



U.S. Agency for International Development Office of Poverty Reduction's Urban Programs Team (UP)

The urban population in the developing world is growing at an unprecedented rate. Half of the world's population now resides in urban areas, and by 2030, nearly two-thirds will be urban inhabitants. Almost all future urban growth will occur in developing countries. It is expected that the urban population in developing countries will increase by 2.5 billion people over the next two decades. Urbanization has been correlated with a variety of positive socioeconomic changes in many countries. However, the rapid rate of growth places tremendous pressure upon the limited resources and management capacity of most developing countries. The inability of national and city governments to manage rapid urbanization has negative repercussions: environmental degradation, harmful impacts on human health, political instability, and hindered economic growth.

The challenge in the coming decades is to make cities work so that they can achieve their full potential to: (1) offer safe and healthy places to live within a sustainable environment; (2) provide basic infrastructure and housing that serves all their inhabitants; (3) feature robust economies with ample opportunities for employment, and (4) promote participatory democracy with high levels of citizen satisfaction with local institutions.

Mission

To assist cities in developing countries meet the enormous challenges of rapid urbanization and to better manage cities in order to reduce poverty and increase economic opportunity.

The Urban Programs Team helps Missions development programs to improve the capacity of cities to better administer and deliver municipal services equitably, particularly to the poor; improve the economic competitiveness and growth potentials of cities and increase public-private partnerships for investment purposes.

Field Support

The Urban Programs Team seeks to support USAID Missions and Regional Bureaus in their efforts to address urban problems by:

- Supporting efforts addressing urban problems of poverty, economic growth, local governance, health, and basic delivery of services as they pertain to urban communities;
- Providing in-house expertise, advisory services, and mechanisms for securing the services and technical exports to enable missions to meet target goals and strategic objectives.
- Working in partnership at the Country level to achieve improved development results, meeting of strategic objects and contributing to Presidential Initiatives and U.S. commitments to UN Millennium goals and targets;

Partnering

The Urban Programs Team develops strategic alliances with a diverse set of public and private organizations that are committed to reduce urban poverty and improve the communities and lives of the urban poor. Recognizing the need for scaling-up city-wide and at national levels to address the problems created by rapid urbanization in developing countries, the Urban Programs Team joins with members of the international donor community and associations of cities in the Cities Alliance Consultative Group to coordinate assistance to developing cities. The Cities Alliance is focused on building coalitions of interested partners that are committed to advancing city development strategies and development through multi-sectoral and participatory planning which results in poverty reduction. Existing and past partners include: Africa and ANE Bureaus, GDA Office, World Bank, UN-Habitat, EPA, Asian Development Bank, International City and County Management Association, U.S. Department of Energy, International Youth Foundation, Nokia and Microsoft in Asia and Africa and various U.S. State Governments.

Knowledge Management

The Urban Programs Team is building the capacity and knowledge base within USAID, across a broad range of sectors, to understand the emerging urban challenges that developing countries face over the next 20 years. We also provide the tools to disseminate that knowledge both within USAID and among our development partners. Through these efforts we increase the awareness, understanding and capacity to manage urban growth and reduce urban poverty.



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