history.

Notes :


4. The United Nations Regional Coordination Office (UNRCO) estimated Kabul’s population at nearly 1.8 million people in 1999. Today’s estimations are somewhere between 2.5 and 4 million people.
Global Trends: The future is urban

Urbanization is one of the critical global trends shaping the future. For the first time in history, we are approaching a moment when more people worldwide live in cities than in rural areas. Over the last 50 years, the world has witnessed a dramatic growth of urban population. The speed and scale of this growth, especially concentrated in the less developed regions, continue to pose formidable challenges to individual countries as well as to the world community.

The world’s urban population is estimated at 3 billion in 2003 and is expected to rise to 5 billion by 2030. The rural population is anticipated to decline slightly from 3.3 billion in 2003 to 3.2 billion in 2030.

Forty-eight percent of the world’s population lived in urban areas in 2003. It is projected to exceed the 50 per cent mark by 2007, thus marking the first time in history that the world population will have more urban residents than rural residents. The proportion of the world population that is urban is expected to rise to 61 per cent by 2030.

Population growth will be particularly rapid in the urban areas of less developed regions, averaging 2.3 per cent per year during 2000-2030. Almost all the growth of the world’s total population between 2000 and 2030 is expected to be concentrated in the urban areas of less developed regions. By 2017, the number of urban dwellers will equal the number of rural dwellers in the less developed regions.

Cities and Development

Cities are the most complex, dynamic and powerful systems for generating and transmitting wealth and well being for very large numbers of people. They are also locations of great inequality and persistent poverty. Both these characteristics are being intensified by globalization which is the restructuring patterns of urban life.

Cities are becoming ever more significant in the drive to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the international development community, which will depend on the
adoption and adaptation in the urban context of a reinforcing system of innovative practices, including the building of institutional capacities to implement and maintain them. There are a multiplicity of initiatives that are currently advancing performance in areas ranging from poverty reduction, social capital formation, employment generation, gender equality, and environmental sustainability, through to good governance processes and partnerships, effective planning and management, and the socially just and equitable distribution of resources to those who need them most.

Cities are intrinsically multi-dimensional in character. They contain the intersection of interacting spheres of human existence and effort. These different aspects of urban development are all important in influencing the immediate issues and future prospects faced by residents of cities worldwide. They are all inter-related in a complex and dynamic system of interdependent parts, where for example access to informal urban activities influence the housing and health conditions of low-income households, and eliminating endemic disease is a function of health education and urban infrastructure provision, and both are impacted by changes in allocations within municipal budgets and the organizational capacities of urban service providers. These multiple interdependencies require a way of understanding and of intervening in the development of cities that can fully realize their potential to improve the welfare and wellbeing of all their citizens: and successfully accommodate future citizens as well.

Urbanization in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is the most rapidly urbanizing country in Asia as it plays “Catch up” to its regional neighbors after 23 years of war. The level of urbanization in Afghanistan is 2.06 per cent but Kabul is almost double that figure. The push and pull factors which influence people’s decision to migrate to urban areas are common to other parts of the world. In recent years, more than three million refugees returned to the country, with the majority settling in the country’s urban centres and primarily in the capital city, Kabul. Kabul is a powerful magnet for Afghans looking for security and a better life after decades of civil war, particularly for refugees returning from abroad and IDPs throughout the country. Today, the city has a population of more than 3.5 million, with impoverished residents filling war-devastated sections of the city and constructing new dwellings higher and higher on the surrounding hillsides. It appears that the growth of Kabul will continue unabated in the next 10-15 years. Rapid urbanization is also resulting in dangerous pressures on antiquated infrastructure that can not meet the water, electricity and other requirements of large portions of the population, while problems of health and hygiene associated with high density settlements are common. Infrastructure such as roads, traffic system, telephone system, electricity, water and sanitation, renovation of buildings, is in shambles and the need for reconstruction is very necessary to bring back the city of Kabul to a better place for living.

In spite of these numerous drawbacks, Kabul continues to be perceived by many Afghans as the city of opportunity, where jobs can be found and where many educational and health facilities are located.

The widespread informal or unplanned settlements of the capital is a subject of much debate, at present, and will need to be addressed.
Major Challenges:

Managing our towns and cities has never been an easy matter. And as they grow at an unprecedented rate, they transform our country, in this new Millennium, shifting from a largely rural to an urban society.

The major post conflict challenges facing our major cities, particularly Kabul city, include rapid urban growth, massive service delivery backlogs, traffic and transportation problems, property rights, destruction of infrastructure, exposure to environmental degradation, and weak urban management. Unplanned land and housing development is an additional problem in Kabul city. Due to rapid population growth and influx of IDPs, large scale unplanned housing development is taking place in the city. Such informal or illegal land and housing development is more predominant in large cities, particularly in Kabul, leading to insecurity of tenure and threat of being evicted. Due to the lack of investment, new land and housing development is not keeping pace with the demand. All these factors have a negative impact on a well functioning land and property markets. Moreover, there is a clear shortage of resources and capacity flowing in to the urban sector. The government will require continuous funding to support the reconstruction of its damaged infrastructure and build the capacity to formulate and implement appropriate development policies and programmes. Building knowledge on key issues such as land, rural-urban linkages and community development will help ensure that urban development policies are properly designed and implemented.

Regrettably, there is a lack of resources available to support the urban sector. While certain sub-sectors, such as water and sanitation, have received some support, other important activities, such as urban planning, shelter reconstruction, municipal capacity building and policy advice remain underfunded.

Rationale and Strategy

The vision is to create well functioning cities that are inclusive, efficient and self-sustaining, that encourage collaboration and participation between the urban population and public and private sector stake-holders. Effective urban management is more challenging in Afghanistan due to the urban migration that has occurred following drought and conflict, and the return of many refugees to urban areas. The high level of vulnerability amongst the urban poor presents significant additional challenges. Sequencing interventions is critical. Housing pressures are immense and serviced land must be made available quickly in order to facilitate the urban population to rebuild housing in a planned manner. The reconstruction process in damaged areas provides an opportunity to ensure that adequate services are set up, although this will require focused management. The Government, in line with national policy direction, will act as a catalyst, providing funding and direction but avoiding interventions that will require ongoing subsidy. In urban areas investment in water and sanitation is critical if major health crises are to be avoided - particularly amongst the most vulnerable. Currently only 35% of the urban dwellers have access to safe water and only 14% have piped water; access to sanitation is limited to 23%. The health consequences of this low level of provision is stark – across the country diarrheal diseases account for 22% of deaths of children aged 0 to 1 year old. Other priorities include transport improvements and steps to improve air quality.
The Major Needs Of Kabul City

1. Systematic rebuilding of Kabul city that has been destroyed, with shelter and housing being critical areas of support for the returning population. This means rebuilding houses, including informal housing, and providing infrastructure and services to the city residents.

2. Finalization of an Action/Reconstruction plan.

3. A number of quick start projects to provide serviced land for housing, facilitating self-build and other housing, with proper coordination and planning for maximum impact.

4. A project to regularize unplanned areas and facilitate improvements to Services, in these areas.

5. A project to improve land registration, property valuation, land survey and demarcation and to develop land dispute resolution mechanisms.

6. Capacity building support for the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, Kabul Municipality and other stakeholders.

7. Provision of a proper Traffic and Transportation plan.

8. A project to mobilize the financial sector with respect to property, to ensure that the Government expenditure is targeted, to develop a mortgage market and to review the potential for property taxation.
A PROGRAM FOR THE REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF KABUL’S HISTORIC CENTER

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Introduction

As a geographical and cultural crossing, Afghanistan was, for centuries, an important inner-Asian trade center and a gate to India. Multicultural and ethnic groups lived here in harmony; thus symbolizing a country that unites several languages and religions.

Afghanistan was the region’s heartland, with a long history of urban settlement, and one of the oldest centers of civilization that dates back to 3000 BC. Many of these historic cities had a pivotal position between the fabled Silk Route and India.

After 22 years of war, destruction, demolition and neglect, Afghanistan and many of its historic
cities, especially Kabul, are in a state of ruin.

All of the famous old cities and districts in Afghanistan, today, suffer from inadequate infrastructure and lack of community services. As a result, the “old town / historic center”, whose path of neglect had already begun in the 50s due to negligible maintenance and investment in services, is associated with retrograde development—encumbered with a very negative image of poverty and squalor. The destruction of social relationships is connected to a lack of appreciation for indigenous traditional values and as a consequence has led to, among other things, the disappearance of indigenous building typologies, ornament and handwork traditions. The destruction of public institutions as well as the urban infrastructure has dramatically intensified the accompanying hardship and homelessness, and the informal development.

The revival should not be a utopian resurrection of bygone times, nor should the solidification
of the current condition be given the status of a museum. Instead, the emphasis should be on developing and strengthening the partially forgotten local and traditional aspects, whilst placing them in a contemporary global context. The goal is to preserve the tradition without hindering the development of a modern social, ecological and economical institution. The cities of Afghanistan should be a reflection of historical as well as actual developments.

Kabul’s Historic Center Rehabilitation & Development Program

To cover all historical cities in Afghanistan the first program will focus on Kabul’s historic center.

Existing conditions

At the moment, the chief characteristics of the historic center are, primarily, poverty, misery and ruin; about 80% of the structural fabric of the old town (450 ha) has been destroyed. Despite this fact, the center has not been reduced to a ghost town. Instead, every conceivable possibility has been implemented for provisional and practical solutions.

- Everywhere, where the destruction has created an empty niche, these niches are utilized for temporary purposes.
- Despite the destruction there remains a vital and very dynamic street life. Space is put to public use wherever there is place.
- The busiest spaces are those where commercial trade is carried on.
- The main commerce of the city takes place on an informal basis, with the use of containers or mobile stalls.
- People try to rebuild their houses on their original properties as soon as they receive an official building permit.
- There is now a growing pressure from commercial developers to be permitted to develop their sites.

In addition to the local economy, the commercial investor is a decisive factor for the rebuilding and for a stable economic situation. By placing the financially strong in the districts allocated for commercial activity such as banks, company headquarters, etc., the attractiveness of the city center, and thereby the whole city, is increased.

The historic city center has significantly more possibilities than is suggested by the first impression. The city, today, has the opportunity to utilize these factors as the starting point for reconstruction. In order for the Government to succeed in making Kabul an attractive economic center for international companies, certain essential criteria must be established. In particular, a political and lawful security as well as a functioning infrastructure is necessary in order to enable meaningful and calculable (stable) investments.

The economy needs ordered structure, standards and controls, which cannot develop without public guidance and planning procedures. So, there is an added urgency to develop a rehabilitation strategy, to formulate the guiding framework, and to start implementing the recommendations.

- To create an attractive, efficient city center for the capital of Afghanistan is a vital contri-
View from the minaret of the Pole-Kheushi Mosque toward the “Titanic” Bazaar in the riverbed - 2002
(Source: Scenario s for Kabul – project documentation, 2003)

Shop in front of a bombed-out house - 2002
(Source: Scenarios for Kabul, CD, 2003)

Merchants in a Bazaar in Kabul, March 2004
(Source: Zahra Breshna 4/2004)
bution to restoration of national identity.

- To create high quality development sites to increase the attractiveness of the city to foreign commercial investment.
- To enhance the lives of thousands of ordinary people, such as residents, office workers, traders, shoppers etc, in the city center.
- To take advantage of the cultural heritage -cultural attractions have far-reaching positive social and economic consequences for promoting tourism.

Rehabilitation Strategy

The Government applies itself to the task of establishing a strategy and a framework. The realization of this is understood to be an essential part of the reconstruction. Therefore, to generate a suitable, pragmatic and realistic solution, it is necessary to react to all influences.

Goals

- Develop an integrated phasing strategy for the preparation, rehabilitation and development of the city center.
- Establish effective general government rehabilitation policies, conservation laws and regulation mechanism for the preservation of the historic fabric.
- Advocate the appreciation of the value and the significance of the historic fabric.
- Preservation and rehabilitation of the historic urban fabric whilst improving the environment and infrastructure as well as the socio-economic conditions in the old town / historic center.
- Revival of cultural identity whilst enhancing community development.
- Strengthening partnerships with private sector, local community, and authorities.

The strategy must adequately address different problems and demands. In this case especially, urban design has to solve not only spatial-design tasks and revival of cultural identity, but also social, economic and ecological tribulations.
The preservation and revival of cultural identity are just as important as a fast connection to global economic and social developments, not to mention the accompanying demands on the old town as the representative image and service, and a tourist center of the city.

The planning should provide orientation and point to possible solutions. Within this framework, specific projects, proposals and exemplary solutions (such as pilot projects) through NGOs or other organizations can be defined. Through involvement with the local forces it’s possible to quickly realize this type of project.

A net of symbolic sites, as those essential to the cultural identity, can, as in acupuncture, not only lead to local improvement, but also serve as multipliers and can result in the increased value of the entire civic organism (for example Tunis, Cairo, etc.).

A flexible regulatory system should address the necessary commitments to the infrastructure as well as high priority ecological and economic issues, especially for the tertiary sector, like, flexible laws and standards, building and zoning regulations, and the clarification of ownership.

The strategy for rehabilitation needs to address the following issues:

- Which elements and principles have their roots in the tradition of the historical center?
- What social, cultural and symbolic relevance do these elements have today?
- To what degree can the revival of historic elements and principles of organization function as an engine for the reconstruction?
- How are the elements and principles to be viewed in a global, social, economic, ecologic context?

In order to investigate this, historical analysis is necessary.

**General studies and historical analysis of Kabul city**

From this investigation, a subdivision of three historical phases of urban development emerge:

Each phase marks a morphological - social connection. Beside the social structures, these phases are characterized by different epochs and built features.

**Pre-Islamic phase**

Origin of the city walls and Bala Hissar (Citadel), 5th century circa. The urban structure is unknown.

Buddha head from the 4th-5th century. Location of finding – Tepe-e-Kulan
(Source: Breshna, 2001, Ill.11)

The walls of Kabul’s Citadel
(Source: Breshna, Abdullah – private photos from the 60’s & 70’s)
Pre-Islamic phase – with locations of archaeological findings.

Since only a few written and drawn references exist, all information in this plan must be verified by archaeological and building-historical research.

(Source: author’s illustration, 2003)
Historically the first phase includes several epochs. In this phase the city develops into a unity. The seat of government is within the city walls. Since Islamization, the city developed within Islamic principles.
The city is a closed, autonomous, self-governing unit.

The organizing principle and solidarity are determined by religion.

In the historic center of Kabul, the reigning order is a topological order: it is a mosaic of sub orders, of spaces nestled within spaces where the connections are coincidental. In this manner, a labyrinth has developed with which only the native is familiar.

The structure of the city is distinguished by regularity and self-similarity which is reflected in the fractal structures of all Islamic cities.

Early Islamic period

Conquest and Islamization approximately in the year 879 - construction of the first mosques, capital of Kabulistan in Sistan.
Era of prosperity (mogul dynasty)
Reign of Babur Shah (1483-1540) Islamic urban structure - appearance of gardens, mosques and bazaars (Char Chattra Bazaar)

Kabul becomes capital of Afghanistan (1773)
Renewal of the city walls and the Bala Hissar (by King Ahmad Shah) - new districts (gozars), mosques, government edifices, gardens....
Afghanistan experiences its largest expansion. In this phase, the first expansions of the city begin and most of the quarters emerge. The population increases to about 70,000 inhabitants over an area of approximately 180 hectares.
Phase 2

The phase begins with the transfer of the seat of government from Bala Hissar to the new town (1878 to 1919). The city wall is dismantled in the north in conjunction with the establishment of the northern and southern urban expansions that are based on geometric principles and a new spatial understanding.

View from Koh Sher Darwaza above Kabul, 1917
Detail of a photo that shows the self-grown structure of the old town and adjacent gardens
(Source: Niedermayer, 1924, B03)
Introduction of new, modern principles of administration and order (laws, building inspection, etc.) The space of the street gains more importance. There are facades to the street on public buildings. Domiciles are developed as solitary objects (later within an enclosing wall).

In the course of urban expansions, the boundaries of the old town dissolve.

The old town is still an autonomous, important part of the city.

It is the beginning of planning and definition of space and spread of state dominion through modern administration systems, whereby the old town remains an autonomous and important unit within the city.
Phase 3 begins in 1949 with the construction of the over-scaled street axis of Jade Maiwand.

Overview – 3rd Phase

The old town and the "Deh Afghanan" district are shown darkened.
(Source: author’s illustration, 2003)

Aerial photo of the old town with view toward the east
(Source: Breshna, private photos from the 60’s & 70’s)
This divides the old town, destroys its structure, and forces it towards the fringes of the urban conglomerate. As a result, the old town loses its significance over the course of time and shows increasing signs of a slum.

Indicative of this is the influence of the international modern style and the displacement of traditional structures.
The new urban expansions develop in accordance with plans and master plans - the first high-rise buildings sprout along the Kabul River. The population increases to about 750,000 inhabitants over an area of approximately 9000 hectares.

Through this historic development, various zones develop with their own character. The borders between the zones are fluid; the morphological and typological blending results from the historical evolution.

Until 1979, Kabul was still a relatively modern city. Through the separation of state and religion, laws and rules could develop that gave women the basis for achieving legal equality. The open societal climate enabled various ethnic and religious groups to live together.

With incipient turmoil and devastation beginning in 1980 that continued until total destruction
in the civil war, all the ambitious projects of the past were negated. Kabul was politically, socially and architecturally thrown back many years.

The following hypotheses should be tested:

- The characteristic elements of the historic city and the urban fabric are tied together with self organization, participation and decentralization.
- Kabul is predestined to create a synthesis of the modern on a global level and the traditional on a local level because the city contains unavoidable and irreconcilable contradictions between the tradition and the modern, that is to say, the self-organization and planning. This collision, which occurs in the city center, is also what gives the city its particular character.
- The reconstruction of the historic center should be with consideration for, and with a revival of, the traditional elements and principles, the reestablishment, or new definition of these particular connections.

Rehabilitation strategies, consisting of:

- A flexible development framework that should simultaneously allow development possibilities and remain open for future changes,
- Formulating a phasing program – to be immediately effective to reduce the acute needs and to respond to the pressure for redevelopment,
- Developing planning guidelines and measures, functional designation, and
- Phasing programs for the plan implementation.

Development Frameworks

The measures form the planning framework for the strategies based on the analysis.

Old town center / Inner ring

Scheme – inner ring, reconstruction of the old town, Kabul
(Source: author’s illustration, 2003)
The old town should be newly defined and strengthened, within and along historically important paths and bazaars, through partial reconstruction and the revitalization of historic connections. Within the historic center development should follow historic principles. The buildings function as models and encourage subsequent, further settlements. Self-organizational processes and space for dynamism should be encouraged and places of identification created. The historic fabric of the old town should be connected to a modern infrastructure— a concept of decentralized logistics, which is connected to a centralized system that can be established in several stages, should be developed.

**Intermediate zone**

The zone between the old town and the geometric urban expansions has the largest potential for development. It is very dynamic and open due to the superimposition of different structures and typologies. This zone is marked along the river through high points and special functions.

**Outer band**

![Scheme – outer band, reconstruction of the old town, Kabul](source: author’s illustration, 2003)

The band that surrounds the old town uses the element water (river, lakes, canal) as its central theme. It is simultaneously strengthened by special facilities (cultural center, library, etc.), the high points of the intermediate zone and the green belt. The old town is contained and moved to the center.
Green belt / slope development

The zone delimits the old town area from the informal slope development and links important cultural places (e.g. “Babur’s” garden and the citadel) with each other and with the center. Since phase 2 of the city's historical development, this connection is no longer perceptible.

In addition, immediate and long-term projects have identified the following issues:

Special places

A net of symbolic sites, and those essential to the cultural identity, can result in an increased value of the entire area. Historically, significant places of remembrance as well as important...
cultural and assembly places are redefined and emphasized. They serve as initial situation for new structures and urban development. These special places, as pilot projects, should function as models and catalysts for future development.

**Infrastructure**

**Technical infrastructure and transportation systems**

It is necessary to have a system that allows for the decentralization of the infrastructure, but above all, takes into account an ecological supply and disposal system. Since there is no possibility for through traffic in the entire historic center, in particular through the inner ring, there is a proposal for a new street in the south along the mountain. The proposed street, which follows in part the green belt, is connected to streets leading to the old town as well as to the “bario” quarters / neighborhoods on the slope. The traffic and transportation network must connect the bazaars, the commerce center and quarters as well as the culturally relevant sites. Nevertheless, the major arteries should not stand alone in dictating the formal elements.

**Strategic process**

1st Step
- An initial survey to identify problems and development opportunities
  - Technical infrastructure and physical characteristics
  - Social, economical and environmental conditions and problems
- Collect data and information on land ownership and cultural sites
- Update maps
- Digitize maps and develop computer models

2nd Step
- Create workshops
- Liaise with NGO’s agencies and authorities.
- Develop planning guidelines, zoning and a flexible infrastructure system
- Develop effective rehabilitation and conservation laws, building codes
- Imperative to find a common consensus regarding the course of action as there are markedly divergent planning cultures and social conceptions

3rd Step
- Develop a phasing implementation programs
- Contribute to communities & private investment

The strategy that needs to be developed for the reconstruction of Kabul can be considered a paradigm for the reconstruction of the country.

The MUDH (Ministry for Urban Development and Housing) team has produced a large amount of background information and analysis. But it now needs specialist assistance and financial support to help synthesize all this information into a workable planning document.
Addendum

At the conference in Monte Verita, all participants perceived the strengthening of the administration as an important basis for urban reconstruction.

Although much money is flowing to Afghanistan at this time, these resources are unfortunately not being used for the establishment and reinforcement of Afghani institutions (administration, central government), so that each assisted group must proceed without coordination as an “individual combattant”.

The promised financial assistance of donor countries has, at this point in time, doubtful prospects for success, since money flows primarily to the many NGOs, international organizations and highly-paid experts, whose work, due to the lack of coordination and supervisory controls combined with a still weak administrative apparatus, has thus far been too ineffective and not sustainable enough.

In the following, I wish to emphasize the importance of a strong administration as a central contact and a centralized place of coordination as well as describe pragmatic resolution strategies for strengthening the administration and an organizational system that is developed from the history and culture of the land.

In order to have a sustainable endurance, solutions for reconstruction (not only for the old town) must generally be in harmony with international laws and norms, but more importantly, must be developed from the local problematic -- on the basis of tradition and culture.
At present the city is determined by chaos, anarchy and corruption.

The social system shattered by combat, civil war, flight and displacement significantly hampers the development of civil society and physical reconstruction projects.

The informal sector, in contrast, in relation to housing construction and also on the capital market forms the strongest growth area in Kabul. It arose from material needs, because of the existing bureaucratic and inefficient administration, and also, largely, out of a tradition of acting on one’s own responsibility.

The development and the strengthening of civil society through political conditions, the implementation of local democracy and the application of principles of subsidiaries are substantive (in the sense of high-ranking, critical tasks).

Traditional structures and today’s requirements for complexity are not contradictory, but rather the combination of various principles offering the possibility to develop sustainable solutions, with which the identity and autonomy of the population can be retained. That contributes decisively to the advancement of civil society, democracy and awareness for responsibility and at the same time can yield relief for the often overstrained administrative apparatus.

Historically, an organisational and communication form developed in Kabul (as well as in Islamic culture), upon the basis of which participatory and self-organizational processes created a differentiated urban structure based upon the solid principle of neighborhood.

Over centuries, a self-regulating system developed (linked with participation and decentralization), that is ultimately anchored in religion and community, and is an essential cause for the morphology and typologies of the city in the first phase.

In Afghanistan, as early as antiquity, the principle of “Jirga” has been used to regulate not only internal problems, within village communities or between neighboring villages, but also external relationships. The institution of the “Jirga” (congregation / assembly) is deeply rooted in the traditions of the peoples on Hindukush. The inhabitants met together in advisory congregations to regulate societal life. For this purpose, non-formalized assemblies were held in which each decision had to be reached by consensus, thereby allowing for all circumstances, possibilities and realities.

These social systems arose from the impulse of goal and functional orientation and were also adopted for organization within the cities.

In this manner, a decentralized organizational system developed within traditional society. The autonomous amalgamations were equipped with great leeway and were viable without an administrative apparatus.
Traditional organizational structure, exemplified by a quarter
(Source: author’s illustration, 2003)

The system is based on the election of representatives of the autonomous units (of the individual courtyard houses or families). In mosques, assemblies of the quarters were held, whereby representatives were elected (Wakil Gozar), who ultimately also represented the quarters at the district level, who in turn elected their own representatives.

Many problems were resolved within the quarters or the bazaars. Also tasks, that are nowadays, administered by higher-ranking institutions, were taken over by the autonomous units.

The solutions for problems were not found using a hierarchical power structure, but instead through a culture of dialog and negotiation.

Despite the destruction (up to 80%), even today mature social structures remain partially preserved in the old town. Thus, quarter-advocates still officiate even in fully destroyed zones. They assume the responsibility for upcoming changes, oversee the accommodation of refugees and make decisions about the conversion of mosques into schools.

Even though quarter-advocates are taking on a rather informal role, representatives were nevertheless elected for the Loya Jirga in June 2002. A representative for the city council assembly has been selected from the quarter-advocates. The representatives for the great Loya Jirga were ultimately elected from the city council.

A larger portion of the historical substance and traditional structures have survived than one would imagine, from initial impressions of the location. This was made conspicuous by the quick reconstruction of many symbolically significant and historically meaningful locations. (e.g. mosques, quarters and tombs were reconstructed or revitalized by AKTC). The memory of symbolic locations (mosques, ziarats, quarters and bazaars) is deeply anchored within the consciousness of the population despite the current hardship.

Strategy for Reconstruction

Today the possibility still exists to utilize these preserved structures and elements as the basis for reconstruction and to connect up with them.
The strategy for reconstruction consists of a synthesis of planning (that readopts historically anchored elements) and self-organization (which is unquestionably present and also has an historical tradition), since the classical planning instruments cannot function alone in light of the multiplicity and complexity of the tasks at hand.

The state and the public sector must establish the crucial preconditions needed. In order to make self-regulation with integration of the population possible, the administration must simultaneously establish a communication framework in which decentralization and participation are possible.

A flexible regulatory framework should contain essential decisions about infrastructure, ecological and economic aspects, as well as flexible laws, standards and design rules. The planning should, thereby, also establish orientation and demonstrate possible examples. A design proposal serves as the basis for discussion.

Axonometry of the proposed design from the northeast - Reconstruction Old town Kabul
(Source: author’s illustration, 2003)

Perspective of the proposed design from the north- Reconstruction Old town, Kabul
(Source: author’s illustration, 2003)
It is crucial, however, to establish a communicative framework in which the various groups (representatives of the residents, planners, donors, other ministries, city administration, investors, NGOs, organisations, experts, etc.) can come together in an interdisciplinary manner and on an equal footing, and can network amongst themselves. Analogous to the traditional system, a flexible, egalitarian, non-hierarchical principle should be established that ensures all participants have equitable voting rights. The model builds upon the addition of autonomous basic units, in which the elected spokesmen for other commissions, who in turn elect their own spokesmen, are appointed. Hence a network of all participants comes into existence.

The system must be purpose and result oriented without a separation between planning and execution. Architects and planners will then take over the tasks of coordinators and moderators.

Diagram of the “communicative framework”
(Source: author’s illustration, 2003)

The goal is to assist participation, especially the inclusion of citizens, and also to strengthen the financially weak and poorly staffed administrative apparatus of the Urban Development Ministry, where an employee receives, for example, $30 monthly, whilst the subsistence level is approximately $200 per month.

Through coordination of the possibilities presented by NGOs and organizations, the Ministry can more quickly formulate guiding principles and guidelines, and establish better and more effectively prioritized tasks, whereby a more fair distribution of resources could also be made possible. The apportionment of tasks within individual (autonomous) subject fields would allow for the decentralization and coordination of projects and noticeably improve their effectiveness.
Diagram – proposal for organization at the level of the Urban Development Ministry
(Source: author’s illustration, 2004)

Diagram – proposal for organization at the level of the “Old Town Kabul” project
(Source: author’s illustration, 2004)
Due to yearlong neglect, Kabul’s old town had already begun to become impoverished and turn into a slum of the 50s, (even the local city administration had ceased to invest in the Old Town). The traditional typologies, for example the traditional courtyard house, in which many generations lived together, and the lack of a modern technical infrastructure did not correspond to new forms of living. The traditional urban structure was perceived as a desolate, ruinous area without any attractiveness and even before its destruction in the war, it was ultimately seen as a symbol for squalor and dilapidation.

The reconstruction process can turn this development around through a modern revitalization of the historically developed elements and a corresponding betterment of specific places.

- If the attractiveness of the old town can be raised, it can contribute to economic and social improvements as a symbol of the city.

- When new jobs are created and tourists are attracted, today’s poor can improve their social status.

- Through settlement of financially strong investors in the areas allocated to business centers (with banks, corporate headquarters, etc.), the attractiveness of the inner city and thereby the entire city will be increased.

With the strategies I have proposed, traditions can be preserved without impeding modern social, ecological or economical orientation. The sustainability of development is guaranteed through integration of the population and consensus-building.

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KABUL : A CHILD FRIENDLY CITY

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My Vision for Kabul is for A Child Friendly City where young people are the designers, planners and improvers of their city to a capital which is safe and happy for children.

Children as Residents of Kabul

There is a child’s eye view of Kabul which sees the city from a position of half height but heavy responsibility. The many obstacles and hazards of Kabul life - overflowing sewage ditches by the side of the road, a large step up to the bus to go to school, steep pathways to houses that cling to the sides of mountains, busy traffic - only seem bigger and more frightening from a child’s point of view. And yet Afghan children love their city, Kabul; they have pride in living in the capital, they enjoy living side by side with neighbours, they thrill at running along walls flying kites, while playing in the park and going on picnics in the surrounding hills are times of great delight.

Half the residents of Kabul city are children under the age of 18. In 2002, Save the Children and UNICEF consulted with the Children of Kabul about what it was like to be a resident of this dynamic and rapidly changing place. The children involved in the research project mapped out the places of risk that they encountered in their daily life. They identified danger spots such as mine fields and ruined houses, busy road crossings and military posts. Some of the sites, that they mapped out when asked to draw a local neighbourhood plan showing the places they both enjoyed and found dangerous, surprised the adults who would not see it as being risky. For example, children commonly remarked about certain corners of their neighbourhood where wild and rabid dogs congregated, as being one of their greatest concerns.

The children, involved in the research, said that such places were a threat to their physical safety, putting them in danger of accidents and injuries. And they said they were afraid of being involved in physical harm because they knew that any accident which required medical treatment would place additional economic strain on their parents who would struggle to find the resources to pay for their medicine. But the children also alluded to the fact that the impact of their physical environment and the risks it held went further than their physical safety; it also affected them socially and emotionally. For example, children in Kabul said that they hated the rubbish on their streets because it was smelly and dirty and attracted flies. They also explained that rubbish had a detrimental effect on social relations for it was a source of arguments between neighbours. Apparently, neighbours in Kabul, are constantly arguing about people dumping household refuse outside their homes. The young people, in addition,
explained the multiple effects of destroyed and damaged houses. They knew that having to walk across sites of rubble was dangerous and could be physically harmful. They also said that they believed that these destroyed homes were places where ghosts dwelled and were scared and fearful of them. Indeed one of the major findings of the research project was the high influence of the physical environment on children’s emotional and mental health.

Children in Kabul constantly referred to busy traffic as a source of danger in the city. Indeed, this emerged as the the most consistent concern identified by children in the research. They worried about traffic as it was a constant force in their daily life; blocking the way to school or the path to the water pump. Children in Kabul carry heavy loads of responsibility, fulfilling domestic tasks for their families such as fetching water and firewood or working on the streets. They care about fulfilling these tasks for their parents and siblings and when obstacles such as a busy road crossing get in their way, they worry about not being able to do their appointed job properly. Road traffic is also a physical threat - the research showed an unacceptable level of children losing their parents in car crashes and themselves being involved in road accidents. The physical dangers of unregulated traffic and chaotic road conditions affect children physically, emotionally and socially.

Building a child friendly city

Turning Kabul into a child friendly city will involve not only taking into account the perspectives of these child residents, looking at the places which affect their social and physical well being in a negative way and seeking to overcome these factors but also building upon and increasing the places children already enjoy and benefit from. Previous consultations and research which express children’s ideas and hopes for their capital should inform the new planning and development of the city. Thus, one clear recommendation which can be taken from the Children of Kabul research in 2002 is to improve road safety in the city, provide proper road crossings and enforcing traffic codes. Those committed to a child friendly city should ensure that this clear directive from children is implemented.

But more than this, my vision for Kabul is one where children are active participants in improving their city. This means going beyond a process in which adults finalise and implement a vision which has been informed by children. Instead adults and children can work in partnership to both design and take action for their neighbourhoods and environments.

Already there are children at work in Kabul taking action in local communities in the city. Save the Children and other child-focused NGOs are working with children’s groups on so-called child-to-child action which can have dramatic results. For example in one area of District 7, Save the Children facilitated children to gather in groups and discuss problems in their local area. The children identified a particularly busy road crossing as a source of anxiety; the road crossing was on their way to school and made them fearful of getting to class in the morning. Together the children in the groups explored the impact the crossing was having on their lives and what they could do to solve the problem. They came up with an action plan to remedy the situation. They presented their ideas at a meeting with many members of their local community, including leaders and representatives of the municipality and traffic police. The adults and children together agreed on how to implement the plan. Save the Children provided resources to fulfill the actions agreed by the group, actions which included: asking a traffic policeman to regulate the cars at the crossings; setting up a rota of the local Scout association in order to help children cross the road safely on their way to school; painting a sign warning drivers to slow down; writing a letter to the municipality asking for a re-structuring of the crossing. When all of these ideas had been put into place,
children overwhelmingly said that they felt happier in their community and less frightened by the road crossing.

My recommendation is to replicate and learn from this previous experience in supporting children to be active planners and improvers of Kabul. This can be done in various ways. First, there can be more children from a local school and community groups to work through action-research processes like in the child-to-child project. Local community leaders and facilitators, teachers, elders, parents and youth can be trained in ways to support children’s groups to express their ideas and turn their aspirations for Kabul into local action. Second, existing projects which are already doing community mobilization work with adults in urban planning (such as UN Habitat Community Forum) can be encouraged to take children into account for informing and implementing local projects. Children can be equal participants along side adults in transforming their streets and neighbourhoods. Third, children should be allowed to take a strategic role in setting a vision for Kabul. Children’s views of life in the city should not just be channelled into change at a local level but should also be heard and implemented at a powerful level, set along side key decision makers including the Minister and Municipality. I recommend that the Ministry and Municipality take time to include contemporary children in a vision making process for Kabul. For example the Ministry of Urban Planning could invite local children to describe a vision of an ideal Kabul, one that they would like to work towards, together, over the years ahead. Having a vision of Kabul which is informed by children living and working in Kabul city will help the Ministry know whether they are achieving a child-friendly city. The Ministry could also ask children to work together with them to fulfill this vision.

Involving Children as stakeholders in rebuilding Kabul

To follow up a commitment to work with children as the designers, planners and improvers of Kabul on both a local and strategic level, will require the following:

Relationships

There will need to be structures and systems in place in order to foster the active participation of children in rebuilding Kabul. The Ministry can work with NGOs like Save the Children, to implement projects such as the child-to-child action groups; as also to change its own structure and organisation to accommodate children as partners in administering the city. These structures can spread from the local to the strategic level. At the local level it may involve, for example, having regular meeting between children’s groups and local municipality and district staff. Children could also join local district authorities when they make decisions about the development of an area. In order for this to work effectively, the district staff will need to accept children as having an equal right to express their opinions and may need to change the culture of their meetings to allow children to join in the conversation and decision making. Local municipality staff can be trained and supported in how to effect participatory work with young people. At the strategic level, objectives such as increasing children’s participation in urban development should be integrated into advisory and coordination groups such as the Urban Planning Consultative Group (CG). It may be possible to form a Community Mobilization sub-group of the CG. A sub-group under the CG which supported community mobilization and participatory approaches to urban planning could only be improved by taking children’s roles into account. In total, the vision, of having children equally involved in developing Kabul, needs a thorough system in place where their views, opinions and plans can be given appropriate credit and attention.
Resources

Working with children in urban planning needs particular kinds of resources. There is a need for flexible funding in which the outgoings and outputs are not set in advance of a participatory process. If, for example, children work in a project to decide how to improve their neighbourhood, it is not right to predict or pre-empt what plan they might come up with or to set this criteria in advance of the project. Funding should recognise that in a true process of participation it is not possible to decide in advance what the budget will go towards in achieving the project. There is a need for undesignated funding where donors will agree to see resources spent on what the young people decide upon in the course of the project. This means that the budgets submitted to projects may well hold unspecified amounts of money such as ‘community funds’ which can then be spent to achieve the ideas. Donors need to be influenced to accept less rigorous budgets where outgoings are not specified but are left open to fulfill the ideas of children.

Similarly such projects need flexible monitoring and evaluation systems where the project is judged on the process of young people’s involvement and the quality of that methodology as much as some of the final concrete achievements and changes. For example, a suitable indicator for a project which encourages children to take local neighbourhood action might be ‘# of children’s ideas which have been acted upon’. This means that credit is given to the process of supporting the children’s ideas to materialize rather than on the results of the project.

Recommendations

In summary, in order to achieve the vision of a child-friendly Kabul my recommendations are:

• To build on previous research and consultations with young people and act upon child given concerns, such as busy traffic. Strategies for addressing children’s concerns about overall development plans for the capital.
• Expand the numbers of children’s groups to meet and support their local action in their neighbourhoods, through linking with partner NGOs and community associations.
• Train and support adults who can facilitate such groups with children.
• Include children as participants in existing community mobilization efforts in the city (such as Community Councils and Community Fora)
• Involve children in an envisioning process for Kabul. Let their vision for the city be the benchmark by which success is measured.
• Change Ministry and Municipality structures, organisation and culture so that children can play an active role in influencing and taking decisions in urban planning for Kabul and in checking whether decisions have been implemented.
• Form a Community Mobilization sub group of the Consultative Group so that community involvement is seen as integral to the overall project of rebuilding Kabul. Include support for children’s participation in this sub-group. Use this sub-group as a place to share experience and promote good practice in children’s participation.
• Lobby donors to open up flexible funding which allows community funds for the children themselves to determine what it should be spent on in their neighbourhood.
• Influence donors - by sharing of best practice - on the kinds of monitoring and evaluation which does justice to and supports children’s urban involvement.
A NOTE ON SERVICE AND INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS IN KABUL

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Situation today

Cities and towns in Afghanistan have provided a safe haven for those displaced from the surrounding areas during times of conflict. Being more easily accessible, bigger cities have been the focal point for the supply and distribution of relief materials to a large number of people. With the return of peace and stability, they will also be the first port-of-call for many returnees. Afghanistan has urbanized rapidly and its cities have been under-managed and under-provided, even in the best of times.

Continued urbanization will exacerbate the situation unless the backlog of service deficiencies is made up over and above the restoration of infrastructure damaged by conflict. In addition, there are approximately 4 million refugees, and their pattern of relocation depends upon security and livelihood conditions in their areas of origin. If the majority relocate to urban areas, it could virtually double the population of cities (the population has increased significantly since the beginning of this year). It is very difficult to quantify the movement of people and the increase in population due to the lack of data and qualifying surveys but it is estimated, by the local authorities, that the population increase has been close to 15% since September 2001.

Job creation and community strengthening are important objectives of the reconstruction effort. This is clearly most evident when looking at the infrastructure program in Kabul city. If the reconstruction effort is to gain credibility and have maximum value for money, it is imperative that they reinforce the vitality of local institutions and ensure that large infusions of aid do not undermine hard-earned gains whilst working towards self-reliance. With the focus on Kabul, it is of great concern for me that this will result in other cities losing its resources and services. Hence, there’s the need to expand out of Kabul and work in other urban centres.

Having visited the city and spent a long time discussing the issues and concerns of the community, there were many basic needs reflected by the people in Kabul city: no houses or shelters, no access to safe water, poor sanitation, transportation problems, no electricity, no education or health facilities; and no job opportunities. The citizens have clearly expressed urgency in improving the deplorable refuse and drainage situation of the city. Due to years of neglect as well as the geometric progression of the population in the city, the existing systems
of rubbish collection and street drainage has deteriorated. The moat around the old fort of Kabul is now full of stagnant water rampant with disease and pollution.

**Housing**

It is obvious that a city, with massive houses and no proper planning, will offer poor social facilities. So, first of all the master plan, feasibility studies, housing, proper sanitation, health facilities, etc. are the important needs of Kabul city. Today, Kabul city can provide, for returnees, neither shelter nor water, nor agriculture, nor job opportunities, nor security, although at one time it was a safe place for the displaced people who emigrated from the surrounding regions during the times of Russian fighting and civil war. In addition, during the last two decades of war in Afghanistan all the infrastructure, including agricultural and residential systems, was ruined in the rural areas forcing its residents to shelter in Kabul. It is essential to have a proper master plan, feasibilities study, problem analysis and social justice even for the redevelopment of the rural regions.

The economic situation in Kabul is very weak. The people are not able to reconstruct their houses. The government is embroiled in political issues which is getting complicated by the day. As a result, people are getting discouraged because of poor income and financial constraints, lack of justice, and the fact that those who have power have every thing. The only source of hope for communities is the foreign organizations to arrange their future. Physically, the Afghans are capable of any kind of hard work, and right now just need advice, support and social justice.

I had interviewed some people and asked them whether they could construct a house for themselves if they had a piece of land. They replied in the affirmative: - they only required a small piece of land on the top of mountain, no support, and would build for themselves.

Our government and the supporting organizations must not waste any time in assessing the problems first, working towards ways of reconstructing the damaged houses, helping the poorer and vulnerable ones to obtain some land especially those whose houses were damaged and who don’t have the capability of rehabilitation.

Then again, due to the increasing population, it is necessary to expand the city of Kabul. For this expansion, it is necessary to plan according to accurate data and the standard norms of social needs, after proper feasibility study and assessment.

The capacity development of the municipal authority to re-establish its strong, valuable and sustainable presence is important for long term planning of Kabul. It is the municipality’s responsibility to assess, negotiate, analyse, coordinate, supervise and plan all facilities for the setting up of an infrastructure in Kabul. The municipality should be allowed to prevent any ad hoc construction of houses, especially in places where there would be big problems in the near future once the master plan for Kabul gets established. Also, the new and correct places should be sketched, planned, and allocated through the authorities to the rightful people.

**Water supply**

The population of Kabul has increased significantly since a large number of returning refugees have decided to settle here. Under the Taliban, the estimated population of the city was 1.5 million, now it is closer to 3.5 million. This has led to severe pressure on the basic services such as water and sanitation.
The water situation, in particular, is in a crisis. Four water supply schemes provide piped water to Kabul residents. The largest is the Lugar water supply scheme in the east of Kabul. Only 22% of Kabul’s population benefits from a piped water supply from these schemes. The rest uses shallow wells, public taps or private boreholes. The drilling of boreholes is now completely unregulated and will cause serious problems in the long-term to the water supply to the city. The growth of the city and the premium on property prices has made land in the city a valuable asset. This has resulted in increasing disputes over property titles, the illegal selling of state lands, and the buying or misappropriating of land by the rich and powerful.

From time immemorial, human settlements have always developed around water sources. Therefore, for safe living, potable water is very necessary. In Kabul, some very small schemes of potable water services were in progress until the war started and hampered any further development of these. On the other hand, the water system has been systematically neglected and damaged due to years of conflict that has plagued the country. This long neglect has resulted in widespread diseases. Another misery which has also shocked our water system, agriculture and also the Afghan economy, is the five-year-old severe drought. The other big problem is the unpredicted, current population of the city. Focus should be on the damaged system of water supply. An emergency program for the provision of potable water, rehabilitation and expansion of the existing systems, which had been developed according to the master plan by WHO in 1971, must be revived. Again, with reference to the new standards and technology, it is important to build a low cost and economical water supply system while the city is being expanded.

In order to achieve this specific goal, it is important to assess the existing situation of water supply, and to prepare an emergency and strategic water supply plan for the city. This would include technical, financial, social and environmental information in consultation with the authority of the system to understand the needs and demands for improving this condition. Improvement in operating the system would mean building the capabilities of the local staff to gain skills from the local technical personnel. To improve the operations of the system, it will also be necessary to re-establish a good and proper cost recovery system. It means the development and sustainability of the water supply authority will be re-established on a long term plan. Personnel of the Central Authority for Water Supply and Sewerage System will have to be trained to be able to assess, analyse, coordinate, supervise and plan the future social needs, including upgrading and expansion of other facilities with reference to design, tenders and supervision of immediate investment and pilot projects, with focus on private sectors in the long run.

Transportation

During the years of inter-Mujahideen fighting (1992-1996), many Kabulis left for Pakistan or other countries. The legitimate economy of the city was virtually destroyed. Then, during the winter of 1995-1996, the desperate economic situation of the city led to a spiraling rate of inflation and the price of basic essentials increased dramatically. Ordinary people struggled to survive. Things improved slightly under the Taliban as roads reopened and prices decreased, but the situation was still desperate. Thousands of female government/civil servants were told to stay at home, including many teachers and students. When the situation changed all them returned to their jobs, along with the dramatic returning of other refugees to Kabul, and the population doubled.
Everyday people commute to Kabul with poor transportation facilities, often using large number of diesel trucks which pollute the air. Kabul is the capital of an undeveloped country due largely to 23 years of continuous civil war and conflict. Consequently, the transportation system, especially the badly damaged roads need to have a complete overhaul in order to cope with the increasing population and traffic congestions.

How to improve the situation? My suggestion is, firstly, to update the existing roads by enlarging them, if possible, like high ways and so on. Secondly, to undertake the implementation of those plans that were stopped before the beginning of the civil war. Thirdly, to plan for more expansion in the other existing residential places, according to the master plan. Furthermore, there is a big need to construct a ring road around the Kabul city. But in the long term, there must be thought of expansion of Kabul as a city. Meanwhile, with all these rehabilitation, updating, enlarging and expansion, we must keep in mind the health and hygiene aspect of the city, with special reference to air-pollution.

Also, like the authority of other infrastructures, the capacity development of the Kabul road traffic authority must be re-established according to the new standard and norms, and trained to be capable of controlling, assessing, analyzing, coordinating, supervising and planning, including upgrading and expansion of other facilities.

**Electricity**

It is well known that electricity is the main source of development in the various aspects of human life. It is impossible to have basic facilities without electricity. Afghanistan, which suffered for two decades by a war by Russia, now requires at least two decades for rehabilitation. Another reason for the breakdown in the electric supply is the lack of water needed to run the technologies, which, as mentioned earlier, have been in short supply due to years of continuous war and conflict.

In Kabul, the undertaking plans of that time were stopped before the war began. Geographically, the stations which were located in the front line, were a good target for those who were against modern technology. Then again, Kabul became over populated by the refugees returning from our neighbouring countries. Fortunately, during the last five years, some areas were rehabilitated, especially in the last two peaceful years. Today, Kabul city doesn’t have enough potable water, nor any industrial production -- all because of inadequate electricity.

**Sanitation**

All socio-infrastructures were destroyed during the factional fighting and now need to be reinstated. Moreover, the situation of Afghanistan after the collapse of Taliban is getting better and some of the refugees are returning to their homeland and most of them have resettled in urban areas so if the previous infrastructures are rehabilitated they will only serve about 30% of the existing population. Before going ahead it is better to focus on the problems of Kabul’s sanitation situation. It is clear that Kabul has poor sanitation. During the last 25 years most of the city’s ditches (for running of surface water), sewerage system, garbage bins, and other forms of sanitation were damaged, and needless to say, all need urgent restoration.
As mentioned before, 3.5 million people are living in city. Hypothetically speaking, if they produce at least one kilogram of rubbish, it becomes 3.5 million kg of rubbish. The municipality has only 50 trucks with a capacity of is 3000 kg per truck -- therefore, able to transport 150000 kg of rubbish daily. The rest gets accumulated on the streets. In addition, people use local latrines which are constructed on the compound walls with the ensuing overflow of the night soil and other filth onto the streets. Accession to potable water, and water for greening of the city or for other needs, is very important for the sanitation program. It is essential to make a plan for drilling boreholes and installing of hand pumps beside normal city water supply regulation. Another important thing is health education: because most of people in Kabul city are not educated it is of utmost importance to train them in housekeeping practices, house living conditions, environmental cleanliness, waste management, knowledge of water conservation, how to use it, food hygiene and how to serve it.

**Education and mobilization**

The main problem in Afghanistan is a lack of education. 95% of the people are not educated, particularly, women who make up 50% of the population in the country. Unfortunately, they were deprived of education because of some cultural obstacles as well as restrictions during the Taliban regime. All the schools were destroyed during the factional and civil fighting all over Afghanistan. Teachers were killed or forced to leave the country. All remaining schools were supported by Russia or Pakistan, and instead of teaching science and technology they were teaching the use of weapons and warfare.

An important social need, right now is to mobilise communities towards education as the only way for urgent reconstruction and rehabilitation. In helping establish a good and proper system of education/ modern technology, our people will be able to take care of their lives, analyse their problems, make decisions, help each other constructively, contribute, associate, and participate in a more productive way.

People in Kabul are not only poor but also vulnerable. They have neither the opportunity to get an education nor the means to acquire stationery and the like. They need help in rehabilitating and redeveloping the damaged schools or constructing new ones, obtaining furniture, books and other preparatory items for even the most basic form of education.

**Health**

The most important objective of a community is to ensure good health for its people. In a community, good health is directly related to an appropriate economy, because with knowledge and education, one strives for proper amenities like water, food and other basic necessities of life. Without these basic elements of life it is impossible to survive. Unfortunately, Kabul has undergone considerable damage resulting in a destruction of its infrastructures and other facilities. It, therefore, needs to establish proper health care mechanisms and services.

Finally, although Kabul needs a lot of social rehabilitation, all of which cannot be listed here, I must mention that some are obviously more urgent than others and need to be addressed as soon as possible.

In the course of the rehabilitation efforts, it is necessary, to work on an updated master plan. First a feasibility study, then a source location, followed by a designing and implementation
stage for creating and developing mechanisms and systems.

It is our job, as responsible members of a society and conferences, to start with and follow through this process, and not lose the opportunity to assist the Afghans in this critical situation to emerge as an improved and developed nation.
These brief notes on urban vulnerability and livelihoods in Kabul are structured in two parts. At first, it is attempted to sketch the situation ‘on the ground’, as it has been narrated by various so-called ‘vulnerable’ urban groups in Kabul, during a small research project on ‘understanding urban vulnerability’ carried out by AREU, using focus group discussions as a field-methodology. This short outline introduces the basic facts and problems of managing urban livelihoods in Kabul, and thereby prepares the ground for sketching out the basic fields for urgent action as a second part.

Managing urban livelihoods and ‘asset-vulnerability’ in Kabul

Narrations and recommendations of ‘poor’ and ‘vulnerable’ communities recorded during group discussions in Kabul form the basis of the following account. Participants in these semi-structured discussions have been classified from outside as belonging to so-called ‘vulnerable groups’, i.e. widows, refugee returnees, internally displaced persons, children, people enrolled in cash for work or vocational training programs, and those with disabilities. Most of these groups were put together in cooperation with various local and international non-governmental organisations (NGO) and consisted of beneficiaries from several of their program activities. There were, however, also discussions with groups of people not benefiting from any NGO activity.

With regard to the widely used term ‘vulnerability’, these discussions revealed the existence of four main intertwined forms:

• Vulnerability to income failure
• Vulnerability to food insecurity
• Vulnerability to bad health
• Vulnerability to social exclusion and disempowerment

These vulnerabilities have an external side, which means they are rooted in broader social structures and processes and are accelerated by the existence of a mostly informal, unreliable and erratic labour market, by a continuing process of a decline in entitlements, by poor living and working conditions for many and by aggravated processes of disempowerment and marginalisation.
The internal side of vulnerability, in contrast, is characterised by limited capacities to cope which people vulnerable to one or all of the mentioned forms possess. This fact can be expressed in the vulnerability of their tangible and intangible assets.

Table 1 summarises the situation experienced by a huge number of people inhabiting Kabul. It shows the factors leading to ‘asset-vulnerability’, with outcomes marked with a minus-symbol, and the coping strategies adopted to counter the effects. These strategies are made up of a range of activities, whose changing magnitudes and intervals influence levels of urban livelihoods and vulnerability, as indicated with the (+/-)-symbol.

Managing urban livelihoods in face of these multiple vulnerabilities is a constant struggle for many if not most residents of Kabul. In showing the main problem fields of disadvantaged urban communities, the table does, however, also outline some basic fields for urgent action in order to secure a satisfaction of basic human needs and to enhance the life chances of vulnerable populations. Therefore, it has to be taken into account, that the assets people possess are deeply intertwined, and can be separated only analytically - for instance, efforts to improve the stock of human assets may positively influence the stock of social assets, which in turn might have effects on financial assets. The aim would then be to counter the negative outcomes of high asset-vulnerability by establishing measures that might help to positively influence outcomes, i.e. to change the ‘minus’-signs in the table to ‘plus’, and, thereby, to facilitate and support the employment of coping strategies that are not potentially asset-eroding. The task ahead would be to support the coping capacities of the urban vulnerable populations to enable them to deal better with the external conditions they have to face. How can these tasks be approached?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of ‘asset vulnerability’</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Coping Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Assets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-) education</td>
<td></td>
<td>(+/-) Support from social relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-) water supply</td>
<td></td>
<td>(+/-) Negotiating work and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-) health care</td>
<td></td>
<td>(+/-) Access NGO-programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-) food security</td>
<td></td>
<td>(+/-) Fetching water from faraway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-) job opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(-) mental health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Assets</td>
<td>(-) access to loans</td>
<td>(+/-) Sharing shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-) repayment capacities of loans</td>
<td>(+/-) “Black market” work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-) sufficient income</td>
<td>(+/-) Stealing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-) reasonable rents for housing</td>
<td>(+/-) Begging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Assets</td>
<td>(-) intra- and inter-household relations</td>
<td>(+/-) Mobilising work from children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-) social support mechanisms</td>
<td>(+/-) Selling physical assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-) care for children and elderly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-) mobility for women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-) relations to the “powerful”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-) trust in each other &amp; in government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(-) domestic peacefulness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Physical Assets
(-) ownership of land and houses
(-) housing as a productive asset
(-) water-supply
(-) transport infrastructure

Environmental Assets
(-) fuel for heating
(-) protection against environmental hazards

(+/-) Finding cheaper shelter in places faraway from basic services and infrastructure
(+/-) Burning garbage
(+/-) Building provisional shelter with plastic from the streets
(+/-) Searching the streets and garbage dumps for inflammables such as plastic

Table 1: ‘Asset-vulnerability’ in urban Afghanistan (adapted from Moser 1998)

Fields of priority-action

The existence of multiple forms of vulnerability already points clearly at the different action-fields that require urgency.

Vulnerability to loss of income

Longer-term employment opportunities are still very scarce in Kabul, and for the unskilled and less literate labour-force, access to opportunities is usually limited to the heterogeneous sector of informal employment. The so-called ‘informal sector’, however, is very complex, and often, needs a productive entity to ponder over how informal employment security can be improved. Similarly, with regard to income generating programmes, longer-term project cycles are needed enabling people to earn cash money throughout the year and, at the same time, help to build up their nest-eggs.

Vulnerability to food insecurity

Access to healthy and diverse foodstuffs is limited not because of insufficient supply, but due to widespread income and entitlement failure, giving rise to the phenomenon of ‘hidden hunger’. Emergency and balanced food assistance for the very desperate is, therefore, required along with awareness campaigns pronouncing the importance of a balanced diet for leading a healthy life. Possibly the reestablishment of a ration-card system, enabling access to subsidised foodstuff and consumer goods, could be thought over.

Vulnerability to bad health

Poor living conditions, lack of income, unbalanced food intake and limited access to reasonable priced and local healthcare services are the risk factors for deteriorating health. In this respect, apart from improving the quality of healthcare in Kabul, priority needs to be put on improving the housing situation for the poor and vulnerable. Affordable housing in Kabul is almost impossible to find, leading to very tight living conditions characterised by a large number of persons living in a single room, insufficient protection from environmental hazards and high residential mobility. Support in reconstruction-efforts, consequently, has to be accelerated, probably in the form of subsidised grants for owners, with consideration for the provision of necessary equipments to protect dwellers in destroyed houses from natural hazards. Further pressing problems connected with housing are lack of water supply, sanitation, and waste
disposal. These pose huge challenges to urban planning, which more than before, should take into account the critical situations of the vulnerable populations and increasingly redirect its funding, albeit limited, to directly address those who are in need. This also means to accept and legalise the existing squatter settlements, which, in view of current urban growth rates, are anyway likely to increase in number and size, as being officially a part of the city and to grant some form of tenure security to their inhabitants. This might stimulate self-motivated investment in housing and, subsequently, may improve living conditions.

**Vulnerability to social exclusion and disempowerment**

The fragmented nature of social networks in urban areas leads to limited social backing to support efforts in managing livelihoods. States of vulnerability put further pressure on existing network-structures, especially intra-household relations. However, there are also live network-structures that, so far, work only on a rather embryonic level. Support of these young networks (e.g. a network of people with disabilities in Kabul, the work of community-councils ‘Shuras’ in Jalalabad) should be encouraged by allowing their consequent integration into government and project-initiatives. That would mean involving communities in the design of project activities, demanding their active contribution, and seeking advice from community-based organisations. This would help to build up dignity and self-respect and encourage further and broader participation in grassroots activities, possibly leading to strengthened social networks. These existing local potentials need to be, consequently, promoted and aided, and their example may possibly initiate other similar networks. Strong linkages between community based organisations, government agencies and urban planners need to be developed in order to achieve integration of communities in decision-making processes and to improve their capacities. Furthermore, possible ways to integrate the most poor and vulnerable in these processes need to be thought over.

Although it is definitely very difficult to impose social assets from above, it is nevertheless important to reach the ‘invisible’, the hidden vulnerable, and to provide for them access to forms of social interaction, e.g. community and training centres for women and women with disabilities.

**How to get there?**

All these pressing problems mentioned are probably well known, and there is no universal remedy for them. However, in the face of ever-limited resources and a rather disillusioning situation in Afghanistan, where, since the fall of the Taliban, no great improvements in advancing the situation of the poor and vulnerable have been made, dissatisfaction and anger among the affected populations is growing. Conversely, there are local potentials of self-help and mutual support, like the above-mentioned groups and networks, including rather well functioning community councils (so far not in Kabul, though), and probably a lot more collective activities not yet even recognised. However, these young social networks have been working so far without much official support in the shadow of current urban developments. Focussing more on the grassroots level would probably be a workable and feasible way to accelerate human development especially for the disadvantaged sections of the urban society in Afghanistan. Shifting responsibility and encouraging local self-help activities, in some form, will address the possibility of increasing dignity and self-respect in a majority of people living in urban Afghanistan who currently feel neglected on all levels.
What is definitely needed, then, are not only top-down planning-efforts addressing high level and uncertain long term developments without showing immediate effects, but also the visioning of bottom-up, neighbourhood and community-oriented perspectives effecting people to decide matters on their own.

This also for another reason: it needs to be recognized that social vulnerability is not a purely local or regional phenomenon but connected to global developments in manifold ways. Lock (2001) rightly pronounces that “current forms of globalisation and market-triumphalism bypass the interests of a majority of global populations” – often leading to huge dissatisfaction and the readiness to use violence as a means of protest. This potentiality has also been expressed during group discussions in Kabul, and in view of latent violent dangers that come with chronic states of vulnerability, the integration of the ‘poor and vulnerable’ into broader decision-making processes, with attempts to provide broader opportunities, seem to be most important.

See a comprehensive version of these notes at: www.areu.org.af

NOTES:

1 Research was carried out in the three Afghan cities of Kabul, Herat and Jalalabad. The following account though explicitly refers to the situation in Kabul.

2 Certainly, more social research is needed to identify ‘endogenous potentials’ for increased self-determined development.

Reference:

SOCIAL SERVICES, ACCESS TO LAND AND TRANSPORTATION AS CORE SECTORS FOR THE FUTURE GROWTH OF KABUL

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General

It appears that Kabul’s main problems in accommodating a very rapidly growing population cannot be solved by adhering to the existing master plan for future development. By all accounts, the latest master plan bears all the hallmarks of Soviet planning. Earlier plans are equally unsuitable, as they were conceived at a time when Kabul was yet to experience the consequences of war. In the past, planning for Kabul took into account a moderate pace of growth of its population, its functions as the National Capital, its function as the main education centre for the country, its importance as a major industrial centre for Afghanistan and its importance as a distribution point, particularly for the east and north of the country.

From the start of the war, which began almost immediately after the Saur revolution of April 1978, Kabul became a magnet for those seeking security and for those seeking religious freedom as well as for those who were seeking freedom away from religion. Perhaps midway through the 1980s, greater Kabul’s population peaked at around 3 million people - crowded into a protected area that was surrounded by semi-circles of minefields and other defence systems, with only the main arteries toward the north, east and south open to enter and leave the city. A major exodus from Kabul occurred only after the Soviets had already left Afghanistan: in particular between April 1992 and March 1995 when Kabul became the focal point for a power struggle between the Jamiat-e-Islami/Shura-e-Nazar, the Hezb-e-Islami and the Hezb-e-Wahadat. An estimated 60,000 Kabulis lost their lives during this period and hundreds of thousands left the city. By the time the Jamiat group claimed victory, the entire south-west and south of Kabul had been reduced to rubble. The start of the Taliban period in Kabul (September 1996) did little to attract returnees in large numbers, not so much because of a lack of security, but rather because of a total lack of personal liberties and poor prospects for economic development. During the Taliban period, Kabul’s population was estimated at slightly more than 1m.
Current limitations for development in Kabul . . . .

With the current population estimated at 2.5 m people and most of Afghanistan beyond the effective reach of the central Government, the stage seems set for a repeat of the past, whereby Kabul once again acts as a magnet to returnees and IDPs alike: all hoping to benefit from economic development and relative tolerance. However, today’s Kabul is no longer the main distribution centre it once was and it is not likely to regain that position: many other urban centres are closer to Afghanistan’s outer borders and are better positioned to take in goods purchased from abroad. Its industrial development may not grow beyond what the city itself requires in terms of reconstruction and new housing. Manufacturing of consumer goods would likewise be limited.

Kabul’s new main functions, therefore, may be as an educational centre, national capital and, in the absence of an extended level of control of the Government over the rest of the country, a safe-haven for those seeking greater security and immediate job opportunities related to the reconstruction business. Set against these functions are three main limiting factors. First of all, there is limited availability of drinking water. Secondly, the costs of food in Kabul are increasing, as the city depends more and more on agricultural products brought in from areas far afield. Agricultural produce from around the city will be insufficient in quantity to feed its growing population. Lastly there are the consequences of war resulting in many unresolved land issues. Returnees with the right documents can easily re-claim their property or land, thereby evicting new arrivals or squatters. The uncertainties surrounding the land issues, directly oppose constructive development.

. . . . and the appeal of the city to those seeking economic benefits

Although there are, as mentioned before, many aspects that negatively affect planned growth in Kabul, there is an undeniable trend of rapid urban growth. This is mainly based on the relative security that the city can offer, the economic incentives related to reconstruction and the reality that Kabul, as the capital, is the main channel through which reconstruction funds flow, of which, by definition, a substantial part will spill over and stay in the city. No city or province in Afghanistan can offer a comparable package of incentives. With ISAF’s limited forces and its reluctance to increase its presence outside Kabul, in smaller provincial cities such as Kunduz, there is no reason to assume that the speed of urbanisation, in Kabul, will decrease over the coming years. For Kabul, this may mean that over the next five to ten years, its population may increase to five or six million – irrespective of the fact whether or not the city can accommodate so many people. The factors running against this trend (the earlier-mentioned water scarcity, food scarcity and land-issues, but also limited availability of credit and Government resources) are not considered major discouraging factors in comparison to the attraction that Kabul holds for many. The land issue, to mention one limitation, has two sides to it: it can discourage people but it can also stimulate a rush to claim ownership or encourage people to squat if it is assumed no ownership may be claimed. In addition to this, funds made available by Afghans in the diaspora, available technical know-how (from returnees) and the advantage of “relative ethnic tolerance” are, for many, arguments of overriding importance to justify a move to the city.

Afghanistan is not unique as a country that is emerging from a long, complicated war but one which has not yet achieved a lasting peace. What sets it aside from many other countries, however, is the long duration of the conflict (covering more than one generation) and the
poor state of development that existed even before the start of the war. Because of widespread
disdain for official regulation in Afghanistan (Afghans often seem to derive pleasure from
going completely against formal rules), but high esteem for customary law, any master-plan,
no matter how well thought off, would always be subject to ridicule or fierce debate. More
importantly, people may not even be aware of what is being planned. Periodic adjustment
to the local reality, a certain level of flexibility and a keen eye for opportunities, therefore, are
essential to give any plan a chance of achieving its goals and objectives. At the same time, a
hard core of basic principles would have to be present in order to give the plan a right level of
legitimacy in the eyes of the public. To some extent the same is reflected in Afghan Society,
where many are frequently calling for strong central authority - while the reality is that in
areas far from the centre this central authority is seldom felt or desired.

Sticking to the core message

The hard-core of any plan would need to take into consideration the factors that inhibit
planned growth of the city and make full use of the opportunities rising from these. Most
important are the provision of Basic Social Services (water supply, education facilities and
provision of basic health services), access to land and regulation of the flow of traffic. Factors
related to stimulate economic growth (such as planning of industrial estates and the necessary
infrastructure for this), would at present not matter much. It is assumed that for the coming
years Kabul’s growth will mainly be the result of security, the climate of relative tolerance
(which for some means the given opportunity of leading an anonymous life in a large city,
away from ethnic, tribal or personal threats), the economic spillover from the international
aid programme and the local building boom - all of which are difficult to control.
The core message of any plan, therefore, would be to show that a serious attempt has been
made to provide Basic Social Services in a coordinated and predetermined way and that this
is done in close relationship to the issue of giving people access to land. Regulation of traffic,
the third element of the core message of the plan would not necessarily be linked to BSS
and Land, but would equally be important to help make the city better accessible to all and
reduce the risks to health.

Planning for access to water, land and improved circulation of traffic

Basic Social Services would foremost be an effort to provide Kabul with a steady supply of
water of adequate quality. Primary education and basic health services, the other elements
of BSS, would also be included from a planning perspective, although actual provision of
these services would not necessarily have to be done through Government agencies. NGOs
providing these services, both local and international, are present in Kabul.

Water

Kabul’s water supply would have to be addressed by diverting more surface water to the
city through a combination of different means: diversion of water at source, harvesting of
run-off water and construction of barriers to create storage facilities. Actual distribution of
piped water in Kabul would, from a planning perspective, have to cover priority areas in
places where rehabilitation has not yet properly started, but where the issue of access to land
is considered “solvable in the near future”. Provision of water to existing priority areas in
densely populated parts of Kabul would have to be considered at a level of sustainability, i.e. not enough to attract yet more settlers, but sufficient enough to meet demands and allow for the aquifer to be restored over time.

Land

Access to land or ownership of land in Kabul is not a straightforward issue. There appear to be at least eight different ways by which people can claim ownership. On a scale from “very formal” to “very informal” this would include 1) Government owned land (the most formal), 2) privately owned land (supported with deeds from the Kabul cadastre), 3) tribal land (ownership of which could be supported with historically documented claims), 4) awqaf-owned land (which should be supported by documents, but which may not always be so), 5) land acquired through land grabbing (supported by documents but with the original owners having been forced into giving up their claims), 6) land ownership by having made productive use of waste land (owned but not supported by documents), 7) land which has been appropriated by verbal agreement in the presence of at least two witnesses 8) land occupied by simply erecting a boundary wall (and therefore establishing de-facto ownership, even if the land is not cultivated or built-up).

It appears that the most pressing issue regarding access to land is the difficulty for establishing true ownership. The Afghan Government has decided that all claims to land for which proof is provided should be honoured. All agree that this decision hampers further development, as there are few clear-cut cases where ownership of disputed land can be established beyond doubt. The descending order, described above, in which occupiers may make a “hard case” for claiming ownership to land, may be used for working out a model whereby just one or two categories for potential land or property owners are managed by a land ownership commission: a category “less advanced” for promising claims not substantiated by deeds and a category “more advanced” for those producing some form of document. The process would also have to be time-bound, with the category “more advanced” graduating into “full ownership” and “less advanced” graduating into “more advanced” (if the claim has not been challenged after the period has lapsed). The sale of land to those who do not have documents, but who have cash, would be appropriate for unclaimed land after a period of time has elapsed as well as for land that does not make it beyond the first category.

Infrastructure - Traffic

Since the departure of the Taliban, Kabul has been facing a dramatic increase in the number of vehicles driving through the city. There have been very few interventions to help regulate the flow of traffic in Kabul. As a result main arteries are nowadays often blocked by slow moving traffic which greatly reduces access to the city and mobility of people. Because of the high dust levels, traffic has also become a main cause of respiratory diseases.

Other than pursuing grandiose plans for creating a ring-road and fly-overs (some of which already exist, others which are bound to come up soon), Kabul city would be well served with a traffic survey being carried out which would indicate where the main bottlenecks are located. Based upon this, short term solutions (in anticipation of a plan that would foresee the construction of one or more major by-passes) could be implemented that would help increase the flow of traffic by 50%. In addition, a cap on the number of vehicles licensed to drive around particular parts of Kabul (in particular taxis and trucks) could be considered,
leaving incentives to move to areas where rehabilitation, water supply and access to water are easier to realise.

**What to do next?**

Just as the planning process itself should consist of a hard core with a soft and flexible exterior, so should be the activities related to planning, whereby land-use, infrastructure and social needs could be the main tools for regulating city growth and development, and wherein positive spontaneous development would not be discouraged. If this were to work, a number of conditions would need to be fulfilled. Of foremost importance would be:

• Ensure there is only one authority that deals with the future planning for Kabul;

• Make sure that a future plan has the right level of legitimacy, both in the eyes of the Government as well as in the eyes of the people. The core must be solid and be based on tangible, achievable targets, to be accomplished within a realistic timeframe;

• Ensure that the status of the plan is well communicated to the people and fully understood;

• Make efforts to show concrete examples of what can be implemented successfully, in order to get credibility. Examples can be the opening of main thoroughfares and unblocking of other roads, introduction of one-way traffic; provision of water supply to an area where development is starting; concentrating land-ownership issues on specific quarters with the aim of finding a solution within a fairly short period of time; work out a medium-term solution to deal with the water problem that can later be incorporated in the main water supply system;

• Set aside areas to accommodate would-be investors in industries, so these can be served quickly, without doing damage to a future plan;

• Trace and investigate spontaneous development and intervene in the early stages if this becomes detrimental to future development, but provide support where this can fit in the overall development plan.
WHO BUILDS A CITY?

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Are cities built by architects and urban planners?

No, cities are not built by architects. Nor by urban planners. The architect or urban planner might define some forms, draw some shapes, tailor some outfit. But the real act of building is done by one who has power and money. And by the common people. The old adage “L’argent est le nerf de la guerre” is still true.

Cities are built
• by investors,
• by politicians,
• by lawyers and
• by technicians (The small Swiss town of La Chaux de Fonds, for instance, has been rebuilt by the head of the fire department, after a disastrous fire. It was he who defined the streets and their width, the areas for houses and public buildings).
• Last but not least, cities are built by the people, by the rich and the poor, by the educated and the illiterate, by the long established urban families and the rural immigrants. And in the case of Kabul, by refugees and IDPs coming from all kinds of backgrounds and experiences.

If we want to influence and control the growth of a city, we have to respond to the needs of these people, of all the different categories of people. And to know their needs, we have to involve them in the planning process.

But what are the needs of the people that live in a city? Two important issues immediately come to my mind (though of course there are many more). They are:

Security
• Physical security first. People need to live in a secure environment to thrive. (Thus the importance of strengthening the police force and keep ISAF for some more time), but also
• Financial security. People want to work for their future, and the future of their children.
The variety of jobs a city has to offer, the easiness of finding clients to whom to sell the products of one’s efforts and the general climate of ‘who dares wins’ are powerful reasons to support a city life which is full of new and unknown threats.

- and very importantly, Investment security. I will comment on this last aspect in more detail because it has a direct relationship with the physical urban planning (which is the theme of this colloquium) and because far too often it is not given the due importance.

Recognition of cultural identity

Most of today’s city dwellers are immigrants of recent date. This will be particularly true for Kabul, with all the turmoil due to the wars, and the returnees and IDPs coming from all over the region. All these people bring with them their habits and cultures, sometimes similar, sometimes widely different. There might be differences in eating habits, in clothing, in behaviour, but very certainly also differences in the way they use their physical space. Rural people have very different spatial requirements than urban inhabitants.

The choice of building materials used for houses, the methods found to respond to climatic challenges, and the techniques used to make housing cost effective (the best cost/quality ratio) are all aspects which too are closely linked to culture and therefore have to be dealt with.

To make a city plan sustainable in the long term, it must respond to such cultural requirements.

Security for investments or, The city as an economic engine

A city is much more than a mass of buildings or a great number of persons. Among other things, a city is a formidable economic engine.

For an economy to grow, it needs capital and investments. A recurrent question is: where does one find the funds to start economic growth. An interesting answer proposed by the Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto is: Look for it where nobody expects to find it, start to recognise the ‘wealth of the poor’, the capital of those who officially do not have resources. People are rarely as resource-less as they seem to be. But the 'official world' is unable or unwilling to acknowledge these resources. The official legal system cannot recognise the illegal houses or the informal work of an important part of the population of a city or a country.

30-40% of Kabul is made out of informal settlements, of houses or shags officially not recognised but for which somebody once has paid real money. There is serious money out there, money transformed in walls and roofs but money invisible to the official economy. The problem of all illegal dwellers is that these ‘real’ resources are not useable in the economic game. People do not have titles attesting their property rights. And so, these properties cannot be used as collaterals to raise further money to start a proper business. These people cannot enter the legal system. They are forced to live as ‘extra-legals’ as de Soto puts it.

What a marvellous pool of resources a government could draw on, if it simply finds a way to give these ‘extra-legals’ the possibility to register their assets so they can enter the official economy and participate in the economic growth of their city and their country.

The examples Hernando de Soto proposes are mind boggling: (from ‘The Mystery of Capital’):

“The value of savings among the poor is immense. In Egypt, for instance, the wealth that
the poor have accumulated is worth 55 times as much as the sum of all direct foreign investment ever recorded there, including the Suez Canal and the Aswan Dam. In Haiti, the poorest nation in Latin America, the total asset of the poor are more than 150 times greater than all the foreign investment received since Haiti’s independence from France in 1804.”

“But they hold these resources in defective forms: houses built on land whose ownership rights are not adequately recorded, unincorporated businesses with undefined liability, industries located where financiers and investors cannot see them. Because the rights to these possessions are not adequately documented, these assets cannot readily be turned into capital, cannot be traded outside of narrow local circles where people know and trust each other, cannot be used as collateral for a loan, and cannot be used as a share against an investment.”

“In the West, by contrast, every parcel of land, every building, every piece of equipment, or store of inventories is represented in a property document… They can be used as collateral for credit. The single most important source of funds for new businesses in the United States is a mortgage on the entrepreneur’s house.” (pp 5-6)

The difficulties to obtain these rights

“To get an idea of just how difficult the migrant’s life was, my research team and I opened a small garment workshop in the outskirts of Lima, Peru. Our goal was to create a new and perfectly legal business. The team then began filling out the forms, standing in the lines, and making the bus trips into central Lima to get all the certifications required to operate, according to the letter of the law, a small business in Peru. They spent 6 hours a day at it and finally registered the business – 289 days later. Although the garment shop was geared to operating with only one worker, the cost of legal registration was $1'231 – 31 times the monthly minimum wage.”

“To obtain legal authorisation to build a house on state owned land took 6 years and 11 months, requiring 207 administrative steps in 52 government offices. To obtain a legal title for that piece of land took 728 steps.” (pp 19-20)

SDC considers that the establishment of lean and efficient structures to register and guarantee one’s possessions are of utmost importance and priority. In our view, the very first step to ensure a sustainable city plan for Kabul must consist in tackling this issue.

References:
• Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit (ABEU), www.areu.org.pk
• Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, www.deza.ch
SDC Programme 2004 in Afghanistan

19 M Sfr, with a decrease in Humanitarian Aid and an increase in Development Aid

12 M Sfr. for Humanitarian Aid, Main Focus: Returnees and IDPs
- 6 M Sfr. Through UN and ICRC
- Co-financing of Public health Care programmes (through NGOs)
- Rehabilitation and Reconstruction in the North (plans for South and South East)
- Assistance for agricultural projects (through FAO and NGOs)

5.5 M Sfr. for Development Assistance
- Livelihood improvement and Community Development Projects
- Good Governance, support to Human Rights Commission
- Support of research institutions (AREU)

0.4 M Sfr. for the Afghan Civil Society Forum, through the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs

0.8 M Sfr. for security (personnel), through the Swiss Ministry of Defence

SDC is not directly involved in the reconstruction and/or development of Kabul. This is mainly because
- there are already many actors interested in this issue, and
- the needs in the rest of the country are still enormous.

While the aim of SDC’s Humanitarian Aid was (and still is) to alleviate suffering through immediate assistance for survival, SDC’s Development Aid aims to influence development to make a difference in the long term. SDC’s key words thus are Sustainability and Culture.
PRESERVATION AND REVIVAL OF CULTURAL IDENTITY

The rehabilitation of the historical quarters and villages of Kabul responds to the needs of the city

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Background

Kabul, as a settlement, has a long history. It was an attractive settlement in medieval times and was located on one of the major routes for travellers during the Zoroastrian, Buddhist and Islamic periods. It became further famous when the later Kushan rulers made it their capital in 3-5th centuries, fortifying it as a citadel with defence walls surrounding it, along the ridges of the mountains that commanded the city. Kabul town, lying on the skirt of a mountain, had a balanced relationship with an open terrain with agricultural, pastoral and wet lands. These were further complemented with the existence of yet higher mountains, further in the west, which generated a river flowing down near the town, thus providing water and irrigating the agricultural fields. There was a comprehensively balanced ecological setup with resources for food production and economy, and therefore assured the sustainability of the settlement.

Kabul, as an important town, was ruled by different dynasties while their capital was elsewhere. Through the period of Kushans, Samanieds, Ghurids, Ghaznavids, Timurids and Safavids, Mughuls and Persians, Kabul was ruled from Herat, Ghazni, Samarkand & Herat and Isfehan. Founder of the mogul empire, Babur (1504-26), had Kabul as his capital. When the contemporary Afghanistan state was established in 1747 AD, the capital city was Kandahar. Kabul was made the capital of Afghanistan by King Timurshah (reigned 1773–93) who moved his seat of throne from Kandahar to this town in 1775, since it was in the centre of the territory he ruled. Therefore, the interactions with other cities and people coming to settle and/or rule this town also brought along architectural influences, styles and craftsmanship which have actually added to the qualities of settlements in the old quarters of Kabul.

The historic quarters in Kabul were defined as clusters, with intricate streets linking public and semi-public spaces. Access within the neighbourhoods was from the individual courtyard houses through semi-private passages to the semi public streets and further to the public streets and spaces. While the open spaces in the neighbourhoods were used as playgrounds, the main streets were flanked by shops, workshops, and display windows. The major
conglomeration of shops were in the main streets within the city area. Kabul had major villages established on hillsides east, north and west of the town, where the people were more linked to agriculture and garden works.

Kabul, being the capital, was damaged when invaded by British army in 1839 AD and the continuous civil wars. In 1842, the withdrawing British troops were ambushed and almost annihilated after the Afghans had promised them safe conduct. In retaliation, another British force partly burned Kabul. The British again occupied the city in 1879, and after the re-establishment of the Kingdom of Kabul by Amir Abdul Rahman Khan, in 1880s, Kabul's built-up area was expanded by new civil and military constructions to the north of the river, while the old quarters were served by underground drainages.

The new city of Kabul was laid out on the land north of the river. The process of reconstruction and development of Kabul continued in later decades also. European styles of construction and architecture, in terms of palaces and villas for the royal family and elite, were initiated. Such styles were continued later on by contributions from Italian, Hungarian, German and Swiss architects working in Afghanistan until the Second World War and thereon. The first straight boulevard, in Kabul, was laid out in 1920s between Dehmazang village and Darulaman palace. The historic quarters were left intact through all these periods, but the first avenue, which was planned, divided the old city into four quarters in 1951-2.

**Major urban transformation and master plan**

Urban transformation took place in the Kabul city centre from this period onwards and many historical settlements, along Kabul River, were gradually replaced by wider roads, open spaces and multi-storey government buildings. During the 1960s and 70s urban plans generated on drawing tables by external consultants were implanted as resources were found, aiming to further modernize Kabul. The emphasis was more on development of the new city and the old quarters was overlooked without any immediate plans. A creation of the *Physical Master Plan* for Kabul as a metropolitan was exercised in 1964 with assistance from the Soviet planners, allowing and foreseeing accommodation for about 800,000 people in urban Kabul. But again, there were no plans for upgrading the villages in the peripheries. The master plan was seen as a tool to direct development in the vast plains of Kabul and to indicate main roads and infrastructure in the future. But little or no detailed plans were exercised for each area in a defined manner, nor did one see any descriptive document as to how the goals and objectives were set.

The establishment of military bases around Kabul, some factories east of Kabul, expansion of the Kabul University were a number of factors which attracted immigrants from other cities and provinces -- as Kabul was then one of the few cities that offered relatively good opportunities for job, and access to hospitals, schools and university. One only needed a single male-shared accommodation on the upper floors of the buildings flanking the main avenue (*jada-maiwand*) which the commercial lots in the rear. The use of such buildings was a mix of residences, commercial, wholesale and retail storage and shops. Amenities such as public bath, public laundry, barbershops, tea-houses, tailors, repair-men and doctors were located in the upper floors of the road-fronted buildings while the ground floors had textiles, hardware, building materials, pharmacies and car mechanics. With the exception of the main avenue that was asphalted, all side streets were muddy in winter and dusty in summer.

The government started to construct a modern residential area. Prefabricated housing blocks
were initiated to accommodate the government employees originally. These were designed in typical European style, 2-3 room flats with an electric kitchen and modern bathroom, eight flats per staircase, on four floors. As these, at first, did not attract the rural people, the government then created residential areas to accommodate both, the people whose property was expropriated in the city centre and the government employees who desired a garden (courtyard). These quarters were established about 10-15 km outside the city – first, at hillsides of Khairkhana, 1968 north-west, and then Rahman mena, east in 1970, and the Khushal-mena, in 1976. Such allotments were carried out through a distribution system by the Kabul municipality for people who had no homes in Kabul.

Many people, who were not identified under such schemes or were not attracted to these distant areas, settled anywhere they could. They bought land in neighbourhoods within the city or villages and built traditional homes. Some occupied wasteland along the steep slopes of the mountains, east and west of the mountains that once had the identity of being the old town of Kabul. Proximity to the city centre as a magnet of activities was still an important factor for the poor who gradually began to replace the indigenous population of the historic quarters. Municipal neglect and limited services had direct influence on the livelihood of the inhabitants of the historic quarters. Many families moved out to the new city due to vehicular access and public transportation as well as better hygiene, like cleaner streets, and less density. While the old quarter kept increasing in density, it continued to be ignored in terms of identity, importance and planning.

Through the communists rule, the Soviet planners and architects finalized the ‘master plan of 1978 claiming 72,000 hectares of land from anywhere they pleased and built concrete multi-storeyed buildings to house government functions, military establishments and security posts. None of these exercises involved local inhabitants and stakeholders and plans were implemented by young engineers often with no roots in Kabul and, therefore, who had little understanding of Kabul’s historic nature. Their basic focus was: to just implement the plan!

The growth of Kabul city cannot be considered natural. It was, firstly, caused by the ambition of the rulers to have a huge and stately capital city, and they therefore, allowed external styles of architecture and housing patterns. Secondly, it was the war after 1987 and the Soviet occupation of the country that isolated the cities from the countryside. And because the government needed to retain its stately existence in the capital city, the state was investing in constructions, housing for loyalists and employees of the vast military establishments who were now confined to the capital and a few other cities only.

Kabul had an estimated population of 1,500,000 in 1997. The population today is said to be about 2,2 million. Centralization of urban governance was necessary to manage the distribution of resources that arrived as aid and assistance from Soviet Union. More and more land was acquired and distributed for residential schemes and Soviet style-residential blocks were built on otherwise very fertile agricultural land of Kabul.

All these activities had a direct negative influence on the historic quarters in the city, villages in relation to agricultural land and gardens and wetland that became threatened by the modern schemes indicated in the master plan. At this period, to gain more control over the old city, the government cut wide roads through the historic streets, demolished the old bazaars and established double lane vehicular roads. The civil war from 1992 to 1995, in Kabul, was yet another cause of destruction and depopulation of the old city quarters -- many buildings got destroyed due to direct explosions and led to an emigration of inhabitants. For many, now
was the ideal time to advocate a full clearance of the old city and regenerate it into a modern city area with high-rise buildings and commercial activities.

Traditional drains became blocked and houses collapsed due to waters logging in the foundations. The surviving quarters were found, in 2002, where pockets of some old houses and open spaces had been transformed into ponds of water and solid waste. Many of the surviving houses were of historic and architectural importance and eligible for conservation and preservation.

During the Taliban regime again, developments in Kabul were limited, as, on the one hand the capital of power and political identity was Kandahar and Kabul was only an administrative seat; on the other, the wealth and resources for investment were already moved elsewhere even before that, due to the war and lootings. A few structures initiated earlier stood incomplete, and property and real estate was, in fact, attractive to only a few foreign traders from other provinces. The war damages and inflation in Afghanistan left little room for people to invest and they often let internally displaced people live in their properties as caretakers, so it would not be usurped by warlords or their armies.

Kabul has become a centre of attraction since the change of regime of October 2001. The arrival of the American led coalition forces increased the range of house rent ten-fold. A house that an international NGO was renting in Taliban era for US$ 200 monthly now had a demand for over US$ 2000 per month. Some properties were rented for US$ 5-7000 per month and the full year’s rent paid in advance. The rent in the Russian built apartments shot up similarly. A room fetched US$ 100 per month even though the salary of the government employee was about US$ 40 per month only. The law did not provide security to the tenant and he could be thrown out by the owner for a higher rent. The return of some refugees from the neighbouring countries reclaiming their properties and the arrival of armed groups and their families from the provinces have boosted again the demand for housing in Kabul. Many houses and properties are also occupied illegally, especially if the owners are abroad or absent.

The historic quarters need to be upgraded

The historic quarters still provide accommodation to the poor in the city. Often houses are occupied by many families, each having one or two rooms. Even though services are lacking, the security of living together in groups of families, ethnicity, and proximity to jobs -- with government or private sector of the independent vendor in the bazaar – has pushed people into searching for accommodation in the historic quarters or building spontaneous accommodation in the empty spaces on the slopes of the hills.

The need for shelter, the lack of government capability to solve housing needs in the near future, the repair and rehabilitation of house and accommodation in the historic part of the city, the traditional villages in the peripheries, and the informal settlements to be regulated have to be safeguarded in any future master plan. Also style wise, the historic quarters, yet again, determine the links to history, identity and needs of the people in Kabul. But a responsible government needs not only to understand the dynamics of the historic quarters but also to incorporate these sites into the urban planning exercises, while preserving the rich cultural heritage in terms of building art, craft, style architecture and concept of space design and lifestyle, and providing basic services of clean water, clean access and streets, amenities such as schools, health clinics, playgrounds for children and social and community areas
on top of the spaces in the historic, religious buildings and shrines which already serve as a magnet for social encounters.

Historic quarters are at the edge of the city’s commercial magnets. But they are not developed because of the lack of conceptual vision on the part of the government. Rubber-stamped concrete market buildings are allowed to grow due to a) a lack of concepts /bylaws for architectural planning; b) a lack of competition in project design /planning thus looking for more ideas; c) illicit allotment of land for commercial use and d) vested interest by the neo-powerful.

The threats to the historic quarters which endanger conservation activities are: commercial encroachment, lack of adequate development plan, lack of cultural awareness to safeguard historic entities, lack of governance at the neighbourhood level, and professional capacity in municipal governance. This leads to general problems of: HQ ignored in terms of planning; access and streets are narrower -- originally designed for animal load width -- and muddy in rainy season and winter, lack of services, environmental degradation, higher density, shared ownership, lack of credit for repair, destruction by war and absence of owner.

Merits of the sites and spaces in the historic quarters are: historic quarters are close to city and commercial centres, shorter distance to work or to market and small scale industries, link to social identity, and local art and architecture. And the opportunities existing in these are: better residential neighbourhoods, better livelihoods and social interaction, integration of residential and commercial zones, revitalization of historic quarters.

Restoration of confidence, pride and hope would be the main outcome in reintegrating the historic quarters in the mainstream rehabilitation and development of Kabul. This would have a direct impact on the revival of identity, understanding the concept of space and ownership, revival of skills and techniques, capacity building through engagement, use and reuse of local material and economic upgrading of the historic neighbourhood and, in turn, the city.

The main factors that have caused the degradation of historic quarters are: natural decay, neglect of repair, lack of technical knowledge, encroachment by commerce, weakness or absence of institutions responsible for preservations and safeguarding and lack of adequate knowledge and willingness in the municipality of Kabul to help improve physical conditions in the historic quarters.

The urban ministry of the present Government of Afghanistan has not only acquired the role of planning for cities in Afghanistan but has also created a department for planning the sites in the historic city. But since it is lagging behind many people are frustrated and have now undertaken repair of their properties in traditional ways, although they are afraid that the government might one day change it all to something unknown yet. In terms of coordination, there is little interaction between the ministry and the municipality. Issues are often taken to a commission for Kabul development which is chaired by one vice-president – a former school teacher and warlord -- with a number of ministers as members. The commission does not have any representation from the people, trade groups or independent professionals.

The few conservation projects that Aga khan Trust for Culture has undertaken in Kabul are in a way a unique example of its nature. In these projects, efforts are made not only to rehabilitate and preserve a historic building, garden and residential neighbourhood but also to
engage the recipient community, representatives of stakeholders, responsible members from government departments in the Ministry of Culture, Urban Planning and Kabul Municipality. It has been through advocacy, discussions and direct engagement of the various stakeholders that these projects have moved forwards right from the initial stages of assessment, surveys and documentation and then planning and implementation of activities for rehabilitation and upgrading. Jobs are given to the people available immediately in the neighbourhood and skilled craftsmen are hired from outside only when needed - while emphasis is made to train on site capacity through direct supervision. Engagement of specialists and external consultants are done when the need arises.

Consequently, the conservation has resulted in tangible improvements in the living conditions of urban households; the widespread physical damage to homes and infrastructure are being reformed with direct participation of the owners and the community. Assumptions are that, in the future, there will be increasing collaboration for resources, land and services. The pressure for “development”, as part of the wider reconstruction effort, has to be appropriately addressed in order to have a physical, economic and social impact.

In the planning stages, it is also important to observe that there must be a balance between preservation, renewal and upgrading, reflecting upon the socio-economic needs of the people, the physical conditions of the sites and its historic potential.

Enhanced livelihoods will be the key to the future of communities who inhabit historic neighbourhoods. Conservation offers opportunities to create employment and develop skills. The home often also serves as a base for production or services, cottage industry and craftsmanship.

One of the major mistakes the authorities in Kabul have made is to keep the inhabitants fearful that the master plan, one day, would destroy their property. Thus, is killed the will and potential of the stakeholders and investors who want to invest in whatever potential there might be in the maintenance and upgrading of their property and its environment. Actually this has been one of the major setbacks in terms of urbanization and/or improvement of environment. Time for economic growth and turnover of assets have not been actually recognized by the authorities, although this has been well recognized by the commercial investors who find ways to acquiring permission for temporary buildings in the centre of the commercial part of the city and have managed to construct a series of multi-storeyed buildings etc. There are examples that the municipality has issued building permission for “temporary concrete structure”! The commercial investor knows that until such time that the master plan gets cleared and eventually implemented they can generate a revenue many times more than what they have actually invested on the construction itself. The downside, of course, is that, as a result, no services are developed, environment is left dirty and everything is considered temporary, access is narrow due to encroachments, shops, stalls and peddlers etc.

The delay in clarification of plans and details (and even keeping it a secret from the general stakeholder) have caused more harm than good for any future development. The energy,
compassion and pride of the original owner over his property is actually in itself a major motivation for the development and maintenance of the property, landscape and environment. This, of course, changes once the property falls in the hands of unknown planners in municipalities who have little connection or relationship to the site. This is why Kabul has been experiencing unrelated implementations of plans that have had no continuity, little follow up, none or few documents demonstrating the actual need and discussions for such actions. That is also a reason why, because there are no community contributions in exchanging ideas or planning for the future, Kabul has become what it is.

It is, therefore, very important to acknowledge the existence of the historic quarters, historic settlements and neighbourhoods and focus on ways to upgrade them in terms of stabilization of structures and maintenance, improvement of access and streets and provision of basic services of water, electricity, and waste collection and allow for socio-economic activities and improvement of livelihood there. These quarters, be they inside the city or on the periphery, accommodate a considerable percentage of the population of Kabul today. And actually, it takes very little influence to have a real change in the physical set-up so as to have a good impact on the people and motivate the inhabitants for an improved livelihood.

NOTE:

The devastation of prolonged, armed, factional conflicts summed together with the consequences of the rise and fall of different regimes are evident in Kabul. Years of under-investment have led to the crumbling of urban infrastructure and public services and to the present failure to meet the needs and aspirations of its citizens. The difficulties, ranging from delivering water to unplanned settlements up steep slopes, to tackling intricate land tenure concerns, are well-known to local professionals, whether working in institutions, building enterprises, NGOs or implementing agencies. Attitudes and approaches differ, ranging from those who feel overwhelmed by the urgent needs of its inhabitants, to those who welcome the opportunity to start afresh and steer the reconstruction force of the people, authorities, donors and agencies towards positive growth.

The impact of rapid urban change: observing the inevitable transformation of the historical districts

In recent years, awareness of the appalling conditions of communities living and working in the Old City of Kabul and of the steady loss of its unique urban heritage has grown. Comprehensibly, the gradual dereliction of the built fabric in the city centre has come about as a consequence of the rise of other priorities in the face of historic events. This has led to the particular vulnerability of particular trading and residential communities, lack of maintenance and basic investment in the building stock and lack of public appreciation for the “old”, leading to frequent episodes of unjustified demolitions of significant buildings, aggravated by an overall “re”-building anarchy.

The transformations of District 1 are mainly linked to functional alterations within its urban fabric. If business functions have not changed in the core of the city, its operational modes have. The old market quarters of the Mandawi are gradually being taken over by wholesale enterprises. Articulated delivery trucks find their way through its twisted and narrow streets. Vast quantities of goods are downloaded and discharged day and night. Residential pockets and cottage industries are being literally squeezed out – not by the rigid prescriptions of the elusive but omnipresent 1978 Master Plan that here foresaw high-rise buildings– but rather by the rules of commercial development and maximisation of profit. Urban blocks are being taken over by wholesalers who find it more convenient to use city centre locations than storage
spaces in the outskirts of the city. Run-down dwellings are transformed almost overnight into warehouses by the addition of cheap corrugated iron roofing. Traders are discretely transforming the landscape without infringing the building ban on District 1. Entire quarters are being redeveloped with alleged “temporary” building permits. Historic wooden serais disappear to make space for multi-storey concrete or steel frame markets. The new monofunctional buildings, despite the high land value of the city centre, are mostly unfinished, under-occupied and badly-used, with high-density mixed trading on the ground and first floor, and low density storage occupying all other floors.

The current efforts to prevent the further loss of important cultural heritage and to valorise the diverse components of this extremely fragile urban fabric in the Old City of Kabul is further complicated by the current planning vacuum inherited from the obsolescence of the late 1978 Master Plan which is irreconcilable to today’s needs; the complex property tenure and occupancy patterns, with conflicting layers of historical and legal vindications against shady political, and outright illegal property claims; the proportion of unrealised ministerial property; the weakness of municipal institutions which are nevertheless major actors at the district and city level; the current and little respected building ban in District 1; the chronic lack of investment and ultimately the destitution of residents and their weak constituency.

Contentions over public space: a limited urban resource

Pressure on existing open spaces is an emblematic aspect of developing economies. The city centre is poor of open spaces worthy of their name. Walkway and street spaces are fiercely contended for between pedestrians, vehicles and mobile vendors, its rush hour surges vainly regulated by the Municipality through the Police Security. Successful bazaars contend for the attention of customers attracted to the Mandawi by the variety and the cheapness of the goods available. Even with the disappearance of the Titanic bazaar, the Kabul river bed is still the theatre of a whole range of daily and seasonal trading activities. Ingenious wooden structures are perched on its stone parapets creating suspended trading spaces along the river. A thriving bazaar of fabric sellers, tailors and embroiderers that has been long settled in recycled shipping containers has taken over the open space around the Mausoleum of Timur Shah, encroaching on public land and precluding its use.

Despite evident problems, observation clearly reveals that most of Kabul city centre is in fact very dynamic. Resourceful residents, shopkeepers, wholesalers and manufacturers are gradually rehabilitating or developing their properties and engaging in further investments. Depending on their capacity to foresee quick gain, developers are mobilising financial assets and working to maximise their profit. This is placing huge pressure on authorities in the Ministries of Urban Development and Housing and the Kabul Municipality to indicate precise future urban strategies and planning frameworks for the city centre, and in particular to support the commercial development of the most prized urban areas. We can agree with Cernea that the modernisation of urban standards and the upgrading or infrastructure in old cities, however important, are not a license for insensitive and wholesale “clearing” and sacrificing of historic areas. Positive change must protect the urban context and the sense of place, revitalise the economic base of the old neighbourhoods and meet the legitimate expectations of residents. This ‘quest’ for sustainability has long been applied in similar projects around the world, with differing successes. Because of their relation with history and culture, urban landmarks and well-established congregation areas, significant not only to local communities but to the wider city users, are successful “hinges” of local renovation.
Nurturing cultural roots: developing a ‘sense of place’

Practitioners around the world have successfully advocated the need for the rehabilitation of tangible cultural assets as a contribution to the growth of the entire city. Experience has shown that the rehabilitation process and its course of action determine whether and how local communities take “ownership” of the project outcomes. Serageldin and Shluger, stress the importance of the function of culture in the development of a “sense of place”.

“The sense of place and feeling of roots are major components in building social cohesion, or social capital. The concept of roots introduces the physical dimensions of the location, the building, and the spaces that have special significance to people and that help define identity and sense of belonging”.

Referring to Kevin Lynch’s own work on the subject, they underline how individuals’ sense of well-being and the resulting effective action depend on stable reference from the past that provide a sense of continuity. The preservation of cultural heritage is “central to protecting a sense of who we are – a meaningful reference in our culturally diverse world.”

Urban rehabilitation processes are never straightforward: the “people” element makes the engagement of those involved a non-linear progression of steps and decisions. It takes inquisitiveness, familiarity of the local context and a number of site visits to appreciate the real characteristics of the area. Most technical professionals become impatient with this ambiguous and seemingly directionless process. The process of helping to mobilize a community around issues of common interest moves at its own pace. Ensuring collective ownership of the process is more important than rapidly achieving a tangible result.

The rehabilitation of significant building as a contribution to urban recovery: the case of Timurshahee in the old city of Kabul

The Timur Shah Mausoleum is the focus of a range of rehabilitation activities implemented by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Historic Cities Support Program, in the old city of Kabul. Situated close to the riverfront, close to the Shah do Shamshara Mosque, the Mausoleum is not far from Jade Maiwand, the broad European-style boulevard cut through the Old City.

Over time, the area changed radically. As pressure grew on land in the city centre, the original gardens were gradually built over, surrounding properties changed ownership, with a number of properties acquired by Ministries; traders and wholesalers settled in the Mandawi and its surrounding area; a vast hospital complex was built on its west corner. In the late 1960s, the modern 5-storey concrete block of the Islamic Market and Timur Shah Cinema was erected, framing the Mausoleum on its western side. Today, most of the Timurshahee building stock is in very poor condition. Despite high land value, there are vast pockets of under-developed, under-used and low-density government properties within the otherwise very compact Mandawi urban blocks. The quite distinctive river front buildings are in a sad state of disrepair. The streets and pedestrian throughways suffer congestion and daily encroachment of activities and shops. In the late 1980s, the visual backdrop of the Mausoleum was seriously damaged by the (un-finished) 5-storey Ghaznival market intrusively built on public land. The above mentioned container-bazaar has become a landmark in itself, due to its invasive but successful market typology.

The Timur Shah Rehabilitation Program aim: to ensure the conservation of the Mausoleum itself; to rehabilitate the surrounding space and park; and finally to facilitate a process of revitalisation of the adjacent neighbourhood which is of historic, social and economic signi-
ficance to the city. The conservation works on the Mausoleum, which suffered considerable deterioration over time and was further damaged during the conflict, have focused on the repair of the partly collapsed brick dome, the waterproofing of the terrace and the cleaning and restoration of the brick work. Work is undergoing and entering a very interesting phase, with the assembly of wooden rafters to sustain the new roofing, the rebuilding of the brick parapets and the construction of a plinth surrounding the monument. This said, the conservation works on the Mausoleum are not as straightforward as it might seem.

Agreements stipulated with the Kabul Municipality and consequent groundwork undertaken in the area made evident the need for the development of an integrated neighbourhood plan pivoting on the restoration of the Mausoleum. Since the inception of the works in 2002, AKTC had to address the problem of the presence of the bazaar and its over 200 containers impinging on the structure of the Mausoleum. The situation has brought AKTC to initiate a fascinating but pain-staking process of clearance of the containershops impeding the restoration of the monument. The course of action of reclaiming the park is complicated not only because of AKTC’s particular concern for the livelihoods of the people working in the bazaar, and therefore opposition to a forced clearance that would threaten the source of revenue of over 600 traders and their dependants, but also because of the complexity of the negotiation process itself. Property occupation is also convoluted because of the neat split of the land between the Kabul Municipality, currently occupied by a mix of pole structure and container traders and Haj al Awqaf (Ministry of Religious Affairs), occupied by the dense container-shop bazaar.

In order to address the multi-faceted problem, AKTC had to get to grips and deal with a number of key issues. Amongst these: the different land owners with their different attitudes and approaches to the situation; the inadequately structured or staffed local administrations, trapped by the lack of resources and capacity within their institutions, and unable to truly collaborate in the conservation projects process; the informal titles to the temporary land leases, issued by the Kabul Municipality and the Ministry of Haj al Awqaf, some dating many years back; the collusion of interests between the Municipality and the Police Security, where the traders’ temporary and precarious leases make them vulnerable to the alleged “protection offer” by local officers; and finally the need for viable alternatives for the relocation of the traders in the city centre to maintain their livelihoods and allow the continuation of the rehabilitation works.

If planning always requires negotiation, in a dynamic urban context such as District 1 it entails sustained negotiation with local authorities, traders, land owners and aspirant developers. AKTC has knowingly pursued the longest and most difficult route, trying to create a platform for discussion between the Kabul Municipality, the Ministries and the bazaaris, with a view to identifying possible alternative site for the relocation of the market. The arbitration of procedures, outcomes, impact and means of the planning process calls for the engagement of all parties, but is seldom equally shared. As donor and implementer, AKTC was bound to carry most of the burden of the intercession efforts, but is not necessarily the stakeholder who sets its terms and who ultimately is able to influence its course. These remain in the hands of the authorities.

The polyhedral practitioner: negotiating on a listener mode

The work of NGOs becomes indispensable in those parts of the city where the public services are out of reach, but often what is provided is not what is most needed by local communities, as decades of international practice can confirm. The crudity of the self-interest of some
donors and agencies is a disappointing reality, as Eberhard Knapp \(^5\) reminded those present at the Colloquium.

Reconciling what the community might need and what the donors can provide is a priority for many agencies that couple financial resources with field insight and capacity. Undoubtedly, we need to address ground reality to “avoid the risk of losing the people”.\(^6\) The role of advocates, lobbyists, speakers, intermediaries, brokers voicing the needs of communities to local and city-wide institutions can be essential. Despite the risk of manipulation – by the community and the donor/implementer, reciprocally – it is worthwhile maximising the negotiator potential internal to each agency.

Embarking on participatory processes implies taking unforeseen routes: from acceptance and reformulation of agreements to the re-negotiation to find compromise solutions both with authorities and community leaders; from forming unexpected alliances to using ostracism; from voicing the condemnation of dubious practices to praising valuable partners. Negotiation is a key component of AKTC’s planning activities. Its team is committed to building its development programs on the basis of lessons learned from crossnurturing the individual projects and strategies. Planning teams need to be able to lead negotiation processes, on different levels and occasions, from liaising with “buttoned-up” institutional representatives, to angry crowds of displaced traders. Experience confirms that planning interventions require thorough preliminary ground work and the comprehensive analysis of the political situation. The awareness of the broader picture helps to appreciate constraints and opportunities that are likely to influence the project outcomes. It allows the team involved to understand and evaluate power and historic relations between negotiation counterparts.

Levels of mutual trust and understanding need to be developed on both sides. Nevertheless, one cannot expect counterparts not to use ruses, cunning tactics and even subterfuges, as in the specific case of the negotiation over the clearance of the illegal traders in the Timurshahee area. Aware of their political clout, the bazaaris’ spokesmen use all sorts of techniques to delay their relocation and also use their contacts to lobby at high spheres of the government. While recognizing the value of AKTC’s approach and appreciation of its endeavour, its leaders and representatives will not leave any options unexplored – this includes covert negotiations with representatives of the Kabul Municipality for the approval of an outrageous underground shopping centre to be built in the grounds of the Timurshahee Park at the very foot of the Mausoleum. Institutional departments involved face the dilemma of procedure. The conflict over street vending, fundamentally a struggle among different urban interest groups over the use of public space, is a problem that many city authorities around the world are confronted with and few can resolve without engaging in physical confrontation with peddlers; well-known cases include those of Mexico City, Lima and Bogotá. Whereas the Kabul Municipality is under pressure on the one hand to demonstrate a hard line towards informal traders, on the other – conscious of its political repercussions – it wishes to avoid open confrontation with the bazaaris. So, while in principle very supportive of the project and its aims, the Municipality is unable to address the issue in practical terms or offer credible alternative sites; this despite pressure from AKTC and the powerful Urban Commission.

There are many interests at stake. Authorities are facing enormous pressures and are keen to resolve the issue and set an example. The negotiation process aims at finding an appropriate solution for their relocation with the available resources, hopefully in the same district, in response to repeated evacuation orders.
The uncertain and winding route of Negotiations

There is no “success recipe”, but a humble attitude, a gradual build-up of experience brought by exposure, respect for different positions, successful development of working relationships and being able to rely on good sources of information are some of the key ingredients of a positive inclusive approach. We are moving in an intricate puzzle of extremes dealing with a variety of people, ranging from powerless to authoritative, from destitute to wealthy, from uniformed to extremely knowledgeable members of the community. There might be solid principles, but in the end it is a process of learning through trial and error: a bumpy road where one has to admit failures and possibly draw useful lessons for future practice.

Counterparts have to find a number of ways to accommodate their respective interests and principles while still managing to agree on programmes. Donors and implementers can easily incur in errors that can escalate into a series of mystifying negotiation failures and finally a deadlock. The key might be to aim at being both principled and flexible. One has to admit the likelihood of a non-linear process of decisionmaking, one that follows an unpredictable route depending on circumstances. Not always are cause and effect sequential. Successful negotiation requires a focus on the ultimate objective, but also flexibility and imagination as to how to get there.

Affected communities might not fully understand the propositions of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between donors and city authorities, but indeed can value its implications on their lives. Nevertheless, unless they can rely on a skilful representative, might it be a wakil guzar, a local mullah or an ally in higher political spheres, poor residents and informal traders like those found in the old city tend to be the most vulnerable to the processes of change. It is extremely important to include them in the consultation process to give them the opportunity to voice their needs.

As in other projects, AKTC/HCSP’s program in Timurshahee has been guided by a series of public consultation, consultative meetings, socio-economic surveys, focus groups and regular contact with community representatives. This has ensured reciprocal support and occasions for building awareness at all levels. The participatory component certainly makes it a lengthy and frustrating process, engaging a variety of very different stakeholders; and no pre-established outcome. If in the beginning AKTC established a fairly straightforward triangle negotiation with the bazaaris and the Municipal District 1 offices, the web of power and institutional relationships would soon become much more complex. It gradually involved the vested interests of the German KfW implementing the rehabilitation of the Aisha-e Durrani School, the Police forces, the small Export Commercial Bank flanking the site, the Ministries of Light Industries, Finance and Interior, the Urban Commission and on occasions inevitably reaching far out to the higher government spheres.

There is scope in trying to understanding better also the decision-making processes at administrative level. Protecting the built heritage of any historic city is a political as well as historical and cultural process. It can prove to be difficult to obtain and secure a definite resolution from an institutional representative. The value of delegation is not particularly shared in high ministerial and municipal spheres. Confronted with donors, officials are inclined to try their best to accommodate needs, but are often unable to ensure a definite resolution. The need for further consultation is reasonable, but often conceals the fear of overstepping power boundaries. Negotiation can quickly reach stalemate. Changes in the institutions, such as the recent change in the Kabul Municipality, may then require the entire re-negotiation of
issues, despite written agreements with predecessors. In order to forward a plan, it is crucial to discuss its elements with the largest number of people, but stakeholders should agree to set up a specifically set-up ‘task force’ as a focal point for decision-making on matters of a certain complexity.

Reconstruction is an ideal opportunity to establish new relationships between public and private sectors as well as between central and local governments. The process of “unlocking” the land, improving its accessibility and the enhancement of the socio-economic conditions of those who live and work in the area will demand further determination. Stakeholders have a responsibility to try to visualise the future of the city and evaluate the impact of planning decisions (or indecisions) made today. At present, even within the “small” world of Kabul, there is a huge and somewhat untapped wealth of knowledge and capacity. The understanding of the local context and its complexities coupled with expertise is crucial for the development of a ‘vision’ for the city. Many qualified and experienced staff of city authorities are keen and able to contribute more to decision-making processes. Donors and professionals directly engaged with implementing agencies and eager to contribute to the renewal process need to be involved. Decision-makers are willing to take key resolutions. The Ministry of Urban Development & Housing (MUDH) and the Municipality should work together to develop an overall but rather loose ‘development framework’ for the city. At the local level, district authorities need to work with local communities on realistic action plans and implementation strategies. The positive energy described above needs to be invested so as to contribute to the gradual development of specific neighbourhood plans. Alongside efforts sustaining the socioeconomic conditions of its inhabitants, for each area the priority should be on recreating a ‘sense of place’ by enhancing nodes, gathering spaces, buildings of significance and other unique local assets.

Notes:
3. Lynch Kevin (1972), What time is This Place?, MIT Press, Cambridge; p. 235
5. Knapp Eberhard, oral presentation, Monte Verita Colloquium, Ascona (CH); 5-7 April 2004
6. Ozkan Suha, oral intervention, Monte Verita Colloquium, Ascona (CH); 5-7 April 2004.
7. More information about negotiation principles can be found in: Leader Nicholas (2001), Negotiation and Engagement in Afghanistan, Report prepared for the UN Coordinators’s Office, UN Islamabad; Subchapter 5, p.6
8. Leader Nicholas (2001), Ibidem; p.11
Empowering Communities through Building Local Institutions

Community consultation is an old and strong tradition in the Afghan culture. This tradition, however, needed to be organised into local level institutions in order to be effective. While identifying this potential, UN HABITAT in 1995 explored the possibility of engaging women and men in their own development process. It was a time when there was no development or service delivery from the state or local governments while as an UN agency, it could not engage with the government that was not recognised. Therefore it focussed its strategy to work directly with the people: in this case the urban poor.

The approach adopted in organising communities was to form Community Forums for women and men covering an urban settlement or a District. This was built on the tradition of the community structures which were called ‘shuras’, but it was necessary to organise them to be more effective in addressing the problems through a process of mobilisation and facilitation. In the traditional shuras, since women had no voice nor participation in seeking solutions, half of the community was left without a say. Through gradual support, the participation of women as separate Community Forums or where there was an acceptance, as joint participation, was introduced. In terms of expressing needs, at the beginning, women’s needs were urgent in nature - like food, clothing and income - while the men were more interested in infrastructure. Building thrust within the communities is a crucial ingredient of the process. It is a process that brings people from different parties, ethnic groups together to address their common problems. It was also a time when women were not allowed to work and the Community Forums became the central point of interaction.

Starting in 1995, in Mazar-e-Sarif the organisation of Community Forums expanded to five other cities of Afghanistan: namely Heart, Kandahar, Farah, Bamiyan and Kabul. In the early stages of the development, Community Forums were mainly involved in relief projects. At that stage there was a concern that CFs would be perceived as ‘aid deliverers’ to the communities. This was contrary to the initial idea of a community led development forum. However during the relief planning exercises it was learnt that through mobilisation...
of communities their active involvement in identifying the problems, prioritising them and seeking solutions could be ensured. People are resourceful in terms of ideas and skills. They need to be guided and opportunities for the mobilisation of these resources created. Training that was imparted to the community leaders facilitated them to make a real contribution to the community’s development.

In the course of development, the Community Forums were systematically organised, and they had regular meetings every three weeks. A Consultative Board for the Forum was established comprising members from the Shura as well as from the Community Forum. This arrangement gave recognition to the Community Forum as representatives of the larger community, and also as a means of accommodating the traditional shuras in a consultative framework. Key issues were usually referred to the Consultative Board with the community’s recommendation. The Consultative Board became de facto a legislative body with the Management Team looking after the day to day project implementation activities. With the growth of the CFs, each forum went on to establish its own premises. This was as a result of the women members wanting a neutral place to meet and conduct their activities.

UN HABITAT initially assisted the communities in six cities to organise the Community Forums with funding from UNDP’s PEACE initiative. When Community Forums became organised, as representative bodies of the communities, many donors and international NGOs utilised the CFs to implement relief and development projects. The CFs provided the platform for the donors to identify the real needs of the people and respond in a more empowering approach rather than a providing approach. This assistance covered a wide range of sectors, including income generation and home enterprises for women, schools for female children, improvement and maintenance of water supply schemes, waste management, health and youth activities and many others.

Based on the successful experience of Community Forums as means of empowering communities, the Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan requested UN HABITAT to design a national programme of community empowerment in the title of National Solidarity Programme (NSP). UN HABITAT designed the NSP programme on behalf of the government in 2002. This is a nationwide programme covering all the 32 provinces of the country. The Government also assigned UN HABITAT to implement the programme in 5 provinces. To date UN HABITAT is working in 1080 villages spearheading the NSP programme in Afghanistan. Although the programme started its implementation in the rural villages, it is expected to be introduced in the urban areas under the Community Upgrading Programme.

Lessons Learned from Community Empowerment

- People are resourceful and they need to be organised to realise their potential.
- Afghanistan has a tradition of consultation through the shura system, but it needs to be more participatory by involving women and those marginalized: this is the significance of the Community Forums.
- To bring people, especially women, to the centre of the decision making process, through organizing and empowering them so that they can address their own problems.
- Recognition of community organizations is essential for them to contribute to the development and for them to be part of the Governance system.
• Transparency and accountability can be built through broad based community involvement in every step of the process.

• Community empowerment has to be considered as a ‘process’ rather than a means to an end of delivering goods and services.

**State of the Urban Sector**

Reconstruction and rehabilitation of housing and infrastructure is one of the top priority needs of Afghanistan following the destruction over the 23 years of war. The widespread destruction has not only affected the cities but also the villages, transforming them into ghost settlements. For example in Kabul, more than half the physical assets lie in ruins. Just over half the housing stock has been damaged or destroyed. There are large settlements both formal and informal that have been completely destroyed. Mosques, schools, hospitals, factories and public buildings have not been spared. Public utilities like water, sanitation and electricity are barely functioning, thereby meeting the needs of less than one fourth of the population. These problems not only affect those returning to Kabul in search of their former homes, but also those who remained in Kabul especially in informal areas without any rights to tenure and without access to basic services. Shaumali Plain, is an example of a rural area so affected by the fighting, that it has entire villages razed to the ground. Farms, irrigation systems, schools markets lie in ruins. People returning to these villages find themselves in a situation where their livelihoods have been destroyed and they are unable to restart their lives. To return to a destroyed house, in a village or in a city, takes considerable courage and determination. However this courage and determination needs to be supported for the family to restart their life. Support to rebuild their house is an important entry point to restart their lives. This is the backdrop on which the reconstruction strategy needs to be developed.

The scale of destruction of residential properties varies from province to province. In some provinces there is more destruction in rural areas than in the cities. In the absence of any survey, accurate data is not available on the extent of destruction except for the city of Kabul.

**The scale of Kabul’s problem can be stated as follows:**

The Municipality of Kabul has conducted a survey in March 2002 in all the districts to assess the damage to residential properties. It reveals that a total of 62,000 houses are fully destroyed or partially damaged. Of this number 11,000 are in planned areas and 51,000 in informal areas.

The UN Regional Coordination Office in Kabul and the Central Statistics Office had carried a population and household survey in July 1999 and the results were published in January 2000. This survey shows some interesting figures regarding Kabul. The population count at January 2000 is 1,700,000 with an average family size of 6.42. A total of 280,000 families were living in 120,000 houses giving an occupancy rate of 2.3 families per house. This can be attributed to the shortage of housing stock and non-availability of serviced land for people to build their housing. It is also reflected in the fact that 58,000 or 48.6% of the 120,000 houses were in unplanned informal settlements. The survey also estimated that before 1985 the population of Kabul was growing at an approximate rate of 3.70 per annum. However, since 1985, Kabul has witnessed a rapid decrease in population due to the conflict. Since normalcy has been restored, it is expected that all the displaced people would return to Kabul not only
those looking for their lost homes but also those in search of job opportunities. The number of houses destroyed or damaged is a safe estimate of the immediate demand. There are 62,000 houses destroyed or damaged. It is assumed by the Municipality that this number needs to be increased by 15% to cater to the families who would have to share. Therefore, the total number needed would be 72,000. Allowing for other families who would move into Kabul to avail themselves of the new opportunities it could be assumed that the immediate need of housing for Kabul is 75,000. Of this 75,000, it could be estimated that 68% or 51,000 would return to their old informal settlements, 15% or 11,250 will return to the old planned areas and 17% or 12,750 will come looking for a new place. UNHCR facilitated returns indicate 393,000 people have settled down in Kabul during 2001 to 2002. Considering at least another 100,000 returning on their own, it could be safely assumed that half a million people would have returned to Kabul. Therefore the estimate of the immediate need of 75,000 housing units is a reasonably accurate assumption.

Community-Based Strategy for Urban Development

Principles of the Strategy

a. People need to be placed at the centre of the Process: in decision making and action
b. People need to be mobilised to form local level institutions to take the reconstruction in their own hands
c. The output needs to be a “process” of people’s reconstruction rather than a “product”
d. Approach with the spirit of converting the present crisis into an opportunity to resolve problems quickly
e. Recognize that people in Afghanistan have over the years built their own housing and settlements and will continue to do so
f. Recognize the right of the families to decide on how they build their homes and settlements within the resources available to them
g. Role of Government and Local Government should be to support people’s own efforts rather than to provide
h. Create an “enabling” environment for people, as organized groups and communities, NGOs and private sector to contribute to the Process
i. Reconstruction as a means of integration of communities and peace building through organising local level institutions
j. Empower women to play the central role in the process
k. Ensure that resources go to the hands of the people to regenerate the local economy
l. Ensure equity in the distribution of resource
m. Keep the process as simple as possible to achieve scale rapidly
n. Generate a process that would allow every family in need to build a basic secure home with access to services
Role of Government in the Community Based Rebuilding Strategy

A representative Government emerging from the ruins of war naturally assumes a very high degree of responsibility towards its people. Some of the most important responsibilities of the Government are to bring about normalcy, provide security, revive the economy and assist people to rebuild their lives. Providing ‘security’ at this juncture means a whole lot more than providing law and order. The starting point of rebuilding people’s lives is a secure place to live. Therefore the primary responsibility of Government in the rebuilding process is to ensure that every citizen has access to a secure place to live. How can the Government ensure that every citizen has a secure place to live? An answer to this requires an examination into those who do not have access to a secure place to live.

Nearly 50% of all urban dwellers live in informal settlements with no security of tenure (48.6% in Kabul 2000). These people live under the constant threat of eviction or relocation. When the Master Plan for Kabul is implemented, these areas are likely to be cleared to make way for green belts and parks even though some people have been living in these informal areas for over 30 years. Indeed, to prevent insecurity in the lives of people, it is imperative that the Government takes measures to regularize these settlements and grant the security of tenure so that the families can embark on rebuilding their lives.

The majority of the Returnees and Internally Displaced People would be moving into informal settlements of the urban areas (68% in Kabul). They may come back to find that their former homes have been procured by others or destroyed. In addition, there is neither a guarantee of a legal claim on their old homes nor any security of tenure on the piece of land on which they wish to construct some shelter. In these circumstances, the government has to ensure that these settlements are regularized and security of tenure is granted to the occupying families. It is estimated that about 45,000 families would return to these areas in Kabul in addition to those who are already living there.

There would be returnees whose former homes have been completely destroyed and the whole settlement abandoned. E.g. Qula-e-Wahid of District 6. The Municipality, in the meantime, has prepared plans according to the Master Plan and is already beginning to acquire the land. These families’ claims have to be checked and compensation paid for the lands that have to be acquired, and alternative plots have to be provided for them to start rebuilding. However, this process of planning, acquiring land, clearing of the land, surveying, building new roads and reallocation is a lengthy process. People returning to these places have neither the patience nor the means to wait. Also, the new plan may not be adequate enough to accommodate all the households that lived in the area. For example, in Qula-e-Wahid, there used to be about 3200 houses but the new plan for the area has only about 900 plots while the rest of land has been allocated for parks and high rises. The original sizes of the plots are large enough for a two-family household (about 250 to 350 square meters). Regulating the methods, including the circulation pattern and services, of the Master Plan, will facilitate the process of returning the original plots quickly to the households and resolving any connected problems. This approach will not require the payment of compensation for which there are no funds available, and also resettle the families quickly with minimum disruption to their lives. In Kabul, an estimated 6000 families fall into this category.

There is the category of people returning to formal areas whose houses have been destroyed. Since they have owned the land before, they can establish their claims and have security of tenure. It is assumed that these families would have sufficient resources to rebuild their
housing. It is estimated that, in Kabul, about 11,000 families will comprise this category.

There are returnees who would have been renting before they left the cities. They too require a secure place to live on their return.

There are Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) of different categories: people who have moved into other people’s houses and people who have left the cities and moved into safer places. These people may or may not have a claim to any land of their own. Here too the Government should ensure that these people have a secure place to restart their lives.

There is the category of returnees who, although originally had lived in rural areas, may not want to return to their villages having tasted urban lifestyles, in Pakistan or Iran; and would prefer to settle in a city in Afghanistan. The younger generation, especially, now used to an urban life, will definitely not go back to the villages.

Another group, requiring special attention in the resettlement process, is the large number of widows with children living as refugees or displaced people needing to be integrated back into their communities. Some of them may want to settle down in urban areas due to different personal reasons. This group requires special attention in the resettlement process.

To summarize, the Government will have to provide a secure place to live for the following categories of people:

• People presently living in informal settlements
• People returning to informal settlements
• People returning to former informal areas that have been completely destroyed and currently being re-planned.
• People returning to formal areas whose houses have been destroyed.
• Former renters
• Internally Displaced People
• People who want settle in urban areas
• Widows

Returning Professional and Businesspersons will be able to secure their place of living in the market and the government need not intervene in this area apart from facilitating a steady supply of land to the market.

Three main policy interventions are proposed in order to provide security of tenure to the vulnerable categories as follows:

• Firstly, land readjustment and regularization of informal settlements.
• Secondly, establishment of new Incremental Development Areas.
• Thirdly, re-planning of completely destroyed informal areas by merging the former settlement with the main features of the Master Plan.

Thus, these interventions would provide an adequate supply of land for the immediate needs for the rebuilding process.

While the role of the government in the provision and regularization of land is one of direct
interception, its role in actual construction of houses and other utilities has to be one of support. The overriding consideration here is the availability of resources: (1) financial, (2) material and (3) human.

1. It has to be accepted that the government, at this point in time, does not have the financial resources to build houses for those in need especially when the option is neither economically nor technically feasible. The government cannot expect the donor community to provide these facilities when there are other competing priorities.

2. In the medium term the materials required for good quality infrastructure and housing are not locally produced and their importation is prohibitively expensive.

3. The only resource that is readily available for a major undertaking in rebuilding is the human resource. The reality is that the people themselves have built the majority of the houses in the cities of Afghanistan, over 60% in Kabul. This demonstrates that the people have the knowledge, skills and the resources to build their own housing. The quality of houses built by the people may not be the best but this is where the government’s support, through technical inputs, can improve the quality of housing constructed by the people.

Although people wanting to rebuild their housing may have the knowledge and the capacity, they may not have the financial resources to embark on such an undertaking. The amount of money needed to get down to rebuilding their houses is not big but it has to be an amount that will give a reasonable degree of confidence to the family to undertake this project. Initially this sum of money cannot be conceived as a loan due to several factors. Returnees are in such a desperate financial status that it is inconceivable that they would be prepared to borrow what would relatively be large sums of money. Secondly, there is a great expectation that some form of compensation will be paid by the government or the donors for the destruction of their houses. Considering moral and ethical factors it becomes obligatory on the part of the global community to compensate the people who have lost their houses. Moreover, to conceive of an inaccurate amount as compensation for the destruction of the houses could easily lead to complexities in the areas of rights, claims, amounts etc. Therefore, to give it a more positive dimension, it is necessary to conceptualize it as a “grant to rebuild”.

The scale of the problem is such that the government of Afghanistan is in no position to provide housing for all the people in need of one. Experiences in other countries over the last three decades amply demonstrate that housing is an activity of the people and of markets and not of governments. It is well known that people build better, cheaper and more affordable houses that satisfy their needs, than what the government could provide. Government housing provision is expensive and therefore has to be heavily subsidized. Government provisions, besides being time consuming, cannot reach all the people in need. Considering these circumstances the strategy should be to mobilize people’s own capacities to achieve basic housing for all, very quickly.

Taking into account the above considerations the Government’ strategy should be one of “Supporting a People’s Rebuilding Process”.

Components of Government Support are the following:

a. Mobilization and organization of people

b. Processing of land claims

c. Readjustment and regularization of informal areas through Community Action Planning
d. Establishment of new Incremental Development Areas  
e. Re-planning of completely destroyed areas  
f. Provision of a Housing Grant to the poorer families  
g. Technical assistances and introduction of earthquake mitigating technologies  
h. Technical and financial assistance for community based water supply and sanitation schemes  
i. Assistance to groups and individuals to establish building components manufacturing units  

Role of the people  

People are the primary resource in the rebuilding process and they have to play a central role. People have to take decisions on their own development and they have to take action accordingly. Mobilization is the key approach to organizing them into recognized community bodies so that they become aware of their responsibilities and can decide what action they have to take to overcome the present situation. This process of empowerment will enable people to take development into their own hands. Unleashing the potential of the people is the only way in which all the people in need can be housed. This principle is indeed more applicable to Afghanistan where people have been able to cope with extreme difficulties and have demonstrated a relentless ability to survive. Their ingenuity and creativity now needs to be directed to reconstruct their lives and their physical assets.

What are the keys to unlocking this huge potential? Firstly, the confidence to cross the psychological threshold, secondly, empowerment through mobilization and organization into community structures, thirdly, security of tenure (a place to call their own), fourthly some form of financial assistance to get them started, and finally, technical advice to build better housing. These will complete a cycle of support to the people.

The psychological impact of going through the exercise of rebuilding ones own house cannot be underestimated. The feeling of achievement, pride, dignity and security would elevate the family to another level of the socio-economic ladder. It is a the transformation of despair to achievement that can stimulate the general social and economic development of the country.

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KABUL: THE NEED FOR ONE ‘URBAN VISION’ – AND MANY ‘MASTER PLANS’

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Discussions on reconstruction and planning issues in any urban environment nearly always relate to questions and issues which can be grouped under the term “Master Planning”. This applies even when the discussion is abstracted and terms such as “inner circle” and “outer circle” are introduced: all items discussed can, in some manner or another, be linked to this core planning term: ‘Master Plan’.

1. Specific Issues in Kabul

Kabul today, in planning for urban development, is faced with a number of problems (or driving forces) which may be considered highly specific to this city:

- War and destruction: the physical structure of the city, i.e. its buildings, houses and infrastructure systems have, to a large degree, been destroyed as a result of the numerous wars which were fought over the last two decades.

- Population migration: while in the course of these wars the demographic structure of the city collapsed, with a majority of the population migrating away from Kabul and thereby creating “ghost towns” in many neighbourhoods, the city is now faced with a massive population influx, both of refugees returning ‘home’ and of IDP’s who, for some reason or other, come to Kabul instead of returning to their home areas.

- Lacking rule of law: the as yet lacking enforcement of existing rules and regulations allows for urban development activities and an expansion of built up areas which, at best, are haphazard and more often than not the result of decisions driven solely by the pursuit of individual interests.

- Donor funds: the huge funds being made available by the donor community (even if often it is only the promise of such funds) constitute an overpowering and dominating force in shaping urban development – with the main, decisive element very often being nothing other than the need to speed up the “flow of funds”.

2. Urban Development in General

Add to these ‘specific aspects’ the notion (which is generally shared amongst “us professionals”) that urban development is a ‘very complex process’ – and that if it could be controlled, it (and, for that matter, any other urban environment) would be much better off. Thus, we planners believe it is our job / duty / calling to plan all urban development.

However, we also know and appreciate that “urban development” is difficult to understand – precisely because it is so multi-faceted. So, we have developed theories and hypotheses, methodologies and approaches. We have broken it down into components or elements and try to look at “urban development” from different angles.

All in search of that Grand Solution: in general, all our professional considerations have as their ultimate goal the control of this “complex process” (at best – we attempt to ‘direct’ urban development on the basis of predetermined broad principles).

In order to help us in the pursuit of this goal (which, I believe, cannot be achieved and will remain elusive forever), we have created or defined a wide range of instruments or tools. They range from, at a more simple and straightforward level, rules and regulations to, at the other end of the spectrum, the very sophisticated concept of “urban vision”. Somewhere in between these two extremes we have also defined structure plans, guide plans, development concepts (“inner circle” and “outer circle” concept), or approaches dealing with more detailed issues – such as the preservation of cultural heritage, or more radical approaches, such as the propagation of New Towns. In essence, they all represent different levels of what could commonly be referred to as “master-planning”.

Rules and regulations were, historically speaking, mostly established in order to assure the continuation of an existing order and to allow those at the top of such an existing order to obtain adequate funds from those under their control. Of course, this does not necessarily imply a negative or even exploitative relationship. On the contrary – only equitable dispensations have proven themselves to be stable and sustainable in the long term. So the rules and regulations governing urban development are, at the same time, necessary to allow for the provision of services to that larger population, which, in turn, is supporting existing structures and a prevailing order.

All these tools may be put to use in order to pursue and implement a given “urban vision”. Ideally, such an “urban vision” will be concretised in a broad approach, where these tools are used in a coordinated manner and mutually fine-tuned.

As a point of departure there will be a given “urban reality”, i.e. prevailing land and property issues as well as existing basic infrastructure and services, land use patterns, conservations requirements, the communities’ perceived needs, etc. It then needs to be established how we move from “urban reality” to “urban vision”:

- Where to: In the “urban vision” the planner will define his or her perception of the ultimate goal to be pursued in the urban development of a given town or city, of what the interrelationship between “inner circle” and “outer circle” ought to be like.

- Why: This can be done on the basis of an assessment of the status quo. The discrepancy between ‘urban reality’ and ‘urban vision’ will then define both the reason for (“why”) and the scope of the development (“where to”) deemed necessary. It is essentially by these elements of the “outer circle” that we can more aptly describe the intended physical
composition of what we may consider to be the goal of urban development.

- **How**: In the Master Plan, the finer mechanisms and workings of this interrelationship need to be dealt with and spelt out. Thus, the typical Master Plan will not only identify what is needed in terms of land, housing, other land uses, infrastructure, services, etc, but it will also identify or define what is required to develop these more physical elements in terms of the system of governance and management to be followed, the values and norms which are to be adhered to, and the resources which need to be made available in order to “implement” the Master Plan. Issues such as participation and social needs will also have to be dealt with at this level.

- **What**: At the detailed level, the Master Plan will deal with defined urban (or non-urban) areas at different layers and will detail actions and measures required as well as the necessary resources to improve or change specific elements or aspects of the “complex” urban fabric.

### 3. Specifics of Urban Development in Kabul

The specifics of urban development in Kabul emanate from what was said in the preceding sections, i.e.:

- The more general perception of urban development as being a process with different possible levels at which actions are detailed or goals are defined – in conjunction with:

- The particular issues and problems prevailing in the Kabul of 2004.

In discussing “The Way Forward for Kabul” it will be necessary to define the kind of intervention that would be appropriate, and to, then, be specific about the interrelationship between “urban vision” vs. “rules and regulations”.

For many years, authorities of the day have been using the Master Plan concept in their various attempts to control or direct urban development in Kabul. The latest version of a Master Plan dates back to the era of Soviet occupation.

Although the present Afghan Government has decreed this Plan to be no longer valid, it is still – so it appears – frequently used by officials of the city as a reference for planning decisions. But what else could they use as a point of reference? At least, adherence to such a plan allows for a semblance of planning in the midst of chaos!

On the other hand – the realities of Kabul’s future growth and appearance are largely being determined by *ad hoc* decisions taken today by individuals with power or access to power, by ‘warlords’, or simply by people who are trying to get on with their lives. These decisions are mostly based on purely individual and personal grounds, without any respect whatsoever of overriding considerations and the well-being of the ‘greater entity’

Similarly, in government offices important decisions are taken on a nearly daily basis, decisions which will shape the future City. Decisions which should be coordinated, but, which at present, still have no basis in formal planning.

The planners, those who should make well-reasoned decisions today – have no guidelines to follow, no rules to abide by. Moreover, they mostly have no proper training. Indeed, they are left alone with their difficult task. Frequently – they are ‘not even there’, i.e. positions have not been filled and the resulting professional vacuum left is, not surprisingly, being used (or misused?) by individuals or groups who are pursuing their own agenda.
4. Lessons from Post-Reunification Germany and Planning in Kabul

Immediately after reunification in Germany (1990), the authorities were faced with a situation which, in some aspects, is very similar to that faced today by the authorities of Kabul:

Whilst, in Eastern Germany, the planning capacities and competences were dismally low, and in a situation where all previous plans and guidelines had been thrown overboard, towns and cities were faced with an extraordinary pressure by would-be investors to approve plans for expansions or new area developments, especially by investors from the outside (the “West”). These investors were usually willing to invest in large projects, mostly linked to the promise of employment creation – indeed a powerful combination when local politicians become involved!

In order for planning authorities to be able to cope with this difficult, short-term situation in an acceptable manner, the instrument of a “Project and Access Plan” was developed, whereby it was the investor’s duty to submit a comprehensive urban planning scheme for any major new development proposed. It was then left to the planning authorities to review the plans submitted and to request changes or improvements as and when required. In general, plans were assessed on the basis of their compatibility with a given (existing) built urban environment and their fitting into the larger “Urban Vision” which was simultaneously being developed by the responsible authorities (which would ultimately lead to the establishment of formal guide plans, so-called “Flächennutzungspläne”, after a transitional period of about 4 – 5 years).

This approach enabled the authorities to deal adequately with the great demand for planning permissions being made at that time, but at a very low cost to themselves and with only a minimal contingent of qualified staff. As the instrument was fairly unbureaucratic and allowed for the necessary flexibility required by investors, the planning authorities could thereby also pro-actively cater for the needs of the day.

5. Local Planning as a Basis for Master Planning

Today, a similar situation is found in Kabul: the recent regime-change and the increasing stability have encouraged refugees to return in ever increasing numbers and investors to start with new developments (although they are, as yet, only few and mostly small). New urban areas are rapidly being opened up - with the resulting expectations and demand for the provision of public services, such as roads, water, electricity, etc.

Against the background of an urban environment as described above, the responsible authorities in Kabul cannot afford to sit back and wait for a definitive Master Plan – indeed: they dare not do so, because reality will betray them very soon! Rather, maybe a less precise “Urban Vision” is required to guide major planning decisions. Such an Urban Vision need not necessarily be drawn up in a written document but could be developed in an ongoing process by a round table of experts, e.g. the ‘Consultative Group’ recently established by the Minister of Urban Development and Housing.

In the absence of a capable and well-staffed planning department, detailed planning, however, can be left to those needing such planning permission, i.e. formal planning applications should be investor-driven and merely monitored and reviewed by qualified urban planners. Only in exceptional circumstances should the City of Kabul itself be responsible for the development
of an urban structure plan for a given area or neighbourhood. Thus, an instrument similar to the “Project and Access-Plan” used in postreunification Germany in the early nineties will provide a valuable assistance to planning authorities in Kabul and would, if well-executed by properly trained professionals, provide for development proposals based on an integrated approach -- which will take into consideration all the classical aspects of planning, as would be the case with a conventional Master Plan – except on a much smaller scale.

Such a “Project and Access Plan” (PAP) will always focus on a specific project or development scheme planned by a specific investor - but it differs from a conventional ‘building application’ in that it also deals with overriding aspects of a given neighbourhood or area. Regulations will need to stipulate that a PAP deals in a balanced manner with a given area as a whole. It will show in full detail, how it is intended to integrate (in terms of appropriateness of proposed land use, mass and volume, architectural appearance and character, traffic and pedestrian access, bulk services, etc.) the proposed project or scheme in an existing urban environment.

A draft PAP would be submitted by the investor (and at his own expense) to the planning authority – where it may (or may not) be the object of debate in a city’s elected forum (city councillors) or any other forum deemed appropriate.

Of course, this type of approach would also have to be applicable to donor-funded projects, i.e. interventions supported by donors would have to follow the same process. This should pose no serious problem – if such a requirement would be applied on an equal basis for all projects.

In summary: many ‘Small Master Plans’ should be developed in parallel, as and when required, by those who need them to obtain a required legal sanction for their proposed development or building activity. In the long run, these could ultimately be incorporated in a larger Master Plan or Urban Development Plan, which – eventually – will need to be drawn up. However, care should be taken that such a plan provides sufficient flexibility and can adapt to changing requirements without extensive or cumbersome bureaucratic processes.

6. The Rehabilitation of the Aishe-e-Durani Secondary School for Girls:
An Example of the Opportunities offered by a “Project and Access Plan”

Early in 2001, the Federal Republic of Germany committed a total of €6.2 mill for the comprehensive rehabilitation and upgrading of 3 secondary schools in Kabul, *inter alia* the Aishe-e-Durani Secondary School for Girls. Until completion of the project in May 2004, the funds were disbursed and managed through KfW – “Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau”, the German bank for reconstruction and development.

The rehabilitated school has a capacity for some 1,200 students (per shift), although the demand is easily twice as much. Therefore, it is evident that there will be considerable pressure on the school to expand in the near future. As open spaces in this central part of Kabul are very scarce, it is evident that expansionary attempts will soon focus on the open school grounds or – even worse – on a possible vertical extension of the existing buildings. In order to avoid such potentially disastrous proposals, a Master Plan would usually proscribe such developments. However, in the absence of such a binding guideline, the planners responsible for the rehabilitation of the School were requested to develop a schematic design for its possible future expansion – with alternatives. The main results of their planning considerations are shown in Fig. 1.
Considerations concerning the necessary future extension of the school in an existing urban environment. In the case of the Aishe-e-Durani School, a number of particular circumstances needed to be taken into consideration, the most important of which were:

To the West of the site is the Timur Shah Mausoleum with Gardens, currently being rehabilitated and developed as a future important urban green space by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

To the North, the school’s site has a major front to the Kabul River and occupies a location of prime importance in the overall urban area. In addition, the main road is a major pedestrian and vehicular way with a large and important public transport stop in front of the school.

To the South, the site borders on large contiguous plots owned by different national ministries and all in a state of very serious disrepair or near collapse – i.e. the need for reconstruction also holds the prospect for urban reorganisation.

To the Southwest, the site abuts a Maqbara (graveyard), which is in serious need of improved facilities and protection. On three sides the site is adjoined by areas of intense small-scale retail trading, mostly by Basaris who conduct their business from converted metal shipping containers.

Therefore it was necessary not only to show what an enlarged Girls’ School would look like, but also how this could be integrated into the overall urban neighbourhood. A number of alternatives were developed – which also had to take into account prevailing land ownership patterns.
The resulting “PAP” – given hereunder in one of its alternative forms – shows how a future expansion of the Girls’ School could both provide for the needs of the school and encourage development of an improved overall urban environment.
7. Conclusion

A small master plan (or “PAP”) as shown above is readily understood, can be properly dealt with by an individual investor (or, as in this case, a donor) and can be enforced in view of its limited scope. At the same time, if implemented, it can become a catalyst for further urban development and improvement in adjacent areas, thereby stimulating further planned and orderly urban development. At an affordable cost and in manageable sizes.

The relevant planning authorities in Kabul (and, for that matter, in other cities facing similar challenges) might therefore consider such an approach - where many small master plans are, under the umbrella of an overall “Urban Vision”, the basis for a coherent, larger urban development. The cost for such development could be offloaded on the main beneficiaries, i.e. the investors (who, as mentioned, would in some instances need to be replaced by “donors”).

8. As an Afterword

In the closing hours of the conference at Monte Vérita we discussed with great intensity the relationship between an “inner circle” and an “outer circle”, we weighed their relative importance and their mutual interdependence. In the end, I felt, everything boiled down to the core discussion of a Master Plan. All items discussed could, in some manner or another, be linked to this core planning term.

As I am sure that many colleagues will discuss – in a far more qualified manner than I could possibly do – the interrelationship between the various elements identified, I have chosen to draw my own summary conclusion from the discussions we had in a more case-related manner. I have attempted to understand the issues we discussed and to put them in a context. I have then formulated a range of statements – without wanting to insist that they are correct or absolute. Rather, I have attempted to review – with a certain distance, many of the discussions we had at Monte Vérita and to try to find an “inner order” to all those seemingly loose ends and non-related statements, presentations, debates – and to thereby continue the discussions and thought processes initiated...:

- In Kabul, we must assure the reconstruction of the historic city centre
- Anybody’s solution is someone else’s problem
- We need to pursue an integrated approach - encompassing preservation of cultural heritage, public service provision and strengthening of private sector/commerce The output needs to be a «process“ rather than a «product“
- The municipality is not working
- Walk, jog or run: planning for Kabul has to proceed at different paces
- It is impossible to have an ideal masterplan – but ideal to have a masterplan
- We don’t need one grand vision for the city – we need many small visions
- We must start somewhere – because we cannot afford to wait for the perfect plan
- How can we plan with a kafkaesque bureaucracy (such as we have in Kabul)
- „I am the Government“
- Buildings should not be «on site“, buildings should be «of the site“
- A masterplan will only work when it can be enforced
- Neighbourhood revitalisation
- It is important to provide a "receptacle" for donor funds – with a strategy, an implementation plan and a concept for future utilisation.

At the same time – my main topic: the “Donor” as a driving force (in other countries / towns / places: replace “donor” with “investor”, “stability” with jobs or “economic growth”), remains a core issue. And the practical impact of donor-activities is certainly a field which we have to further analyse and assess – they have been and will be with us for many decades and they will continue to shape both the lives of individuals and the economies of nations.

Notes:
1 However: is this not really a form of “grassroots planning”, a case of users deciding for themselves what they need and what is best for them?
2 „Vorhaben und Erschliessungsplan“ page 3 of 9
3 It should also be pointed out that it is not the intention of this paper to discuss the pros and cons of these concepts. Rather, the drawings show the type of plan and level of detail which the planning authorities of Kabul should require from each and every investor wanting to implement a project or scheme. This would, of course, include donor-funded projects where it is of particular importance to also look at the impact of a specific development on its larger urban neighbourhood, as donor-driven projects often do not have a very long-term perspective.
4 Authors of the plan are BGS-dmp Joint Venture, Schiffgraben 22, D-30175 Hannover, Germany.
LAND ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT: A PALESTINIAN CASE AND AN EGYPTIAN EXPERIENCE

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Preface

These lines have been written without any personal experience from Kabul, or Afghanistan as a whole. They are based on some exposure to the crucial importance of land and property issues in certain international cooperation projects in countries like Egypt, Palestine and Syria as well as the work that the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe has done in cooperation with the transition economy countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

The starting point

“Imagine a country where nobody can identify who owns what, addresses cannot be easily verified, people cannot be made to pay their debts, resources cannot conveniently be turned into money, ownership cannot be divided into shares, descriptions of assets are not standardised and cannot be easily compared, and the rules that govern property vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood or even from street to street.”

This is how Hernando de Soto describes the developing country reality from the point of view of a property system, or rather the lack of it. Judging from a limited internationally available documentation, the real situation in the land sector of the Afghan cities appears not only complex - what it is by definition in all countries – but also very problematic and seriously urgent.

The Urban Reconstruction Plan (URP) was prepared to implement the vision for Afghanistan’s cities described in the National Development Framework. It was based on the recommendations of the “International Conference on Kabul and the National Urban Vision” organised by the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing in Kabul in September 2002. On land management systems, the Plan states only the following very short paragraph (p. 30):

“Activities will include (i) the review of existing legal frameworks, institutional arrangements, capacities and constraints, cost and performances, (ii) improvement of mechanisms for land property claims and clearing of land disputes, (iii) consultative process for
definition of clear strategies to improve capacity and performance of existing systems and make them affordable and accessible to city dwellers on a cost recovery basis and extend coverage to whole urban areas, including informal settlements in view of regularisation and (iii), preparation of legal reform, operational modalities and resource mobilisation plan for implementation. (Estimated cost: …)

It needs to be pointed out that additional remarks relating to land and property issues are made, however, in a few other paragraphs, referring to issues such as the need to provide formal land titles and the regularisation of informal land, and that the private sector landlords should also be involved in securing them, and that the State alone is not to be seen as a provider of formal land, etc. But altogether, the statement is alarming, because it so clearly shows how many basic land issues were still open to questions at that time. The text may not fully correspond to the situation today, but everyone familiar with land management understands that enormous tasks are hidden behind those few lines, regardless of the quantitative scale of the operations necessary or the practical constraints that still exist in Kabul after the war.

The Technical Annex to the Urban Development paper of 2004 by the World Bank gives a more recent view on the existing situation under Urban Land and Housing:

“Almost half of the residents of Kabul are under the threat of eviction or relocation, with IDPs (Internally Displaced People) and others settling on land outside the Master Plan and the disruption of the land administration process during the war years. For these 23 years, most land transactions went unrecorded. Even when they were recorded, there was no clear title consanguinity. Many landowners left their land unattended, only to find on returns that in their absence it had been sold many times over. The insecurity of land tenure and the resultant climate of uncertainty have the capacity to add fuel to an already explosive environment. There is an extreme shortage of developable land and impediments to a well functioning land market discourage quick development and land transactions. They also deny reasonable access to all income groups, lead to unsustainable use, and compromise the proper interaction of rules governing land markets with other laws and regulations governing land, such as planning and taxation. The functioning of land markets and the value of property rights depends on formal mechanisms for defining and enforcing those rights, including the court system, police, the legal profession, land surveys, record keeping systems, and titling agencies, as well as social norms and religious customs. ........"

Further on, it is stated that land registration is implemented by a number of agencies, and that existing maps are out of date. Antiquated land registries are inhibiting the re-instatement of property to rightful owners and the allocation of land to new arrivals, exacerbating the land tenure challenges. The magnitude of problems in Kabul is described in figures: 60% of the population, or at the time 1,535,940 people, live in informal or unserviced areas, the amount of plots without tenure being 282,420. On top of that, the average urban growth rate is 2.92% for the whole country, and obviously a lot more for Kabul.

Comment

The paragraph on land management systems of the URP, cited above, includes a statement that calls for comment; “(iii) consultative process for definition of clear strategies to improve capacity and performance of existing systems and make them affordable and
accessible to city dwellers on a cost recovery basis and extend coverage to whole urban areas, including informal settlements in view of regularisation,…” The principle of “cost recovery basis” sounds like a thinking adopted from the common international development discourse as practised by major donors and particularly lending institutions. Imagining the economic situation of inhabitants in the informal settlements of Kabul, this appears really far-fetched and not convincing as a practicable goal, particularly with reference to informal settlements.

It is important to act in a way suitable for local conditions and culture. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has for several years carried out work on country profiles on the housing sector of a number of transition economy countries. That work has revealed cases in Central and Eastern Europe where imported model solutions have been recommended to people and governments, but have failed just because some basic considerations of the local history and culture as well as prevailing economic realities have been omitted.

The UNECE Working Party on Land Management has also been sensitive to risks of following latest international trends. It might, therefore, be worthwhile to see what they discussed in November 2003 (HBP/WP.7/2003/4):

“Across the world there are moves towards greater commercialisation in land administration and the processing of land-related information as a commodity that can be bought and sold in the open market. Much of the debate within agencies has focused on cost recovery and on deciding what balance there should be between funding by the State and funding from other sources. Adopting a business approach does not, however, mean that organizations must only strive towards cost recovery but also make the system more sustainable.

Traditionally, government agencies have avoided commercialisation. There are a number of practical reasons why this has happened, in particular:

a) Land administration services are seen as public good. They are beneficial to the community at large in one way or another. A commercial approach, in which the user must pay, could mean that some part of the population will be excluded;

b) There is a need to provide services that cannot or will not be funded by the private sector. An example is the mapping of remote areas where money from the sale of maps cannot cover production cost, yet mapping is needed in the event of disaster or for social reasons;

c) There will be a move towards cost recovery in which other government departments are billed for products or services. This only moves money from one government organization to another and is purely a bookkeeping exercise. The administration of marginal cost recovery from other agencies is an expense that adds to government overheads;

d) The competition that is a consequence of a business approach can lead to conflict between agencies, which could give their own needs priority over those of other agencies. Rather than pay another ministry for a service for which for instance there may be no budget provision, it is often easier to duplicate what others are doing;

e) Some activities are inconsistent with cost recovery – for instance some cadastral agencies are required by law to charge a merely nominal rate for their services, so
that everyone can afford their services;

\( f) \) By becoming more commercial, agencies such as the cadastre may in effect be introducing double taxation, since cost recovery is already built into the system if it is used for tax collection;

\( g) \) A commercial approach can impede the development particularly of products with small sales and/or a short market life. This is especially true of survey and mapping products. Many of their benefits are intangible and not easy to identify. If the price is too high then users will be discouraged."

The Palestinian Case

The crucial role of land ownership and property issues was clearly demonstrated in a Finnish bilateral cooperation project with the Palestinian Authority (PA), launched in the mid-1990s. The Palestinians wanted a comprehensive shelter strategy project which would enable them to get the sporadic housing sector under control. Two separate missions studied the case and as a result of their analysis the original housing project was gradually converted into a land registration project. It was found that, in the prevailing conditions in Gaza and the West Bank, no workable housing policy environment - with a necessary rule of law in the sector - could be created without the regularization of the land ownership and registration situation. Appropriate registering became particularly important for the establishment of housing finance systems. Formal credit normally becomes available only with formal tenure. The Finnish project was successfully implemented for more than two years, but is now interrupted because of the security situation and its completion therefore remains open.

Traditional tenancy patterns

The industrialised countries of the World’s west and north seem to be quite unanimous about a certain pattern of legal instruments for land management. According to the Working Party on Land Administration (UNECE 2003) a sound legal framework consists of land laws and specific laws on land registration and cadastre.

“The general land laws of a country need to:

\( a) \) Define land and property;

\( b) \) Define legal terms of tenure;

\( c) \) Distinguish between real and personal (immovable and movable) property;

\( d) \) Distinguish between ownership, occupation and use of land;

\( e) \) Indicate what rights must be registered (including rights less than ownership);

\( f) \) Specify the legal entities able to own land and land rights;

\( g) \) Specify which professionals, if any, are qualified to draft deeds relating to rights in land.”

Further, “the land registration laws need to:

\( a) \) Create the institutional authority responsible for ensuring the impartial maintenance of land registers;
b) Determine the method by which a register for the whole jurisdiction is to be compiled (systematic and sporadic);

c) Establish systems and procedures for land transfer and registration of other interests in land;

d) Specify if the land titles are to be guaranteed by the State (or the registrar);

e) Define rules for original adjudication of registered title;

f) Specify if the register is to be simply an official public record of legal facts where these are expressed in notarial or other legal documents or is itself the legal record of the title created from documentation submitted to the registry (registration of deeds or of title);

g) Create arrangements whereby subordinate rules and regulations can be made by the registrar to facilitate development and administrative change."

The above contents can certainly be considered quite universal, but in the case of Afghanistan the question arises on how important a role should the traditional customary laws and tenure systems still play in developing new administrative frameworks and what is the impact of legislation and practices introduced during the soviet period. As Payne (Payne 1997) points out, one of the most widely adopted and highly developed systems of tenure evolved by a religion is the Islamic concept, which holds that land initially belongs to the person who ‘vivifies’ it. It differs, though, from customary concepts in that non-use does not automatically divest ownership. Also, Islamic laws provide for defined rules of inheritance both for males and females, either as sharers or residuaries, as in Pakistan.

Under Islamic tenure systems, land is classified into four main categories: *mulk* (land owned by an individual with full ownership rights); *miri* (land owned by the State, which carries *tassrufer* use rights which can be sold by the owner or inherited, but over which the State retains ownership); *waqf* (land ‘stopped for God’ and owned by religious foundations); and *mushba* (land owned collectively, originally under tribal tenure). It has been pointed out that a long-term consequence of the increase of *waqf* land has been the immobilization of city land (Payne 1997). To what extent these are in conflict with contemporary imported concepts of land tenure should be one of the first issues to be clarified.

**The Egyptian experience**

The Government of Egypt has adopted the policy of converting their land-ownership records from the person-based deed system to a parcel-based and geographically defined title registration system. It includes a guarantee of title by the Government, which will be important to the landowners in making their rights more secure, transactions safer and access to mortgage and other loans easier.

The overall objectives of the Finnish-Egyptian cooperation project on *Egyptian Cadastral Information Management* were a better security in land ownership and transactions, and a more sustainable management of the nation’s land resources. The project’s purpose was the improvement of land information systems in rural areas for better cadastral services, land registration and land taxation. It was necessary to develop a conversion system for introducing both old manual data and existing digital data into one unified GIS. At the same time, there is a need for a system of maintenance and updating of cadastral data and operational links to
be established with land registration and taxation. Methods for repairing and saving of old damaged maps are also needed.

In the 1990s, several international donor agencies had assisted Egypt in land management matters, but no one seemed interested to address Cairo itself. It was probably felt to be too challenging in its complexity and quantitative scale, and e.g. specific problems such as the multi-layer (vertical) land tenure as well as some politically and culturally sensitive issues, such as the amount of land belonging to religious communities (\textit{waqf}) and the numerous illegal cemetery dwellers.

“One who has seen Cairo has visited the future, and does not want back there any more.”
(René Gordon: Africa – A Continent Revealed)

The question arises how manageable would Kabul be for land registration authorities. Is it already comparable to Cairo in its complexity? Has the situation been lost? How perfect can or needs the system to be, or should we be satisfied with less ambitious goals? Is perfect the enemy of good?

What kind of step by step approach would be feasible to begin with?

The Finnish researcher Törhönen concludes in his dissertation (Törhönen 2003, p. 19) that if a certain set of preconditions – such as good governance, adequate resources, a culturally sensitive approach, equity, quality and commitment - are not fully met in the society, the establishment of a workable land administration will not succeed. Then the best solution might be to aim at less ambitious goals and prepare merely a land policy, to create a simple unified land administration organisation, to recognise and support customary tenure structures, to aim to establish a fair and gradually improved register of deeds with simple sporadic methods, and only to consider self-financing systematic registration when legal enforcement and resources improve.

There might be good reasons for the Afghan authorities to look closer at the work being done by the UNECE Working Party on Land Administration. It was in 1996 the first international body established to address land management issues and they have accumulated a certain experience available to all nations. They also openly suggest cooperation with other regions than their own, which, however, also includes former soviet republics of Central Asia with a lot in common with the neighbouring Afghanistan. One form of their work is the Land Administration Reviews by international expert teams that the Working Party has carried out in several transition countries, another is the forthcoming updating of Land Administration Guidelines (ECE/HPB/96).

The first task to any Government should be to create conditions which would secure people's possibilities to safely dwell on the land they occupy. The ownership – collective or private – or tenancy must be secured first, that would mobilize people for self-help in their housing provision which, again, will be the one of the main resources that a poor country has.

Notes:

1 The Working Party on Land Administration works under the Committee on Human Settlements and promotes land administration systems in the ECE region. It provides a forum for senior land administration officials to meet and discuss current trends and policies. In particular, it focuses on land registration to secure land tenure and property rights, the development of real-estate markets in countries in transition and the facilitation of European integration processes. The Working Party exchanges information and experience on modern cadastre and land registration systems in the ECE region, and shares its experience with other regions. (HBP/WP.7/2003/2)
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See also : [www.unece.org](http://www.unece.org)
IMAGE-MAKING AS A STEP FOR THE MASTER PLAN OF A CITY IN NORWAY

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The objective of this brief text is to make an attempt to delineate a framework for discussion on the potential of vision-making in connection with the process of rebuilding the city of Kabul. In order to do so, the author considered various academic disciplines which could be useful in this regard. The most operational seems to be urban eionics which offer several frameworks for image discussions and image-making. Thus, the issue of vision will be in this text reformulated into an issue of image. The author is well aware of these two being “kindred”, but not replaceable. Still, the practical value of such a reformulation seems to be more useful for the task in hand, than an academic discussion on the notion of the relation between both of them. With this reservation in mind, a following outline is proposed for the text below:

First, the notion of urban eionics as a discipline on image and image-making will be introduced and a few concepts concerning image and image-making will be discussed. The case of the city of Drammen, Norway, will be presented and the role of image-making for its Master Plan will be reported. A lesson learned from this case will be presented. Finally, a suggestion will be made about how the existing planning expertise, as presented during the Monte Verità Colloquium in April 2004, could be channelled into a pilot study, concerning image-making for Kabul.

SOME NOTES ON URBAN EIONICS

One of the more famous scholars of the 20th century, Kenneth Boulding, introduced the term “eionics” to define the general science of images (Boulding, 1956). He declared that: “We are perhaps in the process of organizing a general theory of the empirical world: something which lies between the extreme generality of mathematics and the particularity of particular disciplines” (Boulding, 1956). According to German studies in the field, images are: (i) normative-anticipatory models of consciousness; (ii) representing the dominating ideas or objectives; (iii) over-all collective images that influence those of an individual; (iv) images that sometimes play the roles of examples (Streich, 1988:23). The development of images in a given field may be explained internally, out of a process within the discipline, as well as externally, when caused by variables outside the discipline. In the first case, the salience of disciplinary imagery is dependent on its ability to give theoretical insight into the disciplinary issues; in the second, the imagery is useful to the extent that it has a problem-solving relevance.
The role of images with reference to urban studies has been much stronger in the German speaking countries than in other countries of the Western world. There is a substantial body of knowledge in this field (as formulated for instance by Albers, Adrian, Dittrich, Ernst, Stracke, Streich, etc.). In American literature, a seminal work was edited by Rodwin and Hollister (Rodwin and Hollister, 1984). Urban images represent to them “a greater knowledge” which they call the “city of the mind”. This “invisible” city helps us to organise thinking and discourse about the city. The contemporary city is seen by means of a variety of images, often conflicting. In the course of the debate “Images of the City of Tomorrow”, a German group “Stadtentwicklung” (city development) discussed a broad spectrum of such images. They were later on conceptualised in form of four categories: (i) administrative-political, (ii) social, (iii) economic and (iv) physical/formal (Hesse, 1991). Reiner and Hindery proposed a concise and convincing categorisation of urban images in city planning. According to their reasoning, images can take three different levels: images of the city, as a metaphor to express some central aspects of the city’s human condition; images for the city, suggesting an idea, or a process to symbolise one city or a class of cities and thereby to establish its essential qualities and meaning; and images in the city, which, by their very association specifically give character and identity to a place (Reiner and Hindery, 1984:135). All these images represent a framework and a reference in the work of city planners. While the first group of images is represented by certain ideal community proposals, such as, for instance, Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City, planning strategies, documents, texts and plans illustrate the other groups. The political, social and economic issues melt the first ‘over-all’ level of planning images into policies. Strategies represent the second, intermediate level. Finally, the third level images can be represented by sequential plans for a specific city; planners’ visions about one specific geographical place over time.

These categorisations can be useful as a reasoning framework in the discussion of leading images for the city of Kabul. They were used when discussing the case of the Norwegian city of Drammen. Thus, these categorisations could provide a common platform for these two very diametrically different cities.

IMAGE-MAKING. THE CASE OF THE CITY OF DRAMMEN, NORWAY

The city of Drammen is, in a Scandinavian urban context, a medium-sized town with its approximately 50,000 inhabitants. It was established in the sixteenth century as a self-governing trade city. In the nineteenth century and until the 1980s, it had a strong industry. Then, while the traditional industries were leaving the city, the service sectors and the new culture and knowledge “industries” have begun to appropriate their previous locations along the river. Drammen is the main traffic hub in this part of the country. Located in an approximate distance of 50 km from the capital city of Oslo, it has a good accessibility by a system of motorways and by the national railway lines. It has also a well-equipped harbour. Some 15 per cent of the labour stock commute daily to Oslo and the trend becomes stronger. The landscape of the city is unique, its main feature being an axis connecting two hills and crossing the river between them. Thus, the city enjoys a harmonious combination of nature and urbanity.

On 17th June 2003, a Municipal Master Plan for the City of Drammen was adopted by the City Council. Its time perspective goes to the year 2014. “Each municipality is supposed to prepare a Municipal Master Plan. The plan consists of a long-term component and a short-term component. The long-term component sets out goals for the development of the municipality and guidelines for sector planning and deals with land use to enable
management of land and other natural resources. The short-term component comprises an integrated programme of action for sector activities during the next few years. The part of the plan concerning land use is legally binding, while other parts of the plan provide the political framework within which the municipality should prioritise its activities, although they are not as such legally binding” (Mønnesland and Naustdalslid, 2001:64).

The Municipal Master Plan is expected to attend to the basic value system of sustainable development in a welfare society. The City Council has to revise and re-evaluate it at least once during its election period of 4 years. The Municipal Master Plan for Drammen was prepared, based on a broad participatory process. It was advised by the city inhabitants, politicians, the business community, the neighbouring communities, the regional authorities, the national planning guidelines, as well as by various expert agencies. A special emphasis was laid on the participation of the children and the youth, as is also demanded by the Law. This process has been called “Drammen 2011”.

Chronologically it was executed as follows:

In the fall of 2000 and the winter of 2001, analyses of the Drammen society were carried out. The potential for development was discussed in broad participatory arenas. In addition, some expert analyses and academic elaborations were executed. In the spring and summer of 2001, a set of images for the future was formulated by an expert agency, Asplan Viak AS, on the basis of the participatory processes, and the supplementary information sources provided. They made a concrete basis for a broad debate among the Drammen community and the planning experts. The debate was targeted towards selection of one of the city images as the most favourable guidelines for the future. In the winter of 2002, one specific image with its more detailed objectives was found preferable, the so-called “Naturbania”. It made the grounds for the Master Plan, adopted, as mentioned above, in June 2003 (Kommuneplan for Drammen 2003-2014,2003:4).

This brief review of the planning process shows how the use of images or visions have created the very core of the participatory planning process, leading to the production and adoption of a Municipal Master Plan.

There were four images presented to the Drammen community. One of them, “The Broken Drammen” (“Byen som brast” in Norwegian), or freely translated as “A City with No Visions”, was an image of the city, where no consensual images were defined. An uncertain situation of the city’s decision-makers would probably make the potential for development lost. People would not dare to invest in the future, and their behaviour would be that of temporary adjustments.

“Naturbania” is an acronym, derived from two words: nature and urbs (Latin for the city) and it assumes a rather harmonious interplay of both these aspects in the city. This image enhances the importance of culture as a new “industry”; it recognizes academic institutions in the city as vehicles for a new knowledge economy; it acknowledges the significance of accepting contrasts and pluralism in values of the city’s inhabitants. The image enhances the importance of public spaces as meeting places and proposes to improve their physical quality in the belief that quality environments ensue social, economic and cultural development. The strategy for support of the business community will be of indirect influence as pointed in numerous literatures on the matter (Dunin-Woyseth, 2002:227).

The “Hub” image provides a scenario of a city, heavily depending on its logistics-dependant economy. The specific localisation of the city in the region opens for such a possibility. The
central economic factors would be the accessibility by the motorway transport, by a well-developed harbour, and other existing supportive physical infrastructures. The Municipality would have an important role in providing attractive sites for the new investors, in securing that the public infrastructures daily function. An academic centre with the speciality in logistics and ICT would be supportive as a think-tank for this image. As the central areas of the city would be “conquered” by the logistics industries, new areas for housing and leisure should be provided.

“Neighbourhood Life” (Bydelsliv) is an image of a decentralised city life where the most important activities are focussed on housing and family life environments. The assumption is that such qualities would attract, to the city, a serious number of individuals with good personal economy, and, hopefully, strong entrepreneurial potential and investment capital (Begg and Whyatt, 1995:132). These lifestyle qualities would be based on the city’s unique localisation in the vicinity of the capital city of Oslo, combined with good transport accessibility. Beautiful, natural surroundings and a lively, urban milieu in a balanced interplay are the city’s strong assets. The “Neighbourhood Life” image would probably enhance a kind of neighbourhood identity, while weakening that of a city identity. It would demand new, decentralised organisation of services and new measures for civic participation. If the assumptions about investment activities failed, the city would become a “dormitory satellite” to Oslo (Haslum and Jerspersen, 2001:8-11).

A city with no visions
- Governing problems
- Investment uncertainty
- Ad-hoc initiatives
- Flux from the city?

Naturbania
- Intensive development of the central areas
- Compact city – inbuilt natural areas
- Good environments for leisure activities
- Academic milieu and cultural activities
- Neighbourhood development?

The Hub
- Central location in the region
- Traffic hub and the harbour
- Transport and goods freight
- Less housing in the central areas?

Neighbourhood Life
- Inhabitants of Drammen live the good life in smaller communities of the city
- Developing qualities of the city with emphasis on living and housing qualities
- A good city for growing up
- A dormant satellite to the capital city?

(Source: Drammen Municipality leaflet “How it will be to live in Drammen in 10 years” / Hvordan skal Drammen være å bo i om 10 år?), Drammen 2011, undated, distributed to all city households)
These images vary in four respects:

- different philosophies with regard to trade and industry in their traditional connotations as well as the new ones, those of culture and knowledge “industries”;
- different values and lifestyles preferences, different cultural development
- different area policies, city development strategies; different area development patterns, both in a short and a distant time perspectives;
- different roles of Drammen in a regional context.

The images “visualise” different cause / effect relations. The experts, who defined these images, assumed that it would not be possible to incorporate certain components of one image into the other at the level of main strategies. Some compromises could be, nevertheless, possible at lower levels of the strategies (Haslum and Jespersen, 2001:11).

The Drammen case is an example of several roles images can play. In the process of preparing the Master Plan, these can be identified as: normative-anticipatory models of consciousness, representing the dominating ideas or objectives, and, over-all collective images that influence those of an individual, i.e. three of the four categories of Streich (Streich, 1988:23). Of the three categories of Reiner and Hindery, we can recognise two: images for the city, suggesting an idea, or a process to symbolise one city or a class of cities and thereby to establish its essential qualities and meaning; and images in the city, which, by their very association specifically give character and identity to a place (Reiner and Hindery, 1984:135). In the expert analyses, the images have not been discussed in the categories proposed by Hesse, but the Master Plan document contains issues which easily can be identified as: administrative-political, social, economic and physical / formal (Hesse, 1991).

The lesson from this planning process has been that instead of starting it as an analysis, which used to be the case in the traditional Comprehensive Planning, the Master Plan for Drammen started from broad discussions on how the city inhabitants experienced their city and what visions / images they had for its future. In the dialogue with the experts these ideas were defined as leading images for the future. In this way, we can maintain that the planning process started from a “synthesis”. Then, the consequences of each image were investigated in depth which can be regarded as an analysis phase of the planning process. Another round of debate resulted in the selection of one preferable image which made up the core and the grounds for the Master Plan’s decisions. This concluding part of the process can be regarded again as a synthesis phase. This synthesis-analysis-synthesis planning process, anchored in a broad participation of the city inhabitants and other fora, resulted in a judicially based Master Plan document during a period of 2.5 years. This innovative planning process seems to prove that creating images for a city can be a potential and innovative tool in planning processes.

CAN IMAGE-MAKING BE CONSIDERED AS A PLANNING TOOL FOR KABUL?

During the Monte Verità Colloquium, in its closing session, the participants discussed a number of issues, regarded as crucial for the rebuilding of Kabul. They were conceptualised in two circles: one, the outer circle, gathering social needs, livelihood, infrastructure, land, cultural heritage and housing, and, another, the inner circle, consisting of governance (participation), and/or process, resources, competence, relationship. In the middle of the inner circle, vision was given a central place. The usefulness of the frameworks of urban eionics could be “tested” with regard to these two circles and the position of the vision in the centre. Instead
of doing that, this author proposes that an idea of a pilot study, _Urban Images for Kabul_, be considered, based on the expertise of those joined at the Colloquium. Could it be launched as a brainstorming session during the next Colloquium?

It seems that there are among the participants some serious competences with regard to the problematic Kabul. This situation could justify to attempt such a professional / academic event. The following expertise has been evidenced during the Colloquium lectures:

- Urban history of Kabul
- Preservation and revival of cultural identity and its potential to respond to the needs of the city
- Infrastructure upgrading in Kabul seen from a 30 years perspective
- Complexity of ground realities. Security and confidence building
- Awareness of institutional constraints and current opportunities
- A bottom-up perspective on urban planning and needs in Kabul
- Experiences from planning and negotiation projects
- Strategies for the reconstruction of Kabul’s Centre versus the pressure of commercial investments
- Community-based urban development for Kabul. National Solidarity Programme
- Empowering of children on neighbourhood issues.

This collective expertise concerns both the historical aspects of the city, the planning issues, and some academic knowledge. Together, it could make a base for, tentatively, formulating premises for urban policies for the city of Kabul. As a collective knowledge, it could open a path for a think-tank in action. The results of the proposed brainstorming, regarded as a kind of thought experiment, could offer some ideas towards a more innovative planning process for Kabul.

REFERENCES


AFTERTHOUGHTS FROM AN IRANIAN PERSPECTIVE

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A variety of topics related to the reconstruction of Kabul were explored and reviewed during the colloquium. ‘Master Plan’, ‘City Infrastructure’, ‘Children issues’, ‘Conservation of Historic Monuments’, ‘Water and Sanitation’, were some of many. It is unrealistic to expect a concrete conclusion from this colloquium. Nevertheless, encouraging the participants of the meeting for further thought on the topics and follow up meetings may end up in more useful findings. Some of the major observations, based on the author’s personal background on reconstruction of the Iranian war damaged urban and rural areas, can be summarized as follows:

1-City reconstruction has to be started from rehabilitation of villages. This strategy has many advantages, including:

- It discourages rural dwellers to migrate to the cities. If the flow of rural population is not controlled it will result in unprecedented development of the city.

- A healthy and prosperous economy of rural areas will support the economy of the city to flourish. This is particularly the case in Kabul as well as in other cities in Afghanistan since industry has a negligible role in their economy.

- Rehabilitation of rural areas is much easier than that of cities. Rural people require fewer resources, have lower expectations, are more acquainted with and tolerant of the harsh environment, are more ready to participate in and contribute to the rehabilitation process, and are often familiar with vernacular construction skills.

- Rural economy is based on land and irrigation, both of which can often be restored in a short time after a war.

2-At present there is a visible concentration of NGOs in Kabul and to a lesser extent in a few other cities. This is because security and logistics are the first priorities for them and, therefore, limited to Kabul.

3-Capacity building must be considered as the first objective both for the Afghan authorities as well as the intervener agencies. Sooner or later the NGOs will leave Kabul, and the Afghans will be left with the huge task of restoring normal life in their homeland. Therefore, all the outsiders should give priority to the training of local people, and to creating or strengthening corresponding institutions as part of their contribution to the reconstruction process.
4-The reconstruction of Kabul, as a city devastated by war, by its nature, is a sophisticated task requiring planning. A Master plan or other physical plans are necessary but not enough to accomplish reconstruction activities. Reconstruction plans, or more precisely rehabilitation plans, should incorporate policies such as:
- the trend of re-population of the city,
- the economic revival and its future,
- a vision of modernization of the city and the community by reconstruction versus traditionalism,
- the role and priority of physical and intangible cultural heritage in rehabilitating life in the city,
- how would it be possible to safeguard the sense of belonging to the space and place among the city dwellers,
- environmental considerations,
- the role of local people and authorities as well as outsiders in planning and executing projects,
- damage assessment and finding appropriate financial resources,
- study of the capacity of producing building materials locally, are only a few on many topics to be taken into consideration.

5-Due to the length of time the Afghans lived in exile, some significant points have to be assessed, including:
- Afghans, who migrated to the neighboring countries, including Iran and Pakistan, were exposed to different and strong cultures. The returnees are not the same as those who abandoned their homeland. They may think and expect differently from those Afghans who have lived in Kabul during the civil strife and experienced different political cultures over the last two decades.
- There is now a new generation of Afghans who, born and grown in exile, have no sense of dependency or perhaps even sympathy towards their fathers’ original city.

6-Concentration of reconstruction in Kabul will encourage more people to rush to the city to get access to their share. This will cause extensive demographic change in the country which, in turn, can result in spatial and economic change, in the long run.

7-It must be remembered that the degree of devastation in Kabul is so high that a «firefighting» approach for rehabilitation will not be efficient. This policy is to a large extent inevitable in emergency phase, but it be borne in mind that return to normal life in Kabul is about long term intensive work. Therefore, it can be concluded that more thought is required in using the existing limited resources in the best possible way.

8-Unlike natural disasters, in case of war, destruction has no definite or clear end. In Iran, for example, reconstruction was in progress during almost the entire war period, and of course, after the war. It should be remembered that ceasefire does not mean peace and peace is not equal to security. People need security for their normal life. If the risk of further invasion exists, the real city dwellers may not dare return from exile, let alone invest and start business.

9-Outsiders, particularly in relation to developing countries, may contribute only a small
part of all the resources, including financial, required for restoring the city to normalcy. The main bulk will remain for the Afghans to bear. As time passes, more resources will be needed while less will be available.

10-Post-disaster studies, as an interdisciplinary area of research, were started at least since 1970s. However, the concentrated research into the reconstruction of wardamaged areas after the second-world war has been launched in 1985 in York by the author as the topic of his PhD thesis, and since, continues. Today, our knowledge of particular issues of rehabilitation of war-devastated areas is considerable.

11-One of the major issues, observed in post-disaster situations, is convincing the authorities that reconstruction planning and management is a profession that requires specific scientific studies. Often it is difficult to convince them that the classical architecture and urban studies can be only useful in context of normal societies, not in a city, for example, which is badly affected by war. Decision-makers at the reconstruction scene must study and get familiar with this profession.

12-Land tenure is often one of the more outstanding problems to face in post-disaster conditions. This is particularly the case in Islamic societies where private land ownership is extremely honored and expropriation of land by government or any other instance is not only difficult, but often impossible.

13-Houses and buildings can change and get modernized in a short time, but change among people is at a very slow pace. Our observations and research into reconstructed war–damaged settlements reveal that the survivors will continue a traditional life in modern buildings.
THE ROLE OF SPATIAL STRATEGIES IN PLANNING KABUL’S FUTURE

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If you want to build a ship, don’t herd people together to collect wood and don’t assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.  
As for the future, your task is not to foresee it, but to enable it.  
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry 1948: Citadelle [The Wisdom of the Sands]

Introduction

This contribution seeks to address the relevance of spatial planning in the context of Kabul’s development. It points at a conceptual gap regarding the role that spatial planning disciplines play in contemporary development policies and strives to discuss some of the potentials of these disciplines. These goals in mind, my endeavour aims to add new aspects in order to complete the picture. It does not intend to disgrace other leading development strategies and policies (governance, capacity building, human rights approaches, etc.).

Kabul finds itself at a transitional stage between disaster relief and (re-)development. This phase brings about an increasing need for long-term strategies. While there is increasing debate about those strategies (cf. our colloquium), it also becomes clear that there is a lack of consensus on the concepts of planning and policies themselves. We can identify a demand for a re-conceptualisation and re-contextualisation of the state of the art of planning.

Addressing the request of the participants from the transitional Afghan government for concrete proposals (Q. Djallalzada: “Write as if you were a government member.”), this paper is structured into three parts. While part one juxtaposes aspects of a local as well as a global context, the second part puts up general recommendations. Finally, part three concludes with a set of pragmatic proposals geared towards architectural and planning projects.

Hence, it has to be noted that this presentation presents a set of preliminary ideas and proposals concerning new challenges for spatial planning and that it operates more in a pragmatic than in a scientific way. (Of course you may contact the author for any references or further questions.)
What is Happening? (Local and Global Context of Planning)

In order to understand the condition of “Spatial Planning in Kabul”, this first part juxtaposes the planning challenges in Kabul with some recent global aspects of planning.

Planning Challenges for Kabul

Three reasons that make Kabul an interesting place for planners:

1) At first glance, the city seems to be a ‘tabula rasa’, an empty field that is waiting to be filled with new ideas, a situation that represents an eternal dream for all planners.

2) Secondly, the city is a highly political, ideological and strategic space, which has been defined by frequently changing forces and ideologies. Kabul is a place that has continuously redefined its identity, and is in a continuous search for it.

3) Thirdly, the most challenging aspect of Kabul is its ‘paradox’ simultaneity of ‘mega city’ and ‘disaster’ problems. Extreme growth – the population doubled in the last three years to 3.6 million and will continue to grow – is juxtaposed with ruins, decay, provisional life in refugee camps and problems of security. The fact that Kabul still survives can only be explained by the dynamics of chaotic bottom-up structures of self-organisation and spontaneous appropriation, so-called informal structures. The city is defined more by spontaneous and ephemeral networks, than by the ruins.

Conditions of Disaster

Additionally, in order to envision Kabul’s future, we have to comprehend the different faces of its state of ‘disaster’. I want to name only two aspects which are often neglected.

1) The first kind of ‘disaster’ describes a state of mind, which is defined by the experience and perception of physical destruction, chaos, war and emergency (ongoing in Afghanistan for more than two decades). It includes a mental trauma on individual as well as collective levels that is barely addressed and understood, but which deeply affects the state of mind and behaviour of a whole population and its confidence towards the future.

2) The second, very central kind of ‘disaster’ that has to be considered very seriously, has to do with the dynamics of the actors involved in development. This ‘catastrophe’ is part of a pragmatic and often opportunistic way of development, consisting of a multitude of seemingly uncoordinated and singular projects and interventions.

‘Crisis of Space’

The approach of comprehensive spatial planning, best represented by modern ‘master plans’ of the post WW2 area, seems to have come to an end. Central planning is in a crisis, as are the urban satellites of post-war Europe or the ‘Superblocks’ in the Third World. Looking at the development agenda of contemporary development policy (communicated at various events, in meetings, policy papers and articles), we find a wide consensus on the process-oriented and ‘soft’ sides of development (social, political and economic). The question on hand then is, whether the denial of the spatial sphere has been too extreme.

We observe that the appreciation of space as a basis of our daily experience and the constituting element of social as well as cultural relations – including the wellbeing of those relations – is widely lost today. This is in fact part of what the French philosopher and urbanist Henri
Lefebvre (1974) called the "crisis of space". (Unfortunately, in this context, it is not possible to delve more deeply in this thought). Many examples indicate that space is not just abstract, but also has individual and collective (i.e. social) dimensions, and that societal achievements, such as civilisation, democracy, human rights, security, identity and culture cannot exist without a spatial dimension. 

Identity in a Global Context
Cities are increasingly defined as dynamic and competitive nodes in networks of ever-increasing exchange flows. In this context, aspects like the ‘profile’, ‘identity’ and the capacity to generate knowledge and innovation become the distinctive characteristics of a place. This tendency may be illustrated among others by the increasing role that regional marketing is playing in the competition between European city regions and by the thematic development of hundreds of new towns in China. For Kabul, this means that it has to position itself in the threads of tradition and modernity and that it has to establish a distinctive identity.

What should happen? (General Recommendations)

Themes and Research Topics
In the following, the six subjects of “Urban Realm / Right to the City”, “Identity and Image”; “Informality”, “Self-Organisation”, “Appropriation and Participation”, “Hybrids”, “Centre and Periphery” and “The Master plan as an Open Development Strategy” are presented as central issues in Kabul’s development.

“Urban Realm / Right to the City”

It is one of the major statements of this contribution that urban space has a much bigger potential than generally assumed. As Kabul appears from the stage of ‘emergency relief’, it becomes important to define strategies that go beyond a mere set of technical improvements and to conceive solutions for improving the ‘urban quality’ in supplying the "Urban Realm” and eventually introduce what is referred to as the “Right to the City". In this manner, a significant difference in development quality could be achieved if long-term social as well as spatial (urban) visions were developed and explored more seriously. Questions such as mental health, security, local attractiveness, quality of life, pride and self-consciousness, faith in the future and creation of identity can only be tackled in a comprehensive manner if one aims at creating ‘urban quality’.

Identity and Image

Identity and image is what radiates into the self, the country as well to the rest of the world and what can generate self-esteem. While we (in the western world) struggle with the problems of our post-modern identities, the predominant task for Kabul is the reconstruction of the identity of a society. We prefer to consider identity less as a fixed state, but more as an evolving process, which has to be brought on its way in Kabul. The development of strategies and visions (the question “Where do we want to go?”) plays a significant role in this process. And consequently – because we see an interdependence of social and spatial processes – the question of identity should become the major concern for the creation of new spaces (urban planning). As a result, the central issue is to nurture Kabul’s potential as a breeding ground for images and identities.
Informality, Self-Organisation, Appropriation and Participation

Like many other fast growing metropolises, Kabul lacks formally organised planning institutions. More than 85% of all structures have been erected using self-help methods, a large proportion of the economic sector functions at an informal level. Despite a widespread disregard of these structures, the city only survives due to the predominance of self-organisation and appropriation. The idea of turning the self-organising potentials of a city into an asset, the ‘participatory approach’, has in fact been an important goal of town planners focussing on the problems of fast growing settlements for several decades. And, since it is not very likely that Kabul will become another ‘Beirut’ (it lacks the big money and the sea) it will be necessary to investigate the potentials of self-organisation, appropriation and participation in a systematic way and utilise them in a systematic manner.

The common classification of ‘formal’ and ‘informal’, ideologically charged in any case, seems out of date. We have to understand that ‘formality’ and ‘informality’ have many gradations. Consequently, the task today is to evaluate what needs guidance, planning and public control and what can evolve from self-organised structures: at this point, the real question is: how many degrees of freedom does a city need? For the reconstruction efforts, this would mean focussing on certain key structures and leaving others open for self-organisation and appropriation (cf. to what Luis Monreal (AKTC) referred to as “Urban Acupuncture”). This scheme could be a possible way for achieving self-sustained development and breaking the vicious circle of dependency on periodically changing donors and their ideologies.

Hybrids

The relation between ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ is another model that is in need of a recontextualisation and conceptualisation. If it doesn’t make sense to imagine Kabul as a city on the way to ‘modernity’, we need to think of different categories. Why not turn the conditions of the hybrid state of being in-between into an asset and the strength of the city. Today, hybrid systems and structures should not be regarded as failures but as potentials for development. (We could mention the juxtaposition of satellite dishes and traditional buildings, or the use of cargo containers in combination with traditional construction materials for housing among many others.)

Using this potential, the city could leapfrog into an urban future, which would have a unique status world-wide. It could embody an urbanism that is capable of accommodating extreme differences: old and new, traditional and modern, low-tech and high-tech etc. Consequently, this ‘natural’ tendency of ‘localisation’, mutation, and hybridisation needs further attention and systematic study. For an architectural part, many interesting examples of this kind can be found in the movement of ‘critical regionalism’, demonstrating that mediation between tradition and modernity is possible.

Centre and Periphery

The strategy for modernising Afghanistan by modernising its heart is as old as the history of Afghanistan’s occupation, and has hardly worked in the past. It is not likely that Kabul could survive as an enclave in a sea of depressed regions. The urban and regional development needs to be balanced; otherwise, the increasing differences could at some point lead to an upsurge. Even though Kabul still has to remain a ‘role model’, the heart with representative functions, the city will only survive if a regional balance is achieved. In addition, as a large
part of Kabul’s population is from the countryside, it may be interesting to experiment with rural forms of life and organisation in the city (i.e. ‘urban agriculture’, traditional construction methods etc.)

The Master Plan as an Open Development Strategy

Last but not least, we want to turn to the opportunities and the role of urban planning and design for Kabul’s redevelopment process.

Urban planning has many of the potentials that the mass of the current uncoordinated small-scale projects and short-sighted decisions lack. The quality of urban planning and design lies in the provision of an integrative perspective as well as the ability to develop long-term visions and images, in spite of a myopic pragmatism.

However, as necessary as it may be, in order to adapt to new requirements, this discipline also needs some reforms and new approaches. Although a traditional master plan is probably not the right solution for guiding Kabul into its future (flexibility in adapting to changes, bottom-up character, implementation capacity etc.), it remains very crucial to develop a comprehensive vision for open and flexible improvement and growth. Therefore, the new objective could be named ‘open development strategy’. The actors that delineate and guide this process still have to be defined and mobilised.

How to Achieve the Goals?

This final part presents a set of recommendations for the government that address various concrete steps towards the development of an urban vision for the Afghan capital (focus on architecture and planning).

A. Utilise the resource “oversupply of architects” from industrialised countries in research, competitions, and training projects!

The fact that Afghanistan is in the focus of international development efforts is a big opportunity for utilising architecture and planning resources from abroad. Although Afghanistan has become a centre of the international development community, the potentials of the architectural, design and planning disciplines are underrepresented and by far under-utilised. This is particularly the case looking at the enormous supply of architects in central Europe, which could be invited to participate in research, competition and training projects.

B. Use the tool ‘international competition’ in order to get the best minds and assemble the best ideas.

International competitions are the most effective (widely utilised and accepted) tools used in order to get the best and most successful ideas, to create scenarios for urban and regional futures, and to find the most innovative solutions for pressing urban problems. Having played a major role in the history of western countries, they currently play a major role in the development of cities and regions in China. The master plan for the Olympic Games in Beijing, the Expo Shanghai, the periodical EUROPAN competitions in Europe, as well as a series of development-oriented competitions organised by the UIA (International Chamber of Architects) or the ‘Architects for Humanity’, just to name a few examples.
C. Employ the research potentials of academic institutions.

Universities are neutral and politically independent bodies that can play a designated role as places of preliminary research and testing, as nodes for institutional networks and as generators of innovative ideas. Universities can contribute to a contextualisation and conceptualisation of problems as well as experiments of all sorts – a task that neither government and non-government organisations, nor for-profit organisations can perform in this way.

D. Create an independent expert group to oversee and co-ordinate efforts of urban development and large scale projects – a "Strategic Vision Group".

Following models from the Netherlands or some German cities, a “Strategic Vision Group” composed of renowned experts could be set up by the government to evaluate the quality of projects, co-ordinate major efforts, as well as lead a public debate on the quality of projects in Kabul.

E. Create exemplary model projects and international building exhibitions.

Following the experiences gathered in international building exhibitions (e.g. “Weissenhof-siedlung Stuttgart”, “Documenta Urbana Kassel”, “IBA Berlin”, “Trienale Milano et al”), the government should promote the construction of exemplary planning and architectural solutions. This could be done in combination with all of the other recommendations. Using these strategies, Kabul could leap forward to a best practice model on an international scale.

F. Publish results

Last but not least, exemplary results should be monitored, documented and made public to the international community.

Summary

Much is at stake at this level of Kabul’s development. At the stage between emergency relief and urban expansion, Kabul finds itself at a crucial crossroads of strategic decisions on the path to its future. Within this context, this presentation sought to emphasise an ongoing relevance of spatial planning (‘urban quality’ as an umbrella of technical and social projects), it outlined some specific topics that should be examined in planning for Kabul’s future (from new concepts of informality to an ‘open development strategy’), and finally, it delineated some pragmatic steps focussing on architecture and planning (tapping of architects as a resource).

Notes:
1 Ajmal Majwandi (2002), a British-Afghan architect, compares the atmosphere of Kabul to a large military camp existing in a context of erased urbanity.
2 His Excellency Q. Djallalzada has mentioned this “psycho-social trauma” as one of the major underestimated factors restraining development.
3 Here I can refer to Eberhard Knapp’s presentation of the roles and dilemmas of different actors in Kabul’s development (donors, beneficiaries, third parties, individuals etc.). The ‘disaster’ then equals the “dangerous mixture”, caused by “lots of money”, “lots of chaos” and “lots of uncertainty”.
4 For example: Kabul’s ‘micro rayons’, or projects like the blocks of “23 de Enero” in Caracas (Venezuela).
5 In her account of the relocation efforts at the Mimur Shah redevelopment project, Anna Saove (AKTC) has demonstrated in an impressive way how the “city is a battle for space”.


The concept is derived from the "Charter for the Right to the City", an initiative of the "World Social Forum" (2003), which seeks to add this right to the list of basic human rights.

It is not hard to predict that Kabul’s historic centre (an important focus of our workshop) will play a significant role for the identity of the evolving city. We are faced here with a multitude of intricate decisions between tradition or modernity, redevelopment or new construction. In total, these will have a large impact on the image and identity of the city.

cf. to Kenneth Frampton, 1983.

Here it could be worth to take a look at the German “informal plan”. This plan is a comprehensive development instrument, which has no binding status, however, and serves as a successful basis for the development of strategies and the co-ordination of efforts.

cf. to Suha Özhan’s remark that a “creative body is needed to co-ordinate projects”.

Europe is facing the problem of many shrinking regions and at the same time an oversupply of architects. With one architect for seven hundred people, Germany has one of the highest ratios of architects per population world-wide. At the same time, the unemployment rate among architects is more than 12% (FAZ 2002). (More than 700 people frequently participate in just one competition.)


cf. the workshop “Urban Planning in Catastrophe Regions, Supplying the Urban Realm – Scenarios for Kabul’s Centre”, which was organised at the University of Karlsruhe last summer and demonstrated and summarised some of those potentials.

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Please contact the author for further references.
THOUGHTS ON URBAN RECOVERY IN KABUL

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Recent decades have witnessed massive destruction of cities due to regrettable war conditions. Most of these disadvantaged Muslim communities. Following the Iran-Iraq War, the Civil War in Beirut, and the destruction of Kuwait, as well as many cities in Bosnia, Serbia, Afghanistan, and the recent tragedy in Iraq have shown how thousands of people have lost their lives and how millions have been adversely affected by having been deprived of the basics of existence. Urban areas being safer and providing more conveniently accessible opportunities became areas of attraction for rural exodus. Eventually the urban population increased beyond manageable sizes and the needs of inhabitants multiplied.

Even though it still seems rather fragile, Afghanistan has given us the chance to help in developing optimism and establishing peaceful conditions. This optimism having been shared by the international community provides unprecedented possibilities to remedy what happened in the recent past. This will be an opportunity for a new vision, to improve the destructed urban conditions. However, this is a massive task to undertake and to proceed demands a substantially well thought out strategic approach with clearly set priorities.

Infrastructure

Long lasting war has destructed both infrastructure of the city and put the building stock into unusable condition. Ever increasing urban population demands tend to derive more from the urban infrastructure than what it can supply. Needless to say, the basics of life, like water and energy, are scarce and insufficient. Transport and urban circulation are problematic, environmental degradation is acute and, finally, solid and liquid waste disposal or treatment almost non-existent.

Any provision for the improvement of the urban infrastructure will be a major factor in urban development. Therefore these provisions need a well prioritised strategic approach in order to control the urban sprawl.

Kabul River is perhaps the most important and attractive feature of the city. It was like that in the past when the river was full and flowing. Definitely it has to be the same in the future. To improve the condition of the river is a major project. It may be a major undertaking but not impossible to increase the present meagre flow substantially by diverting one of the rivers upstream to add to the water content. At first, some shallow catchments could be built at
very low cost to contain and direct the water flow. An intervention like that would not only improve the presence of water in the cityscape but also help replenish the level of water. Underground water, at present, is continuously pumped up for urban needs which is causing the water table to decrease at an alarming degree. Changes in the water table are quite likely to result in a major disaster by the changing soil condition.

**Large Scale Urban Projects**

In post war conditions and in fast growing cities, there have been successful interventions, for example, post war reconstruction of Beirut and the projects to cope with the urban explosion in Curitiba.

In West Kabul, there is a vast stretch of land full of damaged unsafe buildings. There is also substantial public land ownership in this area.

In Beirut, a real estate holding and development company called Solidaire was established by a special legal status. The property owners held shares proportionate to their holdings while others participated by buying shares as investment. This agency was responsible for planning, construction and ownership. Later, shares in the constructed real estate were distributed to the investors. The best aspect of this process is that, the mechanism of the judiciary system sorts those out without any hindrance to urban development. This model can be improved and adapted to Kabul conditions and applied under wisely shared privatisation procedures.

In Curitiba, its legendary Mayor Jamie Lerner developed very simple methods of interventions not only to improve but also to solve many acute problems of the city. This included urban transport systems and solid waste collection. These, already applied and tested solutions for the Third World conditions, can also be adapted for Kabul since any visible improvement in urban condition will generate absolute confidence in local authorities.

**Localised Efforts**

The inhabitants of Kabul are going through very stressed and hard conditions of urban life. Any visible and enjoyable positive improvements will induce confidence and trust in the people responsible and the agencies of international assistance.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture has been implementing four projects that are using concerted efforts to improve four different sites: restoration of Bagh-i Babur and Queen’s Palace, Uzbeki Mosque, Mausoleum of Timurshah and improvement of housing conditions in Arifan and Ashiqan neighbourhood, in cooperation with other international agencies.

These projects particularly concentrate on the restoration of the cultural heritage and the creation of open spaces for public use. Moreover, they aim to generate jobs for low skilled construction labour, as new areas of intervention are to be added to these projects in the future. The areas, especially around Timurshah Mausoleum need to be expanded to embrace the crafts and retail commerce of this neighbourhood and all the way to the river shore to become a part of the urban tissue.
Willingness to Build

The local authorities have difficulties in processing the innumerable applications for building permits.

Naturally everyone wishes to take maximum advantage of the land by building to a maximum area. Even though the greed to build may be regarded as negative, the intention to invest in Kabul at all is the most positive aspect. When controlled and encouraged most of the development could be financed privately. Therefore a strategic master plan responding to meet this demand must be developed at the earliest.

Also, an authority to issue building permits needs to be established to prevent profiteering once unregulated building activity starts, as happened in the massive informal building activities in Egypt and Turkey. In a city like Kabul, where local authorities are on the verge of establishing themselves, to impose legal and administrative controls over informal building activities should not be avoided.

Strategic Master Plan

AKTC Consultant, Romi Khosla, in his report on urban recovery in Afghanistan, quoted: “To have an ideal master plan is impossible. But to have a master plan is ideal”. This was, in a nutshell, his departure point to suggest a strategic approach to control planning by capacity building in every urban setting in Afghanistan.

Kabul has a Master Plan which dates from pre-conflict times. Since then not only the realities on the ground and social structure changed but completely new realities also came into existence, negatively by destruction and positively by international commitment to improve the living conditions of urban residents. Most of the planning values of the existing plan that foresaw demolition and re-building have been changed into improvement instead of demolition.

Even though there is a legitimacy of the existing Master Plan, it needs to be transformed into a different and more dynamic planning instrument in order to cope with the problems of the city that are both increasing in magnitude and getting more complex with time. A major legal procedure is needed to redefine a new dynamic urban planning process. The aspects of this approach have been detailed in Khosla report submitted in April 2003 to the authorities in Afghanistan.

Presently, the city may not be prosperous and self sufficient, but there is an important influx of international funds owing to the good will of the international communities that are still committed to offer their assistance in almost every sector. The growth in the service sectors is noticeably high. The improvements from impoverished conditions of urban life to a better one are obvious. Provisions of accommodation, shopping and catering have been increasing by leaps and bounds. Young, energetic and eager population are desirous in taking part in the economic activities of the service sector. The most acute problem, however, is the congested urban space where there is an excessive concentration of trade, commerce and crafts. The main deadlock in engaging people with trade is “space” and “capital”.

“Space” in the form of land and buildings is largely held by the public sector. What are needed are local urban design projects to allocate space to entrepreneurial people who have already begun not only occupying the land informally and but also contributing to the economic activities of the city.
In terms of “capital” the most sensible model is “Micro credit” mechanism. This process enables persons with initiative to have access to minimal funds with minimal bureaucracy. Micro credit has been tested massively in rural areas. However, the micro financing in urban conditions to the best of our knowledge so far is limited.

Cognisant of the value and workability of this model AKDN has already established a micro credit bank in Afghanistan. Therefore, planned urban intervention when shared with people on a small scale can be successful if there is energetic willingness and co-operation.

In short, the massive apparent chaos and density in Kabul should not discourage anyone. This is the energy of the city and only needs to be harnessed. This energy can be channelised to create new urban structures where people can live, work, benefit and recreate.

Housing

Housing is definitely the most acute problem of the building sector. When temporary or informal structures are built for trade and commerce in city centres, the planning decision can override that and improve the conditions in time. However, when housing structures are built in a particular fashion, they only need infrastructure improvements for them to remain for a long time if not forever.

To improve the conditions of the de-facto or informally housing is more expensive than replacing the urban infrastructure from the outset. In most cases public funds are utilised for infrastructure. Since the decisions lie with the government, a well thought out and architecturally sound housing strategy can be the solution to this problem.

As it is with any other urban involvement, for housing too, the most expensive and inaccessible aspect is the land. Land is an asset that the public sector usually holds. Therefore, planned interventions for the provision of land with infrastructure and some innovative architectural models may help low cost affordable housing. Housing needs to be tackled as one of the most important problems of Kabul.
A LIVELIHOODS APPROACH TO URBAN PLANNING

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Urban Planning – that is, the allocation of space to different land-uses – is largely based on two considerations: one, the natural, physical attributes of the urban space; and two, the relative location of productive, residential and commercial districts. The latter are subject to the needs of infrastructure in terms of layout and extent. Within these broad parameters, a number of other more detailed considerations make for “good” efficient or sensitive planning, taking into account a whole range of issues ranging from culture and social to economy and technology. Other than those cities that are founded around a single or predominant economic activity, such as mining or heavy engineering or transport termini, employment is not a major determinant of urban form. Even here, apart from determining the extent and location of these activities, the planning and setting of residential areas, likely to make up more than half the land area, tend often to determine the overall shape and structure of the city.

On the other hand, most people come to cities in order to make a living. Furthermore, access to social services, especially education, is an added attraction made possible only because of the numbers and concentration of populations compared to rural or smaller settlements. The way a city is planned and managed obviously makes an impact on poverty since it has a direct bearing on the assets and levels of vulnerability of the poor (see Table 1). Similarly, housing and the way it is provided or can be accessed has a direct impact on poverty because both determine the costs of living, and consequently, the costs of and accessibility to other urban services (see Table 2).

Therefore, maximising and assuring income generating opportunities ought to be of primary concern for urban planners when planning cities. Arguments that such a move would only attract even more rural-urban migration are spurious. Gainfully employed rural households do not move to cities. Ironically, successful and efficient agriculture and agro-based industries requires less labour, and therefore, there are bound to be fewer employment opportunities in the countryside. For a balanced development, approximately 80% of the population has to live in or around cities, requiring a massive increase in income generating activities – primarily in the service sector, and, at least initially, in the informal sector. The informal sector thrives in the gaps created by the formal sector, and is also the incubator of new and innovative ways of making a living, especially for the poor. This is the aspect that urban planning needs to address and support, instead of stifling and thwarting it, often done inadvertently through ill-considered and inappropriate standards and regulations.

This note suggests what an approach to urban planning might look like if it were based on
pro-poor, poverty-reduction and income-enhancing principles. In doing so, it uses methodology based on the “livelihoods” framework (see table 3). A livelihood framework argues that households adopt multiple strategies as part of their coping mechanisms aimed at minimising shocks and stresses, which range from natural and man-made disasters that affect the areas to illness, unemployment, harassment and security issues that are faced by the household. The “poorer” the household, the more vulnerable it is to these shocks and stresses due to its lack of sufficient assets be they natural, physical, human, financial, social or political capital (ranging from material possessions to kinship ties and networks).

**Making a Living in Kabul: An Overview**

Kabul has always been a centre of trade from where most imports and exports are handled. While relatively little is produced in the city other than goods for local consumption, there is not much value added to the goods that flow through the city. Nevertheless, as, by far, the largest city, it has the highest non-farming employment, and it is where Afghans come to trade and to look for work. The main sectors of employment and opportunity are:

1. Trading – the bulk of it is carried out in the centre, in the old karavan sarai which are large two or three storied rectangular buildings with a courtyard in the middle with rooms off it. The ground floor has the sales rooms, the upper storage. The courtyard itself, where once the animals would have been tethered, is used for packing/unpacking and loading/unloading goods that are usually carried on hand-drawn carts and barrows or even on the backs of labourers. Many shops, now, have taken up most of the courtyard space, while the upper floors secure offices or one-room housing units. The flat roof is used for ablutions and toilets. While the older structures were built of mud-brick and timber, the current trend is to use the Iranian steel-frame and fired brick infill. The floor slabs and roofs are often of shallow jack-arches or even flat tiles supported by steel T-joists, plastered over with cement and tiles. These structures, about four stories high, are very easy to install and the technique is increasingly being used for all types of commercial buildings, all over Kabul. In some of the buildings, especially along the main streets, such as the Jadde Maiwand, basements are also being built for storage as well as additional shopping and showrooms.

Food, particularly dried fruit, nuts, new and used clothing, shoes and household items, and goods from countries around the region, especially Pakistan and Turkey, are the most common, while the electronic items are dominated by China, Korea and the South Asian.

Trading activities often spill out from formal shops both in the historic centres and surrounding areas onto the streets. Traditionally flat trolleys and pushcarts were the most common means, especially in residential areas, of taking goods to the buyers who were mainly women more likely to remain confined to their neighbourhood or their homes. The choice for shop-structure, today, seems to be the steel, shipping container type. With its obvious strength and weathering qualities, it makes for an excellent instant unit, whether standing in isolation on street corners in residential districts or, as around the mausoleum of Nadir Shah. They are lined up in neat rows to form a complete bazaar with hundreds of shops not just selling clothing but also housing tailors who are busy churning them out on electric sewing machines.

2. The service sector – has always been an important employer in Kabul as in other capital
cities. The government, in all its forms and functions, provides employment for a large percent of the working force, both directly and indirectly. The three sub-sectors within the service sector, are:

a. The Public Sector – which, as indicated above, is made up of all the various government ministries and departments, ranging from civil servants to teachers, from doctors to street cleaners. This sector has been further expanded by the presence of a large number of international organisations and agencies employing staff at all levels. In all, the public sector may provide as much as 40% of the service sector employment.

b. The Private Sector – is relatively small, with most professional services providers incorporated into the public sector. Most members of this group left Afghanistan and settled in the USA and Europe. Their children having followed in their footsteps have been educated and found employment in their host countries. Very few of them are willing to risk returning to Kabul until living and working conditions are more amenable to those they have become used to. This sub-sector probably employs less than 10% of the total service sector.

c. The Informal Sector – made up mostly of casual labourers and those who are self-employed (in the food and second-hand goods markets), are probably in the most precarious situation with their income prospects less reliable or steady than most. Many of those formally employed in the lower rungs of the public sector often dabble with informal activities on the side.

3. Construction – is a vibrant sector for obvious reasons, and includes the contractors and builders engaged in repairing and renovating existing buildings as well as constructing both, formal and informal, commercial and residential buildings. The sale and procurement (and to a lesser extent production) of building materials and components, ranging from timber beams and posts to wooden and metal frames, doors and windows, is as much a specialised trading activity as is construction. There are few large scale contractors and most contractors are middlemen or labour procurement agents, rather than builders or engineers.

4. Agriculture – in and around Kabul is now much less of an activity than in the past, largely because the land has been taken over by buildings and construction. Most agriculture produce is now trucked-in from further afield, or abroad. There seems to be little attempt in the revival or creation of agriculture or market-gardening to support Kabul’s needs for fresh vegetables or dairy products.

An Urban Planning Approach

Within the overview of the ways of making a living in Kabul, there is an indication of how the poorer households make a living. If we take the way they live – their housing, access to urban land and services, political power relationships and other such aspects, we begin to get an indication of their livelihood strategies. In the Table below is an indication of how the livelihoods strategies could be improved and strengthened by urban planning, by taking a deliberate, more positive approach towards influencing the livelihoods context as well as the assets of households in ways that would enable them to withstand shocks and stresses, resulting in better livelihood outcomes in terms of housing and living conditions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Livelihood Component</strong></th>
<th><strong>Urban Planning Response</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Livelihood Context</td>
<td>Organizations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                          | Strictly speaking, it can be argued that the establishment and/or promotion of community-based organisations is not a legitimate concern for urban planning, but in a situation where a satisfactory alternative does not exist, a CBO may make eminent sense. Much of urban planning fails because local communities are unable to connect with or comprehend, and therefore cannot understand, the logic of planning rules and regulations, and so fail to support or abide by them. As a corollary, the urban planning machinery feels threatened by the development activities of the community and, in the absence of feedback and communication, is forced to adopt a hostile stance, to the detriment of both the city and the citizens. Even where there are appropriate CBO in existence, urban planning should reach out and co-opt them in its development and planning facilitation framework. Thus, it will not only help promote urban planning, but by supporting and sustaining the CBO, the relationship will be mutually beneficial.

Such a CBO does not have to be elaborate, nor expensive: indeed, to be sustainable, it cannot be. Essentially, no more is needed initially than a point of contact from each community or locality that can be given a basic orientation and induction course that would enable them to become the liaison between the community and the city. This Community Facilitator, equipped with a few basic skills and guidance, can ensure that local development takes good urban planning practice into account. She can also act as the point of contact for other government and development agencies, raising and channelling resources to the community, and acting as the facilitator for various other community activities (see below). In the long run, the position could be sustained by collecting a fee from the community or from the development activity. However, in the short term, the urban planning authority would have to provide a stipend. Even a large number of Community Facilitators could be supported at a reasonable cost, and would save, both on staffing the Urban Authority and paying their way through a more effective planning practice.

In this way, the urban planning machinery feels threat of the development activities of the community and, in the absence of feedback and communication, is forced to adopt a hostile stance, to the detriment of both the city and the citizens. Even where there are appropriate CBO in existence, urban planning should reach out and co-opt them in its development and planning facilitation framework. Thus, it will not only help promote urban planning, but by supporting and sustaining the CBO, the relationship will be mutually beneficial.

A more effective approach, that does not artificially raise settlement costs, would be to designate environmentally sensitive areas – where settlements are liable to damage the environment or those areas where the environment is harmed for habitation – and aggressively protect these limited areas. For the rest, settlements should be allowed, but local Community Facilitators should help ensure that appropriate measures are instituted to minimise environmental damage. One of the advantages of individual development by poorer households is that they leave a smaller footprint and can more easily take on slopes and hill-sides.

Natural environment

While urban planning normally designates sites that are topographically appropriate for the location of communities, e.g. avoiding flood prone areas, steep slopes and hill-sides, environmental issues, contaminated areas, dump sites, access to green spaces, traffic and safety, it means that the poorer communities are excluded from them, especially if accompanied by supporting urban services and physical infrastructure (see below), since these areas are easier to build on, and require less protective or pre-emptive construction. Planning permission also increases land value by artificially limiting the available land area. The result is that poor households often locate “illegally” or in “informal settlements” not designated by urban planners.

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Infrastructure

A planned urban area allows for the easier availability of education, health, social services, water and sanitation infrastructure, roads and transport, markets; electricity, access of population and households to infrastructure. However, though planned for, the actual provision of infrastructure, and more so, the ability of poorer households to access it depends on the pricing structure – and this means both the price of connections and consumption, as well as on any conditions of eligibility such as legal tenure and title. On the other hand, the provision and management of urban services also depends on the ability of the organisations and institutions responsible to have the necessary resources and capability to do so.

The provision of infrastructure necessarily increases the price of land and may therefore place it beyond the reach of poorer households. An alternative may be to plan the infrastructure but not to install it until AFTER the land has been occupied and developed. This will protect the meagre resources of the poorer households till such time as they are better able to pay for infrastructure. During this period, a process of incremental provision of infrastructure could be considered that would provide lower levels of provision that can be extended and improved over time in response to demand.

This is likely to mean the provision of decentralised, local systems in the first instance. For example, pedestrian access ways rather than paved motorable roads; hand-pumps rather than piped water; pit latrines or small group septic tanks rather than reticulated sewerage systems. Community health workers rather than clinics; home-based schools and crèches rather than formal schools; community-based provision supported by the Ministry rather than Ministry-run institutions. In all this, the role of Community Facilitator will be critical to ensure the these systems are made available to the community, that they are upgraded and improved as demand dictates and that the “planned” spaces and access is not encroached upon or hijacked by powerful or ignorant individuals.
| **Cultural Environment** | Urban planning often tends to degrade and destroy the cultural environment, especially of the poor in two ways. First of all, directly, through planning and building rules and regulations that foist “imported” legislation, often under the misguided assumption that in doing so they are “educating” the people. The most obvious instance of this is in the planning and zoning regulations relating to plot development: in most cases the set-backs and plot coverage preclude the adoption of courtyard-based housing development. It also makes it difficult to ensure the levels and degrees of privacy that, for example, Muslim societies and cultures desire. The planning and layout of housing is determined by the dictates of infrastructure, particularly transport, usually based on the private ownership of automobiles. For the poor, this often creates unnecessary problems and making the retention and promotion of culture and community more difficult. Furthermore, the segregation and restriction of land uses, (for instance residential areas are not allowed to have commerce or production or other mixed uses) means that the cultural life of the poor in particular, is considerably affected. For many of the poor, ways of living (and housing) are an integral part of their livelihood strategies, and social and cultural networks run across and encompass living as well as commerce and production. To assist the poor, planning rules and regulations, regarding layout and land-use should support and strengthen the cultural environment. Secondly, indirectly, through the processes supported and justified by urban planning for the allocation of land, both in newly developed areas and when making land adjustments after “upgrading” urban areas, and that following the eviction and resettlement of communities. This is often done without due regard to communities, neighbourhoods and other networks and cultural links and associations. For example, rather than adopting “impartial” processes such as random allocation, it would be better to follow participatory processes that allow communities to voice their own preference in terms of who they would like to live close to. Wherever possible, ethnicity, religion and gender relationships and settlement patterns should be accommodated in urban planning or re-planning. On the other hand, this does not mean condoning the creation of ghettos or populations sequestered on the basis of culture, race or religion or even place of previous settlement. |
| **Political environment** | The greater impact is that of the political framework and political parties, and the access that people have towards voting and decision-making; feelings of insecurity / uncertainty at household and community level; informal controls through gangs/mafias’ etc; police harassment; other harassment from state or informal structures. On a more day-to-day level, it is the impact of rules, regulations and policies on households and community; access to identification documents, taxation (formal and informal), tenancy laws, regulations on ‘hawking and zoning that affects the political environment of the poor. From an urban planning point of view, introducing and ensuring transparency regarding rules and regulations can perhaps be the most positive action. In general, the fewer the rules and regulations the easier it is for the community. Wherever possible, creating frameworks, and more importantly, administering them should be done at the local community level. A simple device for ensuring transparency is to have any rules relating to allocation, use and development of land and housing written up and posted very visibly in each settlement they relate to. The local community should participate in the process, assisted by the Community Facilitator. |
| **Economic environment** | The economic status and standing of households is closely dependent on the overall economic environment, as evidenced by macro-economic trends, the urban economic base and activity mix, and employment and incomes extent of employ of living (incomes over) cost of living trends. These are further influenced by the policies and attitudes towards informal sector activity in general and micro finance regulations, frameworks and practices. Traditionally, urban planning has limited its role to designating areas for use by economic (productive and commercial) activities based primarily on environmental considerations. It can, in fact go further in assisting decision-makers to locate and develop economic activity by reducing the costs of location and establishment, by reducing infrastructure and running costs, and by reducing the reproductive and social costs of labour through cheaper and more accessible housing and social services. For the poor, the economic environment can be enhanced through support for the informal sector, by allowing mixed use, and providing access to land and infrastructure. |
| **Household Assets** (their nature and how they are used affects households' ability to recover from stresses and shocks) | A household’s human assets are based on its skills and entrepreneurial ability and can be improved through improving the level and access to education, ability to work, security of employment, income earner dependency ratio. While urban planning may be able to do little directly, it can help by ensuring that the processes by which urban development is carried out affords employment opportunities through the use of labour-intensive methods wherever possible. Moreover, negotiation skills, as well as management and basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, can be fostered through an extensive programme of participatory decision-making through community-based processes and institutions. The Community Facilitator can also help invite, introduce and initiate Government and NGO literacy and skill-enhancement programmes into the community. |
| **Human** | The way in which a locality is planned and laid out can have a significant impact on fostering and enhancing social interaction, and increasing community cohesion and solidarity and exchange. For example, the simple grid-iron may be efficient in land-use or infrastructure provision, but is less effective in social intercourse which helps improve the social assets of individual households. The Community Facilitator should also be trained and assisted to encourage and increase membership in community groups; build upon the nature of interactions with other households, and generally minimise the level of social isolation, especially of the poorer households. |
Urban Planning can help most by making it easier to own and improve physical assets of the household such as land and housing. This can be done by adopting a more incremental approach towards the provision of infrastructure, accepting more realistic standards of plot size and facilities and an efficient use of land. Allowing mix-use will both make it easier to develop income-generating activities, and reduce the costs of travel and transport. Allowing and encouraging urban agriculture, the planting of wood-lots and other such practices are both environmentally friendly and economically beneficial, and can be greatly facilitated by more imaginative urban planning, layout and land use.

The Community Facilitator can assist in building up the economic assets through the encouragement and establishment of community-based savings and rotating-credit schemes, in providing access to information and markets, reducing costs by community and cooperative procurement of materials and sale of products.

The house, as a structure and as a space for carrying out activities, is, of course, a major economic asset. Anything that can be done to enable households to improve and consolidate their homes will have a major direct impact on livelihood strategies. The quality of the house and its structure may also be linked to economic activities, and improvements to the house should be seen in the same light as investment and improvements to the workplace. For instance, a cement floor, a weatherproof interior, running water and electricity etc can directly improve working conditions and enhance production possibilities and capacities.

Livelihood strategies (production, processing, exchange and income generating activities)

The measures suggested above for urban planning will allow for more effective and robust livelihood strategies. Households will be better able to develop multiple strategies for income earning, through the participation of more members of the households in a more communal and community-supported environment. Through a reduction in the costs of housing, transport and infrastructure and improved access to urban services and assisted by the Community Facilitator, costs of living could be reduced.

However, for many households, minimising expenditure on housing is part of their livelihood strategy. In particular, households that have recently moved to an urban area, and those that are in transition from a rural to urban status (and there are many that continue their rural links with an intention to return often lasting a lifetime) – these households do not want to spend anything on improving their housing condition, and would benefit from a secure and assured rental housing rather than ownership. Therefore, “overcrowding” and poor or shared housing is an important component of livelihood strategies and should be taken into account before proposing house ownership or improvements.

Area level

Better planned and located living areas, with strategies for protecting the environment and a reduction in environmental hazards will reduce the vulnerability of households to external, area-wide hazards and events. With better networking, and greater integration with the urban services including urban management and political framework, the community will be better prepared to act and to be supported in times of need than is usually the case with poorer communities, who are often seen to be illegal and therefore not deserving of assistance and support from the urban administration.

Household level

The means of support and assistance suggested above not only help develop multiple and more robust income sources but also reduce costs and build and develop local and community networks in helping individual households withstand and counter shocks and stresses affected them. Developing skills for savings and access to credit will help them to recover and rebuild quicker after any disaster or calamity.

Livelihood Outcomes

The overall outcome of these strategies and policies would be better, more acceptable and sustainable on levels and types of shelter, food, nutrition, health, water, education, community participation, and personal safety than is generally the case in communities where urban planning and management does not take livelihoods and livelihood strategies into consideration.
### Table 1: Applying an Assets / Vulnerability Framework to Urban Governance and Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital</th>
<th>Governance Actions Which May Enhance Assets of the Poor</th>
<th>Governance Actions Which May Increase Vulnerability of the Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>Ensuring access to land which is affordable by the poor and with sufficiently secure tenure, both for residential use and for economic activities.</td>
<td>Zoning regulations and development standards which prevent access by the poor. Minimum plot size regulations and construction standards which are unattainable by the poor. Forced relocation and clearance of informal housing areas. Upgrading projects which raise service levels and security to the point where it becomes attractive to higher income groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effective environmental controls on water and air pollution and waste disposal.</td>
<td>Failing to control pollution and waste disposal “upstream” of where the poor live. “Rent-seeking” by enforcement agencies on activities in poor areas such as waste sorting, pollution from economic and domestic activities. Restrictions on urban agriculture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human</td>
<td>Universal, quality (primary) education. Ensuring equal provision for girls. Involving parents in the management of schools. Skills training related to real skills needs of the poor. Accessible health care Food/nutrition support programmes. Public works programmes that absorb surplus labour (&amp; increase skills)</td>
<td>Imposing fees (official and unofficial) for primary education. Imposing fees (official and unofficial) for primary health care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Providing access to suitable housing finance (eg community mortgage) Providing access to micro credit for informal businesses. Providing market facilities in suitable locations, with provision for small, informal sector businesses.</td>
<td>Refusing to recognise informal housing areas or resolving tenure insecurities. Regulatory controls on informal sector trading. Costly and cumbersome licensing requirements for traders. Harassment of informal sector traders. Local taxes which impinge on the poor. Charges for services that are not related to inability to pay. Unofficial charges and demands for bribes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Providing access to safe, reliable water supplies, including community provision (e.g. communal taps). Providing access to safe sanitation (including community provision). Providing proper systems of waste disposal (including community provision). Providing all-weather pedestrian access. Providing vehicle access to within reach of areas where the poor live. Providing drainage systems to prevent flooding. Providing public space for economic and social activities in informal housing areas. Ensuring safe and reliable public transport. Ensuring availability of electricity supplies</td>
<td>Unsafe water that requires boiling, and unreliable supplies which require storage, queuing, collection at night. Enforcement action against illegal connections. Inadequate sanitation that creates environmental hazards and increases vulnerability of women. Inadequate waste disposal that creates environmental hazards. Privatisation that results in poor areas being excluded. Regulation of waste collection/sorting/recycling that reduces income earning opportunities for the poor and results in “rent-seeking” by enforcers. Providing very high levels of vehicle access that make areas attractive to higher income groups. Displacement of poor households as a result of upgrading. “Rent-seeking” by traffic police which increase costs of public transport without improving safety. Enforcement action against illegal connections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Helping to build community organisations among the poor. Ensuring safety / security / freedom from fear of crime in poor areas.</td>
<td>Creating dependence on external agents. Forced relocation (or relocation caused by pressure from higher income groups) which destroys informal networks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>Accessible, ward-based councillors who have influence. Mechanisms to make decision-making and resource allocation more accountable and transparent. Mechanisms for participation. Responsive systems. Supporting collective action by the poor and enabling them to make demands.</td>
<td>Dependent relations with local politicians. Service / resource providers not subject to democratic accountability. Exclusion of certain groups. Co-option of leadership of community organisations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shelter and Poverty Reduction

The provision and improvement of shelter can impact on urban poverty reduction through a variety of ways, some of which are indicated below. However, while considering these, it is important to keep in mind that in most cases, there is likely to be a corresponding loss of earning or status to those supplying and supporting these services currently. However, such losses are likely to be both less than the possible gains and are more likely to benefit the city at large by being more transparent and more widely available. Indeed, in some cases and for some services, the households themselves may end up having to spend more than at present, but in the longer term, and overall, there should be net benefits for all households.

Reducing vulnerability and increasing social capital for Households

Households can considerably improve their economic situation by increasing incomes and/or reducing (non-discretionary) expenditure. For the poorer households, and especially those close to the threshold of poverty, it is important to ensure that they are able to prevent themselves from slipping back, especially at times of crisis. This requires reducing their vulnerability, through an increase in their social capital, for instance.

Table 2: Shelter and Poverty Reduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Reduction of living costs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The costs of housing are an important component of household expenditures, and may make up as much as 30% of the total. Therefore any reduction in the costs of housing is an important objective. The costs of &quot;housing&quot; include all payments for the house itself (such as rent) but also for repairs and maintenance as well as land and other user charges. By Reducing housing costs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of Rent</td>
<td>Where households are paying rents that are higher than the cost of housing itself, an obvious strategy would be to provide easy and affordable access to house ownership, and to facilitate the process of house purchase. It may be that lower income households, especially those who are recent urban migrants, are less interested in home-ownership than in lowering their costs of housing. For them, rental housing may be a preferred option, and a programme of providing rental housing, perhaps by the municipality or by the community or an NGO may provide better housing at a lower cost than they are currently paying. It is not merely the monetary cost of the rent that needs to be considered but also the level of security and social costs that may be associated with current rental housing that would have to be lowered. An examination of these, and the design of appropriate intervention if required, would help increase security (see below).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of Services</td>
<td>Although most households manage to access infrastructure and services, the cost of doing so is higher if these are not through the municipality or part of the formal urban system. Thus, for example, where there is no piped water, it must be drawn from shallow wells or collected from surface water sources. While there may be no charge, there is a cost in terms of time and effort, and of course both the quality and the quantity is likely to be well below desirable levels. In other cases, suppliers may provide water using carts and barrels, at a cost per litre that is higher than that charged from those connected to the water mains. Apart from the fact of not having suitable infrastructure, households may not have access to whatever is available because of the status of their housing. Similarly, the choice of services, such as cooking fuel, may also be dictated by the nature of the construction of the house. These may well be a function of designation of land use rather than costs or affordability. If this is the case, then there is a need to investigate how the status could be modified to allow better services and infrastructure to be provided and thereby reduce costs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of Health</td>
<td>The quality of housing has a direct bearing on the health of individuals, both as regards the ability to temperate the affects of weather (keeping out the cold and rain, or letting in the sun), but also raising damp (through floors and walls) and dust on respiratory ailments, and finally in terms of being able to withstand more severe calamities that can be physically damaging or indeed fatal, such as floods or earthquakes. There is also the impact of water and sanitation on water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea and other chronic intestinal disorders. Unregistered, illegal or inaccessible housing areas may not only be unhealthy but they may also have reduced or no access to preventative and curative health facilities, except perhaps those provided by self-styled practitioners and/or at high costs. They may also be left out of health and education and other informative, inoculation and protective campaigns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of Transport</td>
<td>The location of housing has obvious transport costs associated with it, but there may be additional costs imposed by the quality of roads and access. Not only with the distance travelled be increased if there are no river or railway crossing facilities, but transporters may refuse to serve areas with poor and un-surfaced roads, or impose a surcharge. Where the household is engaged in home-based income generation activities, the additional costs imposed by poor roads and expensive transports may be even more telling. Strategies that improve the level and quality of services and infrastructure facilities and/or improve the access of poor households to such services have the added impact of reducing expenditure and thereby increasing discretionary incomes, as well as the benefit from the service-provision itself.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2. Increasing Income Options

As well as reducing expenditure, housing can help increase both the range of income-earning possibilities and extend the range and capacity of households to engage in the activities they wish to pursue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Increasing activities</th>
<th>By Increasing output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having a house, especially if it is formally recognised and registered as such, opens up the possibility of a number of income generating activities that would be difficult if not impossible otherwise. The first of these possibilities is to use part of the house for renting. The extent and whether this is possible is of course a function of the house and its design as well as its location and whether there is a demand for rental accommodation. In many cases, it is the poorer households that need the additional income from renting, but may lack the space or the capital to provide it. Shelter-loans programme usually prohibit borrowing for this purpose, and certainly do not allow such income to be taken into account in calculating affordability. In practice, households traditionally use renting as a means of helping to finance their housing construction or improvement costs. There are other similar possibilities to use part of the space of the house for small-scale manufacturing, assembling, storage, commercial or selling activities. Some of these activities, particularly those that require electricity or water supply, or work surfaces, only become possible through access to housing. Provided that any negative impact of these activities, such as pollution, traffic and any additional infrastructure or utility needs are taken into account, this is generally to be encouraged and housing finance an other strategies should incorporate such activity in their lending and development programmes.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Many of those activities that can be carried out in informal housing or without proper services, are likely to be undertaken at a higher level. More and cleaner water, and especially having an authorised electricity connection and adequate supply can not only expand the scale of activities, but also lengthen the “working day” and/or provide for more flexible inputs. In each case, the ability to do this allows incomes more than an is likely to increase incomes that may be incurred. Strategies for determining levels and quantities of infrastructure should therefore take economic activity, and indeed potential activities into account when planning and providing services. Any cost-recovery and scale of user-charges should equally take advantage of the opportunities offered by these expanded income-generating activities.</td>
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### 3. Increasing household security

The links between increased security of tenure and housing improvements have been quite well documented. However, there are a variety of ways in which security of tenure can and should be provided, and there are also differences in perceived, de facto and legal security of tenure that need to be taken into account. It is not merely that security of tenure provides collateral for borrowing or an incentive for investing in housing improvements. Increased security of tenure also goes a long way in assuring and ensuring security as such for the household, and is therefore an important component for reducing vulnerability, especially for the poor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Protecting investment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As suggested above, providing an increased level of security of tenure reduces vulnerability, primarily from what is often arbitrary action (or at least perceived as such) by the government or other actors.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From Government</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Many households build their houses, their lives and livelihoods in locations that are not sanctioned for housing. However, it is not always apparent to the households that there are any “invisible” and therefore unfathomable reasons for barring housing development on such locations. In many cases, the decision to declare an area out of bounds for housing development is indeed arbitrary – in as much as there may have been other equally tenable uses for it, including housing, especially at the outset. In other cases, the reasons for barring housing may be developmental, environmental or geophysical. Just as once-open choices become constrained for development by what happens on surrounding parcels of land (for example once some polluting industry has been built, it is no longer as easy to revert the decision on land use from industry to housing), so people who have been allowed to settle on land and build houses find it difficult to understand why they are being asked to move some years later. Why can’t they continue to live by the railroad or the river? The threat of eviction is increased where governments are known to make decisions that appear arbitrary or contradictory (having previously condoned if not supported the settlement). In such cases, households are unlikely to make more than the minimal investments in their housing. The less they invest the less they are risking, and the higher the perceived risk or insecurity, the greater the need to minimise exposure. The poor quality of housing may therefore reflect neither poverty nor capability or capacity, but may be a sensible and considered response to the level of insecurity. Obtaining urban services, receipts or any other documentary or concrete evidence of the government’s recognition of the settlement can be powerful aids in reducing insecurity, often as if not more important than tenure rights or actual ownership. After all, most households are not seeking ownership or commodification of the land they are occupying. The confirmation of the entitlement of the settlement to be where it is, is enough to reduce insecurity and an incentive for further and additional investments and therefore improvements in the shelter and living conditions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From other actors</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As with government and the legal machinery, the degree of security can also be affected by other, often more immediate sources and actors, both formal and informal. In conditions of insecurity that may be brought about by a fear for physical safety from hostile neighbours or a hostile environment, households are unlikely to make substantial investments. A challenge to the government and the legal machinery can do to reduce the level of safety and security will encourage an increase in housing investment and therefore lead to an improvement in housing and living conditions.</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consolidating networks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An important way for households, particularly those at the lower-income end, is to establish and develop networks, both amongst themselves, but also to other, more established and settled individuals and institutions. These networks not only provide advice and information but can also offer a degree of protection from eviction and other arbitrary action or intervention. The longer a community has been established, the stronger and more extensive these networks can be. By improving shelter and security and confirming the entitlement to settlement, not only is the security improved and incentive to invest increased, but it becomes possible to then extend to other spheres, such as employment and income generation and other areas important for increasing the level of security of households.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Improving social status

Providing that any negative impact of these activities, such as pollution, traffic and any additional infrastructure or utility needs are taken into account, this is generally to be encouraged and housing finance an other strategies should incorporate such activity in their lending and development programmes.
The social status of households is reflected to an extent in both the location of their house and their entitlement to be there. Not having a permanent or recognised address makes it difficult to access services and exercise many of those rights available to "settled" or "established" citizens. The same de jure or de facto prejudice or stigma may apply to those with a known address in what is known to be an illegal or unrecognised settlement. The entitlement to settle and the recognition and incorporation of a settlement and the consequent "rights of citizenship" help improve the social status and standing of households that live there, as well as entitling them to become eligible for those rights available to other residents.

**Political integration**

The provision of the right or entitlement of the settlement, the reduction of insecurity and the formal incorporation of the settlement into the urban area also confers or increases the right to participate in the urban political processes. These then enable the residents to have a greater say in the affairs of the city and to make a greater contribution in its future and development. The conferment of settlement rights and political integration is an interactive, two-way process that can help the city better understand and respond to the needs and demands of its citizens as well as for the citizens to exercise their right to monitor and judge the performance of the municipality and the politicians.

**Vulnerability Insurance**

Especially for the near poor, housing acts as a means of reducing vulnerability by providing a relatively simple means for generating additional income when required, either by renting out part of the house or land, or by literally "guaranteeing a roof" over one's head. Being able to remain housed also allows households to more easily hide temporary and short term drops in income, thereby delaying or deferring precipitate action by creditors, which would then push them further into poverty, perhaps to a point more difficult, even impossible for them to climb back from. Those households that do not own their own house or are liable to be evicted, should they be unable to pay the rent or repayment, have an additional threat in that they could potentially lose their house. Indeed, many households in Kediri who had or wanted to build an additional room to rent out, saw renting more as an additional form of insurance against bad times than as a necessary additional income during normal times.

**Collateral, equity**

Land and buildings that are legally recognised and have legal title have formed the basis of much of the collateral and security required by conventional housing finance and mortgage lending programmes. However, even without formal title, land with de facto use rights can also be used to provide collateral and security for borrowing. In looking at the rate and security position of a household can be improved through improved security of tenure, the real key lies in the borrowing terms and conditions of the available financing options. In the case of Indonesia, and especially for low-income households, the supposed security provided by formal tenure and title may be notional in the absence of appropriate financing mechanisms. The main problem here is the gap between affordable capital and acceptable housing: the former is far below that which the latter costs. Until such time as notions of acceptable housing change, for both lenders and borrowers, the ability to provide collateral and security for housing finance through secure tenure and formal tenure or ownership will remain a theoretical benefit.

**4. Improving financial status**

Regardless of formal or conventional financial mechanisms or tenure and titles, the additional security offered by increased security through formal recognition of entitlement to use the land for housing, is serving, and will continue to serve, as a major means for improving the financial status of households.

**Through Borrowing ability**

Having a house that is not under threat of demolition or relocation provides considerable security, which can be turned to advantage when seeking loans. It is not only the financial "value" of the land or building acting as collateral, but rather the added security and stability that provides some guarantee of the continued availability and accessibility of the borrower that acts as surety for the lender.

**Through Saving incentives**

Having greater security of tenure, or reduced risk of eviction or relocation directly reduces the exposure to risk faced by households making investments in housing and related infrastructure or equipment, and also makes it possible to take a longer-term look at development and improvements. It is this security that provides an incentive to borrow, or to undertake targeted savings aimed at meeting future needs through a deliberate and planned strategy of asset accumulation. These savings incentives are essential for ensuring a sustainable development, improvement or upgrading process.

### Table 3: Tools used for participatory livelihoods assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Livelihood Component</th>
<th>Themes for discussion and analysis</th>
<th>Principal tool</th>
<th>Tools for triangulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Livelihood Context</strong></td>
<td>Organizations</td>
<td>Presence and importance of community level institutions; interaction of population with external organizations; control of resources by organizations; formal versus informal institutions and organizations, e.g. Crime rings, gangs, slum lords</td>
<td>Venn diagram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natural environment</td>
<td>Location of community with respect to topography – e.g. flood prone areas; slopes and hill sides; environmental issues: contaminated areas, dump sites; access to green space; traffic and safety</td>
<td>Neighbourhood mapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>Availability of education, health, social services; water and sanitation infrastructure, roads and transport, markets; electricity, access of population and households to infrastructure</td>
<td>Neighbourhood mapping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural Environment</td>
<td>Ethnicity; religion and gender; urbanisation patterns – did villages move ‘en masse’ to a specific neighbourhood, are there ethnic ‘ghettos,’ are there ‘indigenous’ people (villages swallowed by the city)</td>
<td>Historical profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political environment</td>
<td>Political parties; access to voting; feelings of insecurity / uncertainty at household and community level; informal controls through gangs/mafias etc; police harassment; other harassment by state or informal structures, Impact of rules, regulations and policies on households and communities; access to identification documents; taxation (formal and informal); tenancy laws; regulations on ‘hawking;’ influence of zoning</td>
<td>Key informant interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Household Assets (their nature and how they are used affects households’ ability to recover from stresses and shocks)</td>
<td>Economic environment</td>
<td>Macro-economic trends; urban economic base and activity mix; employment and cost of living (inflation) trends; policies and attitudes towards informal sector activity; micro finance regulations, frameworks and practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human</td>
<td>Skills; entrepreneurial ability; education level; ability to work; security of employment; income earner dependency ratio</td>
<td>Household interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Exchanges of goods and services; assistance to or from extended family networks in rural areas, other urban areas or overseas; membership in community groups; nature of interactions with other households; level of social isolation</td>
<td>Household interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economic (includes physical and financial)</td>
<td>Economic environment</td>
<td>Land; home ownership; transport; equipment; shops; market stalls; household water and sanitation facilities; savings; salary; money from income generating activities; remittances; access to credit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Livelihood strategies (production, processing, exchange and income generating activities)</td>
<td>Type of activities undertaken by each household member; level of contribution to household economy; access to employment; income-generating activities; access to credit; diversification vs. dependence on single earner; flows of money, people and goods from rural to urban areas.</td>
<td>Household interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nature of shocks and stresses and responses</td>
<td>Area level</td>
<td>Occurrence, intensity and duration of flooding, such as earthquakes, war, riots, strikes, gangs, police harassment; increased levels of crime, power cuts. Nature and origin of neighbourhood associations; activities; external assistance and relief activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Household level</td>
<td>Nature of impact of external shocks on household; loss of assets due to shock; unemployment; illness; imprisonment; personal security. Coping mechanisms, such as diversification of livelihood strategies; sale of assets; migration, etc.</td>
<td>Household interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Livelihood Outcomes</td>
<td>Shelter, food, nutrition, health, water, education, community participation, personal safety</td>
<td>Household interviews</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Sanderson and Westley, 2000 in Arjan de Haan et al, *Methods for understanding urban poverty and livelihoods*
WHAT IS THE USE OF A MASTER PLAN FOR KABUL?

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The distance between the “planned city” and the “real city” has always been huge all through the twentieth century in Kabul. The city has grown all over the large plain around the town centre. The bare hills have been covered with buildings. The old town, with its mud and wood houses, has partly subsisted. Different plans at different times have ignored this reality, which was that of uncontrolled development, lack of sanitation and infrastructures. Different types of urban sectors, ignoring each other, have grown side by side on the same territory: the neighbourhoods of the wealthy people, the “Microrayon” housing estates from the Soviet period, the administrative districts around the Royal Palace, the bazaars. The different Master Plans, in the 1960s and 1970s, have just been ideological images, with little implementation on the ground. It was said to us that only 12% of the 1978 Master Plan had been really built up to 2003.

All these plans lacked what is essential behind a “nice image” to insure its feasibility: a political continuity, a wealthy public finance system, a detailed planning (infrastructure, transportation, sanitation, public services), and a fixed program for implementation stages. After the Soviet occupation of the country in 1979, the war against the occupant, the following conflicts between the different political clans, and, finally, in 1996 the Taliban’s occupation of Kabul, all this resulted in the destruction of 60% of the town (1). But not only the physical and social destruction, the populations leaving Kabul and Afghanistan for refugee camps, but also the intellectual destruction took place. Most of the educated people left, or those who remained didn’t have any chance to update their knowledge or education. The country was cut off from the outside world, and it is during this period of time, from the 1970s to 2000, that the views about urban planning, urban development, environmental management, changed more in the world. Ideas changed with the development of new concepts as those of sustainable development, ecological planning, and governance. The world changed. With the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, a unique ideological and economic system based on capitalism spread all over.

In front of the huge urban developments faced by cities in the South, new models were developed in the field of infrastructure improvement, user participation, and public health or education projects.

In Kabul today, there is an urgent need to use all this worldwide experience and knowledge in order to find quick and cheap solutions for the improvement of the life of the inhabitants.
It is urgent to repair what can be repaired— and this, in fact, has already been done by the inhabitants in the sectors of the town where buildings suffered minor destructions.

The origins of town planning

Urban planning in Kabul goes back to the beginning of the twentieth century. Under the rule of Amanullah Khan (1919-29), founder of the independent kingdom of Afghanistan (1926), modern institutions started to appear. Roads were built, electricity installed. At the beginning of the 1920s, a project for a new town was developed in Dar’ul-aman, eight kilometres south-east from the old one. The Parliament Palace was the centre of the setting with neighbourhoods of villas and palaces, surrounded by neo-classical colonnades. Khan also created public parks, swimming pools and race tracks. A trolley bus line connected the two towns (\(^2\)). Today this part of Kabul has been totally destroyed by the war, and the public bus stop, outside the old town has been shattered. The skeleton of the Parliament building is the only remnant, looking like the Reichstag at the end of the Second World War which the Germans plan to restore.

In the 1930s, a plan for developing the town was combined with steps for the rehabilitation of the old town, which was already considered to be unhealthy. After 1935, the new town of Sahr-i-Nawa, with its parks, was built on the north-east of the Royal Palace. It was to become a privileged residential area for the upper classes and expatriates. In 1942, the district of Karta-ye-Cahar was constructed on the western border of the town, between the road to Dar-ul-aman and the University. This district was also inhabited by the upper class and the foreigners till the 1960s. Starting in 1948 and during the 1950s, many new neighbourhoods were built in the western, eastern and northern parts of the town. The usual pattern was a one family house, with a garden, surrounded by a brick wall. Thus the population density remained very low, the houses occupying a large part of an urbanized territory.

According to Amanullah Khan’s Constitution (1921-23), the - baladiye - was in charge of municipal affairs (\(^3\)). British military expeditions and internal political conflicts, which eventually put an end to Amanullah Khan’s reign, stopped the process of urban planning. It is only in 1964, with the reign of Zaher Shah, that the word “sharwali”, meaning municipal council in Pashto, was introduced in the new Constitution and replaced the word “baladiye”.

The subsistence of the municipal council was confirmed in the 1964 Constitution. The laws and decrees specify the nature of the baladiye’s skills, powers and duties towards the town’s inhabitants. The chief of the Municipality, the “shorwal”, is elected through a direct secrecy vote. The recognition of the “shorwali” in 1964 gave an institutional legitimacy to the urban development projects, and thus paved the way for the enlargement of Master Plans for Kabul and other cities in the country.

During the rule of Muhammad Zahir Shah (1933-73), the municipal administration was further developed. A new building legislation was voted and a Control of Buildings Office created (\(^4\)). During the 1930s, two storey shop buildings on both sides of Kabul River were erected. During the 1940s and 50s, a lot of new developments took place: cinemas, the University (\(^5\)) , a hospital for women, Polikhisti Street (1948), Jade Maiwand Boulevard (1949) extending through the old town, with four storey buildings on both sides, shopping centres, restaurants and a 1200 seats cinema. In 1962, Kabul was the biggest town in the country, with 380 000 inhabitants and covering a territory of 6840 ha.
The new districts under construction in 1979—just before the USSR invasion—were:

- «Khayrkhanā», to the north-west, near the road to Charikar, for the low and middle classes and for those who had been evicted from the old town. Some 30,000 people lived in this district in 1976. It was not connected to the town: no transportation, no water supply.

- «Nur Mohammad Sah Mina», to the east of the old town, on the road to Lataband, for the employees of the Municipality and the Government.

- «Nadir Shah Mina», or Microrayon, a district of modern blocks with flats to the north-east of the old town. This was the first district with blocks of flats in Kabul. In 1974, 55 blocks comprising 2000 flats for 10,000 inhabitants were built. The residents were Government employees. In 1975, another project to the north of Microrayon foresaw the construction of 14 blocks with 4 storeys and 536 flats.

- «Wazir Akbar Khan Mina», a district of modern bungalows and villas, built in the 1970s on the ground of the old airport to the north of the old Royal Palace and to the east of Sahr-i-Naw. It was inhabited by foreigners and upper social classes.


Next to these new developments administered by the municipal authorities, uncontrolled settlements arose to the west of the town (Naw-Abad-i Pul-i Sukhta and Qala-i Sada), including existing villages, and covering the slopes of the hills “Ser Darwaza” and “Asmai”.

The Master Plan

Mohammed Daoud (1908–78), a King’s cousin, was nominated Prime Minister in 1953. He developed a program for economic modernization with the help of the USSR. The first five year-plan, inspired by Kemalist Turkey, was announced on September 22, 1956.

Between 1950 and 1971, foreign aid from not only the USA and USSR, but also Europe, was provided mainly for the building of infrastructures, irrigation and educational programmes. The only urban project was Nadir Shah Mina, or Microrayon, funded by the USSR (11.1 million US Dollars). This was a district with 60 blocks of flats, a cinema, a mosque, a kindergarten, a restaurant and a shopping centre (in)

At the beginning of the 1960s, the Government and the Municipality, decided to develop a means of controlling the urban development. The first Master Plan was prepared in 1962 by Afghan experts, with the help of USSR councillors. The project was planned for a city of 800,000 inhabitants, covering 23,780 ha, and over a period of 25 years (c). This plan is the absolute replica of those Master Plan produced during the 1960s in different European cities. It is very similar to the Geneva Master Plans of 1965: independent districts surrounded by motorways and fly-over, parks in the centre, the formal zoning dividing the territory between residential and industrial areas (d). It is also very similar to Master Plans developed by the famous modern architect Le Corbusier. His “Neighborhood Units” planned for Chandigarh, the new capital of Punjab, and other projects, present the same image: a primary network of roads surrounding an alveolar district, with green areas and pedestrian paths through its centre, the buildings being located on the perimeter.

In the second half of the 1960s, the main principles of the plan rapidly appeared to be quite unrealistic. As the plan was just an “image”, no implementation mechanisms were to accompany it. No enforcement of the measures planned by it took place. The hills, which in the
Master Plan should have been used for public parks, were covered by uncontrolled settlements with their courtyards houses.

A second Master Plan was prepared in 1970 with the help of USSR experts and the UNESCO. It covered 29,900 ha for a population of 1.4 million in 1995. The traditional courtyard houses were definitely replaced by blocks of flats. The Master Plan foresaw 10 to 15 per cent buildings with nine floors or more, 65 to 70 per cent buildings with four to five storeys, 20 to 25 per cent buildings with two to three storeys. Only 15 per cent of the existing town was kept with its one family two-storey houses. In the 1971 Master Plan, the town was divided into four main sectors (N-W, N-E, S-E, S-W), those were again divided into sub-sectors, and these divided into neighborhood units. Each sub-sector comprised a central area for services, with shops, restaurants, hotels, cinemas, a mosque, a theatre, a concert hall, banks, offices and a public park, as well as an industrial area. Each neighborhood unit had a small centre with a kindergarten, shops and services, schools and a mosque.

In 1974-75, USSR experts came to Kabul to discuss the future of the Master Plan and to prepare detailed plans for some urban sectors. This new plan was to be designed for a period of 25 years, i.e. until 1995. It was divided into two development periods: 1964-89 and 1970-95. At the end of the first period, the planned population would have amounted to 800,000 inhabitants. The plan proposed the complete destruction of the old town, where offices and shops and housing towers would replace the existing set-up.

A third, and ultimate, Master Plan was approved in 1978. It covered a surface of 32,330 ha, for one million people. The Municipal Council was responsible for the implementation of the plan with the help of different ministers. Immediately after its approval, it became obsolete due to the unplanned and wild urbanization implemented on the orders and to the benefit of the powerful and rich representing the political regime. In 2002, an estimated 20 per cent of this plan had been achieved.

Looking at the remaining prints of the different Master Plans, and especially the projects for sectorial plans or district plans, one feels somehow uneasy. These drawings are just as utopian as the trend prevailing in most European cities after the Second World War, when new towns were developed everywhere in order to solve urban problems. These residential developments were based on heavy industrial prefabrication and the distance between buildings based on the “crane distance”. The feasibility of these drawings raises different questions, since an industry of prefabricated buildings, cement plants, transportation trucks, investment opportunities or public funding, demands for modern dwelling did probably not exist in Afghanistan at the time. We must therefore ask ourselves for whom and why such drawings were developed. They evidently represent a dream for modernity, a desire to show that Afghanistan is as modern and industrially developed as its neighbors, the USSR or European countries. The model behind these drawings is based on Moscow with its huge residential suburbs, seen in the propaganda movies of the Soviet regime till the 1980s and 1990s, similar also to the residential suburbs in the French towns developed in the 1960s.

The utopian aspect of the drawings is furthermore evidenced by those shown to us by the technicians of the Municipality of Charikar. This small agricultural town, with some ten thousands inhabitants, had ambitions to become a metropolis: condominium towers, motorway, low density one family houses, were planned for the western part of the old town. But the site is all hills, ravines, gorges. The relief would not have permitted to construct even a tenth of the initial plan.
Through the presentation of these drawings or blue prints, which constitute relics of « modernity », one realizes the gap to be filled in the mentalities. Twenty five years, one generation, have passed. The war against the Soviet army, and later between rival mujahiddin factions, and finally under the Taliban regime, has not only physically, but also mentally destroyed the town. During this long period of destructions, nobody found time nor energy to think about the future, about town planning or reconstruction. Intellectuals, engineers, architects, technicians had mostly left for other countries. The whole debate about social town planning on a human scale, sustainable and ecological development, which has been taking place in the West since the middle of the 1970s, was impossible in Kabul. Therefore, we are now on ground zero: dreaming about modernity, following the Soviet model of 1978, before the war. The situation implies a mental recovery after this period of unrest and the necessity to envisage the future of Kabul in a globalized world.

The Situation in the Beginning of the Twenty First Century.

In 1999, a special law on Municipality Administration was passed. Article 7 empowers provincial administrative centres, districts or human settlements of more than five thousand inhabitants, to create a municipality and to prepare a Master Plan. The Municipality of Kabul is under direct control of the Central Government, other municipalities depend on the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Municipalities may prepare their Master Plan and submit it to the Government for ratification. The approval is based on the Government assumption that municipalities have the capacity to implement the proposed plan. Municipalities may sign contracts for the carrying out of designs and constructions, with approval of the Government (11).

The Kabul Municipality constantly refers to the 1978’s Master Plan. This line is a little simplistic with regard to the municipality’s real power towards the Central Government. This is even more so since President Karzai issued a decree in autumn 2002, stripping the municipality of its power to set up a Master Plan, which is now in the hands of the Ministry for Urban Development and Reconstruction, the technical staff of the municipality having been transferred to the Minister.

Pressured by private investors, the municipality began to prepare “construction plans” for some districts destroyed by war (12). Condominium towers were supposed to replace informal and uncontrolled settlements. The recent revival of economic activities has provided arguments to those who hope that Kabul will become the economic hub for a new nation and the “Dubai of the East” (13) in the twenty-first century. In September 2003, the municipality intended to develop four new towns, with 250 000 inhabitants each, around the existing city. They also planned to build 100 000 new houses in the town centre to replace the destroyed districts (14). The Minister for Urban Development and Reconstruction encouraged another project, the “Kabul Satellite City Construction”, thirty kilometers from the city centre, submitted by the US Trade and Development Agency (15).

Some municipality departments already sold public ground to investors, e.g. the trucks parking belonging to the Public Works Department. At the same time, some people in charge of different ministries want to take advantage of this opportunity and are therefore pushing private investor’s projects (16). The police director, for example, had just been dismissed after a scandal, because he had ordered his guards to demolish houses and expropriate their inhabitants, so as to release the land for his minister (17).

This shows what the Master Plan means to those who want to control it: a fantastic instrument
for power, and a potential for investments. This is why the Minister for Urban Development and Reconstruction is attempting to reorganize the entire set-up, at the same time pushing his own projects. According to the Deputy Minister (18), the Government should abandon the Master Plan which is not the right instrument anymore. It should put forward a Kabul Development Plan or a Strategic Plan, recommending actions according to the urgency of the situation, e.g. rehousing the refugees before the winter. First, some kind of ownership certificate should be delivered for the buildings in informal districts, built since 1978. This would encourage private investment by the inhabitants or small enterprises, so as to reconstruct the destroyed urban sectors and to repair the buildings whenever feasible. This initiative would permit to rehouse most of the inhabitants and refugees within a short period of time (19).

A survey submitted by the municipality shows that for the entire town, 62,360 houses have been totally or partially destroyed (10,977 buildings in the formal districts and 51,383 buildings in the informal districts). A census made in July 1999 and published in January 2000 indicates that the population in the town amounted to 1,781,012 inhabitants, with a medium size of 6.42 people per family. 277,202 families were living in 120,539 houses (2.3 families per house). 48.6 per cent of the houses (58,614) were located in informal districts (20).

According to the municipality, the number of houses needed, to offer a dwelling to those families sharing their house with others, exceeded the number of destroyed houses by fifteen per cent. Therefore the actual need is for 71,714 new houses, to which some 75,000 houses must be added for the new population wanting to settle in Kabul. It is estimated that 68 per cent of the people would like to return to their original informal district, 15 per cent would like to go back to their original formal district, and 17 per cent would want to seek a new location (21).

The Multiplicity of Actors and Strategies

When analyzing the interviews made during our visit and the numerous reports and publications by International Organizations, we noticed a complete lack of coordination between the different projects, as well as between the various actors.

A. The Minister for Urban Development and Reconstruction has developed a plan for 2003-05. It is divided into four sub-programs: town planning and management, housing, infrastructure and services, rebuilding of government buildings. The sub-program for town planning is directed by four Afghan town planners, returnees from abroad, made available by the CIM, the World Bank, the CIDA and the IOM. Strategic plans have been developed for four towns. Detailed plans are under preparation for some strategic sectors of Kabul. The project for a new town in the north of Kabul is completed and the proposal has been submitted to donors for approval. The Minister has received help from the Italian Government for the training of the technical staffs. The sub-program for urban planning still needs funding (22).

With regard to housing, the UNHCR informed us that the majority of returnees were settling in Kabul (393,000 in 2002) and in other big towns. International aid made it possible to build three thousand houses outside of Kabul. Improvement of the quality of life and sanitation conditions in informal districts is urgently required, since returnees to Kabul mostly settle in these sectors. In Kabul more than two thousand families are homeless, but no funding is available to them. The only district having been rehabilitated is Microrayon, where employees of the Government and middle class families live (23).
In September 2002, the Ministry arranged for an international conference - Kabul and the National Urban Vision - which was attended by more than two hundred delegates from twenty-five countries (24).

B. UN-Habitat has been very active in Kabul for years, including the Taliban period. They have a very thorough knowledge of the field reality and their staff meets the highest expectations. They made a lot of surveys and studies in the city which will be used as data base for future projects. They also built more than three thousand dwellings in the plain of Shomali, funded by the Italian Government (25). To do so, they developed the concept of “community forum” which requires an active participation of men and women in the process of urban rehabilitation (26). Furthermore, UN-Habitat completed a mapping and cartography of the destructions, as well as a census of the refugees having come back to Kabul by September 2003. Given the results already obtained by UN-Habitat in all these fields, it seems sensible to collaborate with them as much as possible to implement the projects for the municipality.

C. UNEP, UNDP, UNITAR, and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, have also developed projects in the urban field. There are probably many other institutions working on the urban context in Kabul, but the above list already gives already an idea of the multiplicity of projects.

**United Cities against Poverty and Kabul**

In February 2003, the City of Geneva and the International Solidarity Fund of Cities against Poverty (ISFCAP) received a request for development projects from the Mayors of Kabul and Charikar. A team of representatives of the cities of Geneva and Lyon visited Kabul in September 2003. Different projects were set up: the repairing of the town hall building in Charikar, the building of a garage for the trucks of the Kabul Municipality Solid Waste Department, a day nursery for the female employees of the Municipality, and the training of a municipal staff in town planning and urban management.

The project in Charikar is going on, but the projects in Kabul have been delayed due to the changes in the Municipality.

During our visit, my colleague Christian Sozzi of the “Agence d’urbanisme du Grand Lyon” and I, visited most of the International Organizations involved in urban rehabilitation projects. We noticed that the views were very different between the different partners. The International Organizations were trying to evaluate the situation, the needs of the population and the refugees, and develop reconstruction or improvement projects for the poorer. Their task was the urgency of the situation and the need to shelter this population before the winter snow. The Municipality wanted an updating of the 1978’s Master Plan, even if a presidential decree in September 2002 transferred the responsibility for the Master Plan to the Ministry for Urban Reconstruction. The Ministry wanted a Strategic Plan.

It seemed impossible for an organization like United Cities against Poverty to intervene in this debate. As there was a real demand from all sides to have better educated people to develop urban planning strategies, we thought that a project would be the rapid setting up of a training course for young architects, town planners and engineers, enabling them to implement the most urgent projects for reconstruction, sanitation, rehabilitation at the municipal level. It would be a meaningful project, even though results could be expected only in the middle or long term. A similar project, for the training of local teams, has already been elaborated by UN-Habitat.
A training project

Given the conflict situation between the Ministry and the municipality relating to their respective terms of reference, the training program in urban planning should be made available jointly to both entities. Both teams would be trained simultaneously by the same experts and teachers. Thus, both Government levels would benefit from the program, as well as from the international funds and loans provided by Habitat.

United Cities against Poverty could submit, organize, coordinate and implement such a training program. It would include the most recent concepts in urban planning, urban management and environmental management. The program would be implemented in Kabul, it would thus benefit from the presence of numerous experts working with International Organizations. It would also request local specialists from the University and Polytechnic to participate in the training of the planning staffs. In case experts would not be available locally, specialists from neighbouring countries (India, Pakistan, Thailand) could be invited for short seminar and training periods. Not only would they have the knowledge of other Asian situations, but their costs of travel and fees would be minimal, compared to Western experts.

Courses and seminars have to be held in English. This means that translators, interpreters to Dari will be needed, since very few local employees understand English. This also means that part of the project will include English courses. The candidates will also have to follow computer courses (GIS, Excel, ArcView).

The courses and field exercises will cover one civil year. They will be divided into six terms of two months. The first five periods will consist of:

i. Thematic courses and seminars (type of buildings and housing adapted to the cultural needs of the local population, transportation, sanitation, services and technical infrastructures, water, solid wastes, use of local materials, urban rehabilitation, urban and environmental management, etc.)

ii. Field exercises (physical and social surveys in different urban factories in the city)

iii. Examination of the acquired knowledge, with the help of local and international experts.

The purpose of these courses and exercises is to “de-construct” obsolete practices and to replace them by the present state of knowledge and techniques.

The last period will be used to develop a practical project in the field of urban management and delivery of services, e.g. improving housing conditions in one district, or building a public park with equipments for children and women, or to begin a sanitation programme.

The result will be evaluated by the experts and - if successful - the candidates will receive a “diploma” and a high level responsibility job at the Municipality.

Of course, setting up such a project is not easy. First of all, the Municipality must be convinced of its usefulness and priority. Secondly, we must identify and locate the teachers, trainers, professors, experts interested in participating in the experience. Their wages will not meet international standards, since we want the available money to be invested on the people who need it more, and not on the jet-set of experts and international consultants. This means that we need to find a dedicated person in Kabul, who will be able to meet and discuss the matter with specialists already present in Kabul. Thirdly, we must find candidates, women
and men, who agree to spend one year in training and, later, to work for the Municipality during a certain number of years in repayment of their training. Then we must find offices, or rather, the Municipality should make offices available. These will need to be restored, equipped with technical material, computers, telephone lines, internet connections... And this is expensive.

**An idea for a lighter project**

This type of project was strongly criticized during the Monte Verità Colloquium by the Deputy Minister for Urban Reconstruction. The reasons were that no local people were able to follow such a programme for a long period. Furthermore, if we would find people to do it, they would leave at the end for the private sector of for international NGOs or other organizations. And finally, we would have to pay them a good salary during the training period, a salary which they would never get in the future from the Municipality or the Government.

Consequently, a lighter project would be to organize in priority urban sectors “Pilot Local Urban Ateliers”, directed by staff of the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, and in collaboration with the Kabul Municipality, and with the technical help of UN-Habitat.

Based on the research done by the International Organisations, like UN-Habitat, CICR, HCR and others, priority urban sectors can be chosen for infrastructure improvement and repair (27). At the same time, and also based on reports produced by the same organisations, temporary solutions should be developed to solve the land ownership problems (28). Local people would be organised, trained, reassured and receive financial incentives to begin improvement work by themselves (29). Staff of local people could be trained to make quick technical surveys. It would give them an employment, a salary and training. Each group would have to survey a district of the town over a short period. With the help of AIMS, maps would be produced indicating the urgency and size of the problems.

To launch this type of activity means, first of all, to bring together, in a workshop in Kabul, all international organisations, NGOs, experts working there, to put together all available information and reports on the subject of “Housing and infrastructure rehabilitation”. From the results of the meeting, a coordinator should be nominated- for example, somebody from UN-Habitat or from the Aga Khan Trust for Culture- to prepare a strategic plan with priority measures, pilot study areas, to get a better and more complete image of the needs of the town.

In a second stage, feasibility plans, offering cheap and simple solutions for the improvement of the local situation, should be developed. NGOs and other charity organisations should be contacted for funding – and possibly directing- the projects.

In a third stage, a presentation of the improvement and repair process would be made by the members of the “Local Urban Atelier” to the inhabitants. These would be encouraged to form Community Based Organisations (CBO) to discuss their needs and priorities. Small scale pilot projects would be realised to show what the improvement can be.

In a fourth stage, funding will have to be researched (from outside the community as also from inside). Materials will be bought and the inhabitants with the help of local technicians would do the work.

This of course is not sufficient. The Government and the Municipality will have to develop
plans for the higher level infrastructures, like water treatment plants, solid waste collection, clean water supply. These are part of the Strategic Development Plan for Kabul and the task of the Ministry.

What is meant by “infrastructure improvement” in the Kabul’s situation?

Excepting some planned parts of the town, little infrastructure, sewage, exists, or was never built. The worst situation is on the hills and the “old town”, parts of the city which were already considered as insalubrious in the 1930s (30). The houses themselves are in good, some in very good, conditions. They have been repaired, well maintained. They open on a small garden with some trees (31). But the slopes, the trails, the walks, the paths, the narrow streets, connecting each houses to the outside world, are slippery and dirty lanes with no drains, no sewage, nothing. To solve the problem is a big challenge and needs good technical expertise. The districts where houses have already been rehabilitated need development, cleaning, repair of the sewage drains, water tubes, and electric cables. Roads have to be repaired, surfaced, and lighted. This can be made in cooperation with the inhabitants and the shop owners (32). Other districts, like “Microrayon”, need an environmental improvement with the plantation of trees, the construction of small public parks and nurseries on the spaces between the buildings.

This type of small scale projects are very different from those in the Kabul Strategic Development Plan. They are also different from new development projects like private towns or new shopping centres around the existing conurbation. But they are important as they can give confidence to the Kabul population to invest in their future. They are also connected with the question of the land ownership. If we want the population to invest in order to improve the quality of life in the neighbourhood, we need to give them some settlement security. It means, during a first period, to give legal legitimacy to what is called “squatter settlements”, according to the 1978 Master Plan. Later on, in five or ten years time, when security is established, it will be time to re-integrate these parts of the town into more long term projects. At the present time, the population has an urgent need of some legal security. This point was discussed during the Monte Verità Colloquium, and even if it is a difficult question to solve its priority is absolute.

One of the last reports on the web, about “Urban vulnerability” (33) includes the following recommendations to tackle urban vulnerability: “Support housing reconstruction efforts and establish some form of tenure rights for squatter settlements on the periphery of cities, build on local potentials of self-help and establish access to social participation”.

With what has been discussed during the Colloquium, it seems that we are in the centre of the target. Let’s hope that the publication of the papers of the seminar will be of some help for the population, the government, the Municipality of Kabul. Let’s hope that peace will come back to the place and that poetry and music will come back to life for the new generations.

Notes:

1 62 360 houses have been totally or partially destroyed: 10 977 in the formal districts, 51 383 in the informal districts. Source: UN-Habitat “People’s rebuilding and housing development strategy”, August 2002, p. 5

2 UN Habitat, « Preliminary study of land tenure related issues in Urban Afghanistan with special reference to Kabul City », March 2003, p. 7 and “Geo”, n°277, Mars 2002, p. 93-99 for old photographs. The introduction of western models of architecture, and first attempts of urban planning, are also to be found in nearby areas, as the Swat Valley in North

balad = town ; baladiye = institution in charge of the town management.

UN Habitat, March 2003, p. 9

The first Faculty is Medecine in 1932. affiliated to the Université de Lyon, see Dupree 1980, p. 598

ibid, p. 638

UN-Habitat, March 2003, p. 9-10

André Gutton, L’urbanisme au service de l’homme, Conversations sur l’architecture, tome 6, Ed. Vincent Fréal, Paris 1962, p. 457, La ville soviétique d’après les normes de 1958. Residential areas are based on residential neighborhoods, or « microrayons ». The gross surface by inhabitant is 33 to 36 square meter, or for 50 000 inhabitants: 165 to 180 hectares, including in this surface all public services.

ibid, p. 52-55

UN Habitat, March 2003, p. 9

Since our visit in September 003, the Mayor and the Vice-Mayor for Town Planning were replaced by a new Mayor. This was written before. We don’t know which will be the municipal policies in the future.

Extract from a Un-Habitat document dated 8 August-23 September 2003, and interview with a consultant from BECA, Auckland, New Zealand, in Sept. 2003

Interview of the Kabul Mayor and his Vice-Mayors on 20 September 2003

Patmuran Housing Development Project: made up ten neighborhoods with 70 000 inhabitants each, bungalows and flats from 2 to 4 floors. Cost of the project: 400 millions US dollars, June 2003

The Minister of Finance contracted a big consulting firm from Lebanon, Dar-al-Handasah Nazib Taleb & Partners, to develop new towns projects.

Le Monde, 20 septembre 2003: he was sacked on Sept. 18, following the brutal expulsion of 250 people and the destruction of their houses, which were near the wealthy neighbourhood of Wazzir Akhbar Khan.

Interview with Mr. Nasir A. Saberi on September 2003.

UN-Habitat, “People’s rebuilding and housing development strategy”, August 2002, p.5-6

ibid, p. 3

ibid, p. 4

Extract from the document by the Ministry for urban development and housing: Sector profile, 2.4 Urban management, 31 July 2003. On January 2, 2002, a convention was signed between the Italian Government and the Afghan Minister for Culture and Information. Cooperation was to take place in four fields: development of a local TV chain, archeological campaigns and reconstruction of the Kabul Museum, a Master Plan for the town and technical assistance, reinforcement of the legislation for the protection of the cultural patrimony (CNN Italia, 2.1.2002)

Summaries are available on many websites. See also - ‘Afghan Urban Reconstruction Plan’, Ministry of Urban Development and Housing, 28 November 2002.


- Preliminary study of land tenure related issues in Urban Afghanistan with special reference to Kabul City’, March 2003; ReliefWeb 31 March 2003 “Land rights in crisis”

- Afghanistan, technical cooperation programme for the implementation of the urban reconstruction plan’, November 2002

According to some of them we were invited (September 2003). This doesn’t mean of course that all houses are in good conditions.

Reconstruction Funds are available for this type of activities: see ReliefWeb, 6 Aug. 2003 “A grant of US $3 million has been approved from ARTF to improve transport services on important roads within Kabul city through the rehabilitation of high priority road sections, as well as the repair of drainage systems along these roads. This project will be implemented by KfW in cooperation with Kabul Municipality”. IRIN News.org, 19 Feb. 2004 “Locals rehabilitate roads and rivers in Kabul”, funded by a donation of US $5 million from the Government of Japan.

Available Reports in September 2003

3. Afghanistan, technical cooperation programme for the implementation of the urban reconstruction plan, UN-Habitat, 28 November 2002, 21 p.
   Shomali Plain Shelter Recovery Programme, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, UNDP, UN-Habitat, 16 April 2003, 12 p.
9. Comprehensive solid waste management project for six urban centres of Afghanistan, UN-Habitat, February 2003

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The Development Set

Excuse me friends, I must catch my jet.  
I’m off to join the Development Set.  
My bags are packed, and I’ve had all my shots,  
I have travellers’ cheques and pills for the trots!

The Development Set is bright and noble,  
Our thoughts are deep and our vision global;  
Although we move with the better classes,  
Our thoughts are always with the masses.

In Sheraton Hotels in scattered nations  
We damn the global corporations;  
Injustice seems easy to protest  
In such seething hotbeds of social unrest.

We discuss malnutrition over steaks  
And plan hunger talks during coffee breaks.  
Whether Asian floods or African drought,  
We face each issue with an open mouth.

We bring in consultants whose circumlocution  
Raises difficulties for every solution –  
Thus guaranteeing continued good eating  
By showing the need for another meeting.

The language of the Development Set  
Stretches the English alphabet;  
We use swell words like “epigenetic”,  
“Micro”, “macro” and “logarithmic”.

It pleases us to be esoteric –  
It’s so intellectually atmospheric!  
And though establishments may be unmoved,  
Our vocabularies are much improved.
When the talk gets deep and you’re feeling dumb
You can keep your shame to a minimum:
To show that you too are intelligent
Smugly ask: “Is it really development?”

Or say: “That’s fine in practice, but don’t you see,
It doesn’t work out in theory!”
A few may find this incomprehensible,
But most will admire you as deep and sensible.

Development Set homes are extremely chic,
Full of carvings, curios and draped with batik.
Eye-level photographs subtly assure
That your host is at home with the great and the poor.

Enough of these verses – on with the mission!
Our task is as broad as the human condition!
Just pray God the biblical promise is true:
“The poor ye shall always have with you!”.

Ross Coggins

(printed here with the author's permission)
10th Architecture & Behaviour Colloquium

in collaboration with:
The Aga Khan Trust for Culture
The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
Cantone Ticino
The Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne

Monte Verità, Ascona, Ticino, Switzerland
April 4 to 7, 2004

Urban History and Development of Kabul:
Reconstruction and Planning Issues Today

Programme

Sunday afternoon (April 4) and Monday morning (April 5)
Arrival of participants (no official programme)

Monday, April 5, morning
9.00-12.00 Colloquium Office is open for Inscriptions
12.30-13.30 Lunch, Monte Verità Restaurant
14.00-15.15 Official Colloquium opening

Introduction
14.00 Kaj Noschis, Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne
Opening of the 10th Architecture & Behaviour Colloquium
14.15 Josep Acebillo, Director, Accademia
d’Architettura, Università della Svizzera italiana
Welcome address
14.30 Luis Monreal, General Manager, AKTC, Geneva
Introduction to the Colloquium
14.45 Tom Schacher, Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation (SDC)
Swiss Hopes for Afghanistan
15.00 Marcus Schadl, University of Munich
A Short Reminder about the Urban History of Kabul

Urban perspectives and forces in Kabul today
15.15 Qiamuddin Djallalzada, Deputy Minister and Acting Minister,
Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MUDH), Kabul
Planning the Future Development of the City of Kabul:
Institutional Constraints and Current Opportunities
15.45-16.15 Coffee break

16.15 Amirudin Salek, Deputy Mayor, Municipality of Kabul (Last minute cancellation)
Implementing the Physical Recovery of the City of Kabul: The Role of Kabul Municipality

16.30 Eberhard Knapp, Architect, Advisor to KfW, Frankfurt and Kabul
Planning with an urban perspective: Experiences from Kabul

16.45 Abdul Wasay Najimi, Architect, AKTC, Kabul
Preservation and revival of cultural identity: How can the rehabilitation of the historical quarters of Kabul respond to the needs of the city

17.00 Fahim Hakim, Chair Afghan Human Rights Commission, Kabul
Addressing the Complexity of Ground Realities: Security and Confidence Building

17.15 Alain Viaro, Town Planner, Institut Universitaire des Études du Développement, University of Geneva
Is There Any Sense for a Master Plan?

Discussion
17.30-18.30 Moderator: Babar Khan Mumtaz

19.00 Dinner, Monte Verità Restaurant

20.00 Visit of the Monte Verità Museum (Museum of Utopia – Villa Natta)

Tuesday, April 6, morning:
8.00-9.00 Breakfast, Monte Verità Restaurant

Project case studies:
9.00 Dad Mohammad, CARE International, Kabul
Infrastructure Upgrading in Kabul: A 30 Year Perspective

9.15 Stefan Schütte, AREU Kabul
A Bottom-up Perspective on Urban Planning and Needs in Kabul

9.30 Anna Soave, Urban Planner AKTC, Kabul
The Timur Shah Area Programme: Planning and Negotiation Issues

9.45 Zahra Breshna, Architect, Director, Kabul City Development Programme, MUDH, Kabul
Strategies for the Reconstruction of Kabul’s
Centre: Facing the Pressure of Commercial Investments

10.15-10.45 Coffee Break

10.45 Mohamad Sherif, UN Habitat, Kabul

National Solidarity Programme: Community-Based Urban Development Scheme for Kabul. Building on Experience

11.00 Joanna de Berry, Save the Children, England and Kabul

Empowering Children on Neighbourhood Issues in Kabul

11.15 Alain Viaro, International Solidarity Fund of Cities Against Poverty, Kabul and Geneva

A Training Programme for Urban Planners at Kabul Municipality

Discussion

11.30-12.30 Moderator: Kaj Noschis

12.30-13.30 Lunch, Monte Verità Restaurant

Thematic discussions

14.00-16.00 Moderators: Fahim Hakim and Abdul Najimi

Themes:
- Responding to urban growth: basic infrastructure, services and the preservation of the urban environment
- A burning issue: land and property ownership
- The historic city: the value of conservation and awareness
- Voicing needs: Community based development
- The definition of an urban vision for Kabul: Institutions and key actors

16.00-16.30 Coffee Break

Linkages and Reflections on the Issues Raised during the Debates

16.30-18.30 Moderator: Ajmal Maiwandi

Panel of international planners discussing key issues and the applicability of lessons learned from other urban rehabilitation projects. With short interventions by: Sultan Barakat, David Driskell, Michael Mutter (Last minute cancellation), Halina Dunin and Veikko Vasko

19.00 Aperitif offered by the Ascona Town Council for the 10th Architecture & Behaviour Colloquium, Monte Verità Restaurant

20.00 Dinner, Monte Verità Restaurant

21.00 Free evening in Ascona
Wednesday, April 7

8.00-9.00        Breakfast, Monte Verità Restaurant

**Round Table: Issues and recommendations for follow up steps**

9.00-12.00       Moderator: Babar Khan Mumtaz
12.00            Suha Özkan, AKTC, Geneva
                 *Conclusion and perspectives*
12.30-1.30       Lunch. Monte Verità Restaurant

**For further information please contact:**

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Additional information on Architecture & Behaviour Colloquia and publications can be found at: [www.colloquia.ch](http://www.colloquia.ch)
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* last minute cancellation