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The Urban Forum for the Near East and North Africa

Network Case Studies

Housing and Urban Programs: Design, Planning, and Delivery of the
RHUDO/NENA Policy Workshop on Building a Sustainable Regional Forum for
Urban Development Professionals
Sponsored by USAID/Rabat

Prepared by
Henry P. Minis, Jr.
Research Triangle Institute

and
Bonnie Walter
RHUDO Regional Activities Advisor
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Henry P. Minis, Jr.
Research Triangle Institute

Bonnie Walter
RHUDO Regional Activities Advisor

As background for the Istanbul conference on the Urban Forum, this paper presents case studies of two networks: the Latin America Center for Urban Management (LACUM) and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI). The case studies were selected because of their relevance to the NENA Urban Forum: both deal with urban issues across several countries. At the same time, the two networks are different, and through these differences demonstrate different ways in which a network can structure itself and function in service to its membership. The case studies are offered not in the spirit of providing specific models which the NENA Urban Forum can follow, but rather as examples of how networks, with objectives that are not dissimilar from those of the Urban Forum, have tackled basic problems of defining activities, defining membership, establishing an organizational structure, and funding activities. The presentation of each organization follows these four issues.

International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI)

The concept behind the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives began in 1989 when officials, primarily from the U.S. and Canada, observed that there was no organization on a world-wide scale to represent the interest and bring together local governments, part of the cornerstone for improving environmental conditions. At the UN's World Congress for a Sustainable Future in 1990, the delegates representing local governments voted for the creation of an organization that would serve as a clearinghouse for information and as an advocate for local governments. The world secretariat for ICLEI was established in Toronto in 1991.

Objectives

ICLEI's mission is to build and serve a worldwide movement of local governments to achieve and monitor tangible improvements in local and global environmental actions through cumulative local actions. ICLEI supports research and innovation at the local level to develop new tools and models for addressing priority environmental problems. In general, the organization pursues the following objectives through research, information exchange and technical assistance:

- lobbying for the environmental agenda;
- specific environmental campaigns;
- regional and international networking centered on specific environmental problems.

Membership

As a local government organization, membership is made up of 240 municipalities and associations that represent municipalities from around the world. While part of the worldwide network, members also become part of their regional groupings for North America, South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. In the NENA region, the Organization of Islamic Capitals, Arab Towns Organization and IULA are members and on the Executive Committee, but few cities in the region are members. In addition to these full members, there are also associate members including individuals and other organizations.

Organizational structure.

The ICLEI Council convenes every two years. The council comprises all of the member local governments and other full members. The primary responsibility of the Council is to review and approve ICLEI's 5 year strategic plan. It also elects the Executive Committee which is comprised of 21 local governments from all over the world.

Administratively, ICLEI's world secretariat is located in Toronto. In addition, there are

regional secretariats currently in place in Europe and Asia. While the staff in the secretariats is responsible for managing activities and fund raising, there is a major attempt to keep the membership actively involved in all aspects of ICLEI's activities. There are a variety of mechanisms for maintaining contact with members: a website, an organizational newsletter and circulars from the regional offices, and project up-dates.

The legal status of the various ICLEI branches depends on the legal regime in each country. ICLEI-Canada is a non-profit corporation. ICLEI-US is a charitable organization. Local Environmental Initiatives, which manages the ICLEI-Europe secretariat in Germany, is a non-profit, limited liability company.

Activities

ICLEI mainly sponsors local actions, centered on environmental protection (carbon monoxide reduction programs, energy use, and land use). They organize practical campaigns in cities, give technical assistance to help cities analyze these problems and develop action plans aimed at reducing pollution. (ICLEI does not finance the implementation of the action plan). They serve as a local government lobby to international organizations and at international meetings. ICLEI conducts training programs and fee for service consulting to local governments. They carry out small collaborative research programs between cities, putting 10-15 cities together to develop solutions to a given problem (e.g. Medurbs networks). They participate in the Local Agenda 21 effort with 14 model communities.

Funding

Funding for the secretariats and projects is derived from many sources. A membership fee based on a sliding scale according to per capita income and city-size provides 8 percent of annual operating fees. Mexico City pays \$300 per year, while a large city in a developed country pays \$7,000.

Activities are generally grant based from a variety of donors. Both the world wide secretariat and the regional secretariats raise funding for activities, depending on the scope of the activities. The central office looks for funding for multiple activities, acting as the Executing agency for a donor. ICLEI has EU funding for participation in a few of the Medurbs networks, and some funding for project work in other cities. In addition, some German cities underwrite the costs of activities in some African cities.

There is no core funding for secretariat/central office functions. To the extent possible, overhead costs are recovered on projects and the secretariat offices are in-kind contributions from the host cities.

Lessons Learned

Maintaining an effective and productive network has forced ICLEI to confront many problems. The search for funding occupies a major share of the secretariats' time. Programmatically, fighting local government inertia and trying to keep environment on local government's agenda is a challenge as is working on a multi-sectoral approach with cities. Changing council membership makes for difficulties in continuity of commitment. In the future, ICLEI intends to more vigorously monitor the impact of their programs and to evaluate the results of environmental protection campaigns and environmental actions plans.

Latin American Center for Urban Management (LACUM)

The Latin American Center for Urban Management was established by RHUDO/South America. It is based in Quito and operates in 11 countries. It undertakes its own regional and national programs, and also supports the bilateral programs of RHUDO/SA and the USAID missions throughout South America.

In 1989 an Urban Network(which eventually changed the name to LACUM) was established which brought together nine regional and national organizations who shared interests and the desire to establish a partnership with USAID and other institutions in the region. Each of these organizations had regional contacts of their own in South America, they had recognized prestige and credibility in their field, and could contribute financing, material or people for joint activities. While LACUM remains an arm of the RHUDO/SA, the level of involvement of network members and their commitment of resources for network activities is noteworthy.

Objectives

In a phrase, LACUM's objectives are "concepts and contacts", providing a forum to discuss emerging issues and innovative solutions and building contacts among a broad array stakeholders in the urban development process. The objective is to form coalitions of business, community, and government to address shelter and urban problems, through policy dialogue, dissemination of information, and strengthened institutional capacity for urban management. To so do, it works in partnership with networks of institutions -national, regional and international- and has undertaken cooperative agreements with the Inter-American Housing Union, and the Latin American Chapter of IULA, and the Cooperative Housing Foundation .

LACUM's brief is very broad, and reflects the diversity of the network membership. In the past the activities of LACUM have covered 15 different themes in housing and urban development. The main areas of concern are :

the mobilization of private sector resources for financing and managing housing and urban services;

improvement of productivity of the public sector resources used for housing and urban services

institutional capacity development to improve planning and management of the urban environment.

The output of LACUM conferences and other activities are intended to reach policy makers, those able to influence policy formulation, and those who are able to create the capacity to implement policy.

Membership

LACUM includes both individual and institutional members. There are 2 to 3 individual representatives per country, drawn from government, business, and community groups. These individuals are selected by the RHUDO, based on their thoughtfulness, understanding and leadership in urban affairs. By maintaining a fairly constant individual membership, the network has been able to gain access to policy makers through network members as they have moved up in their institutions.

Institutional membership is composed of trade or sectoral organizations, academic institutions, and NGOs active in the urban environment, housing, and family and local development, many of which have their own networks of organizations or collaborators. In addition, municipal training organizations such as the ICAMs of several countries (Institute for Municipal Training) participate. The current membership of 33 organizations is composed for the most part of non-governmental bodies, for example: Inter-American Federation of construction Industries; Federation of Real Estate Institutions, Carvajal Foundation, Private Corporation for Development, Popular Housing Corporation, Center for Social Housing, Urban Development and Environmental Studies, Corporation for Technological and Scientific Management fo Urban Environment, Cooperative Housing Foundation, Center for Legal Research and Studies, Ciudad Research Group, Colombian Confederation of NGOs, Inter American Housing Union, World Council of Credit Unions, Catholic University Urban Studies Institute. In addition to organizations from Latin America, RHUDO has nominated the United States affiliates of many of these organizations to also participate, adding new perspectives and expertise to the network.

Through this membership, LACUM is able to reach out to approximately 2,700 individual organizations or affiliates.

Structure

The coordinating secretariat structure of the LACUM network is also the training and policy unit of RHUDO/SA. Staff is paid by RHUDO, and premises are shared. The total budget of the training office is approximately \$145,000. However, the majority of this covers training events, while only an estimated \$30,000 covers the cost of supporting the network. The network members meet at least yearly at a policy seminar. For most activities, the LACUM secretariat plays a coordination role, generally contracting with a network institutional member organization to implement the activity.

According to a former RHUDO/SA director, the importance of the secretariat role in LACUM should not be underestimated. Beyond administrative functions, the "person" of the secretariat plays a role in maintaining cohesion among the network members. The dynamic role of this person is particularly important early in the life of the network as it helps build

commitment and identity of the network.

Because LACUM is mainly funded by USAID, the major control of the network rests in their hands. One can assume that the professional staff of LACUM , along with the RHUDO, are the major decision-makers, since structure of meetings and membership is not formalized. The staff consists of one full-time professional and two program assistants.

Activities

LACUM has organized a variety of activities, many covered through the training and research activities of the RHUDO. These include regional meetings and seminars on policy issues; establishment and support for a periodic conference of Urban Environmental NGOs; Inter American ministers' meeting; regional inter-organizational study tours; cross -country technical assistance; magazine on local democracy; quarterly newsletter; publication of proceedings of meetings; (through contracted institute) data collection on shelter and urban indicators, (through contracted institute) preparatory work for Habitat II; and publication of successful case studies .

Funding

Staff and logistical expenses of LACUM are covered from the RHUDO budget. Activities are partly financed by RHUDO, but cofinancing may come from participating network organizations as well as other cooperating agencies. RHUDO estimates that it contributes generally one third of the cost of activities with members picking up the majority of funding including some of the local costs of an event. Participants generally cover their own transportation costs. In order to promote the participation in each meeting of the network members, RHUDO provides partial financial assistance to institutions unable to cover their own travel expenses, and pays most of the logistical costs of meetings.

Lessons Learned

What is unique about LACUM membership is the emphasis on network organizations (associations, federations, etc) and non-governmental bodies, as opposed to governmental agencies or individual cities. Through a very small input and direct sponsorship of only a limited number of activities, LACUM has tied itself into a very large network and is able to tie a number of diverse groups together.