ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING CLUSTER

LEARNING NOTES:
LIVE THE CITY: METROPOLIS ANNUAL MEETING

DATE: 18 – 21 MAY 2015

INTRODUCTION

On May 18 to 21, 2015, a six member delegate from eThekwini Municipality attended the LIVE THE CITY, Metropolis Annual Meeting that was held in Buenos Aires. It was an opportunity for the metropolitan cities to meet, exchange knowledge and share cutting edge practices on urban management. Buenos Aires has developed an extensive programme of greening the city and ensuring that it becomes inclusive and thrives on innovation. The programme ensures that (citizen) public participation is an essential or driving factor in the urban management of the City. Therefore, the purpose of the meeting was to allow the City of Buenos Aires to share its experiences and lessons learned with Metropolis members and other stakeholders. The event focused on three strategic pillars, namely, inclusion, innovation and sustainability. These three pillars have informed its cross cutting urban policy agenda in Buenos Aires. The event allowed participants and opportunity to observe the people's everyday challenges; look at concrete actions designed to improve the quality of life and wellbeing of the people; as well as draw reference points. In this case, participants were able to interpret the City of Buenos Aires vision of urban management and were able to draw experiences and relate them to their own contexts and situations.

BACKGROUND

Metropolis, World Association of the major Metropolises, represents over 130 Cities and Metropolitan Regions from across the World. Metropolis also manages the metropolitan department/section of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). On an annual basis, Metropolis facilitates and coordinates an international forum for exploring issues and concerns common to all cities and metropolitan regions. Over the years, Metropolis has created an opportunity for eThekwini Municipality to participate in mutual learning, innovation, governance, technical and financial assistance, international presence and debate. eThekwini Municipality is a member of the Metropolis Association and subscribes to this organization on an annual basis. Furthermore, the municipality as represented by the Mayor: Councillor James Nxumalo also co-chairs the Urban Strategic Planning Committee of UCLG.

eThekwini Municipality needs to build a network of initiatives by collaborating with metropolitan governments and others partners to promote projects for urban sustainability (understood to include environmental, economic, social and cultural aspects) and must undertake the following:

1. Represent and give international visibility to the City's interest and concerns
2. Promote reflection and debate on trends in the evolution of the City
3. Find innovative and groundbreaking solutions to the City's problems and challenges
4. Contribute to global metropolitan governance to reduce City imbalances in line with vision 2030.
5. Mobilize new financial resources, donor funding and investments available for sustainable and efficient development
6. Promote mutual learning, innovation, transfer of knowledge, practices and experiences between the eThekwini Municipality, cities and other stakeholders (i.e. enhance the knowledge management and innovation programmes of the City)

The Metropolis Annual Meetings and Conferences offers many opportunities for international cooperation and provides a platform for the exchange of knowledge, experiences, lessons learned, and technical skills as well as the development of relationships between member cities and their partners. At the conference, the core team has an ability to promote projects and programmes for the City and seek a consolidated network based management of activities targeted at these projects and oriented towards partnerships and funding. Our participation at the conference sets the pace and contribution to deepening the understanding of the City's issues and foster cooperation with other members. Delegates participate in dialogue on numerous aspects of urban development, including economic, social and spatial issues (i.e. urban planning and development issues).

LIVE THE CITY: METROPOLIS ANNUAL MEETING

About the City of Buenos Aires

The City of Buenos Aires is the capital city and a dynamic economic and creative centre in Argentina and South America that blends heritage and innovation. It has been recognized as a major tourist destination infused with historical and cultural attractions as well as its bustling nightlife. It has approximately, 3 million inhabitants, 48 neighborhoods and a myriad of activities from restaurants to bars, theatres, two airports, and places of worship

and football stadia and so on. It has the reputation of being the Cultural Capital of Latin America due to a variety and competitiveness of its arts scene. It also has a rich history of immigration from all over the world, a strong sense of diversity and openness to ideas. The city has a mild and generally sunny climate, with stretches of park and protected nature reserves.

PLENARY SESSIONS

Live the City

This session addressed the three strategic pillars, namely, inclusion, innovation and sustainability. These pillars are interlinked and mutually dependent. They also form an integral part of urban planning and seek to develop a socially balanced and forward looking city that respects and preserves the environment. The purpose of this session was to allow experts to present and share their views on the strategic pillars: how they fit into urban management and planning in the 21st century and how that planning should promote public participation as a means to empower local communities and help reduce social and economic barriers to inclusion and well-being.

Lessons learned:

On Inclusion: Using social and physical infrastructure to address poverty and inequality should be a policy priority for improving urban equity. Public participation and the empowerment of local citizens to engage in and collectively make decisions that affect their neighborhoods and well-being are an integral part of urban management.

On Innovation: The concept of innovation that was addressed in the event covers technological change, information technology and digital solutions, as well as improvements in public administration processes and models (urban and open innovation). This enables the city to enhance its knowledge economy and support human capital whilst helping to generate an ecosystem favorable to innovation and entrepreneurship.

On Sustainability: Cities should have a holistic approach to sustainable development which considers social, economic, cultural and environmental factors. Urban environmental policies have to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation. They must support the green economy and the development of renewable energies; show commitment to pedestrianisation and implementation of zero or low carbon emitting public transport; protect green spaces and environmental services (and goods); and manage waste in order to reduce environmental impact.

Voice of Mayors

Political leaders have always used their voices to share their experiences in many world meetings and events. The international community has an obligation to listen to leaders of the world, especially those from the world's most significant cities. Mayors, Councillors and City Officials are local representatives of many people. They hold a very high level of political responsibility, managing cities, urban agglomerations and metropolitan regions that are considerably large and economically, culturally, and environmentally influential than many states. Local leaders have a closer understanding of people's daily needs for housing, energy, mobility, education, employment, health and safety. More recognition of the value and experience of cities are needed on the international stage. Currently, national level actors are given prominence in international negotiations and decision making that affects sustainable development and environmental practices in cities.

Lessons Learned:

With "Voice of the Mayors", Metropolis aims to make these leaders to be seen and heard worldwide, for their active role in global development through the exercise of their mandates. The project aims to bring together testimonies from Mayors and their counterparts in a set of publications to be released. This will in turn help Metropolis leaders to position themselves in major international events. The Metropolis President will be able to formally present Metropolis Declarations.

THEMATIC SESSIONS INCLUSION

Sports for Social and Urban Transformation

Sports activities in cities is increasingly dynamic and complex, in relation to diverse areas such as health, education, social cohesion, urban development, the economy and international projections. A city's sports policy is a municipal commitment predicated on a model of institutional co-responsibility, in which citizens engage through their association and network of clubs, federations and organisations. This session attempted to address the social and territorial dimension of the practice of sport, understood as a public policy designed to tackle urban segregation. It also relates to "good governance", given that it improves quality of life and well-being, and contributes to social cohesion and identity.

Sport is a powerful tool for co-existence and inclusion, especially for children, young adults and their families. The social dimension of sport helps foster solidarity programmes and assists sectors of the population with poor access to sports and equipment. Importantly, the practice of sport in public spaces and the improvement of sporting facilities in neighborhoods enable the appropriation and recovery of vulnerable or disused public spaces.

Lessons Learned:
In exploring their experiences, Metropolis Cities value sports and sports participation in sports as a successful social tool for inclusion and transforming the urban landscape.

Experiences in Community Leadership
An experience in community leadership was presented by citizens from various cities across the world. The objective of this session was to allow elected officials and the general [public to listen to the community. Cities are quint essential political and public spaces. Local democracy and the idea of living together is not an issue to be discussed and planned only by elected officials who occupy institutional positions, or as a space solely for experts to define what should be done and how it should be managed. Communities must also play a defining role in the development, implementation and review of the policies that affect them.

It is clear that the concept of local democracy based on the participation of communities is increasingly taking hold. In a rapidly changing society, public intervention in neighborhoods is more effective when it looks to make alliances with initiatives promoted by the community itself. Communities understand their needs on the ground better than anyone else, and should therefore be the protagonists in their own social transformation.

Furthermore, neighborhood based movements doing important work in support of peace, social rights and inclusion are now taking up the mantle against inequality, one of the most important challenges cities today face. As local democracy grows, more and more self-organized events are taking place in neighborhoods, helping to empower the individual and the community, develop local identities, a strong sense of independence, ethical values, and solidarity in issues such as the management and use of public spaces.

Ultimately, this notion of local democracy is about adding deliberative and participative democracy to representative democracy. But public participation is not just a means or a tool. It can only be successful and sustainable if it is rooted in the very essence of public management.

THEMATIC SESSIONS – INNOVATION

Creative and Collaborative Cities

Globalisation, the transformation of production models and the new technological and digital environment have given rise to a new economic and social context. The drivers of economic growth are being progressively replaced by creative communities who are strongly becoming creative and innovative. Creative cities are those which put creativity and the creative economy at the centre of their model of development and global positioning.

The creative economy promotes sustainable and human development, and is based on social innovation. The sector covers the creative and cultural industries, as well as social and collaborative economic initiatives. It is a strategic sector of the economy and generates business and employment opportunities.

> **Lessons Learned:**
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> The City developed a local public policy that addresses and promotes the creative economy. The objective of the policy is to support business and business friendly environments, the creation of entrepreneurial hubs for the community, training support and so on.

Urban and Open Innovation

Urban Innovation is fast becoming a new paradigm for responding to urban challenges. It considers cities at a human level, where priority is given to people and the use of public space as areas to meet, share, experiment and fully realize one's social or economic potential.

Related to this process, open innovation is a new way of conceiving public management, enabling governments to go beyond the internal limits of their own organisations. It is about strengthening cooperation with civil society and businesses, which in turn strengthens their ability to respond effectively to social issues. A number of tools are being used to generate knowledge, participation and transparency.

The biggest questions are:

- In identifying the best ways to promote an ecosystem is what fosters innovation in our cities?

- What are the basic principles of urban innovation that are transforming city management?
- How can we get open innovation to form part of a permanent work agenda and not develop solely on the basis of isolated events?
- How can urban innovation turn the challenges that cities face into opportunities?
- How can we generate a culture, and how can government better channel the ideas that emerge from these events into effective public policy projects?

Successful Examples of Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change

Urban areas will continue to grow in size and population over the coming decades. As they grow, they will have to tackle important challenges related to energy supply, greenhouse gas emissions reduction, road traffic regulation and integrated water resource management and so on.

Lessons Learned:

Sustainable growth policies with a multidisciplinary focus should be the strategic objective for local policy makers. Cities' economic models will need to accommodate and incorporate the regenerative and socially sustainable green economy. This will enable cities to offer fast, flexible, balanced and creative solutions to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.

Towards a Friendlier Mobility

In contemporary urban society, mobility is essential for accessing goods and services and managing one's daily life. Guaranteeing the maximum level of accessibility and providing it at the lowest possible social cost is a major global challenge for our cities.

In previous decades, policy on mobility often gave pride of place to the automobile over the individual commuter, the pedestrian or the cyclist. Today, large cities can often be paralysed by traffic jams and their health systems have to cope with the health and safety effects associated with heavy emissions and road accidents.

Friendlier mobility puts healthy mobility such as cycling and walking as a priority. It gives priority to the pedestrian, as it is the pedestrian who is always the most vulnerable in the transport ecosystem, and involves traffic reduction

mechanisms as much as infrastructure to increase accessibility to public transport services.

> **Lessons Learned:**
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> It is essential that urban planning fosters the mobility of pedestrians and bicycles, recovers public space, advances the construction of bike lanes, and implements efficiencies in public transport within cities and across their metropolitan areas. These measures must be complimented by policies to revatilise local services and businesses in neighborhoods to minimize unnecessary travel.
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> Urban mobility actions must benefit citizens (pedestrians, public transport users, storekeepers, businesses, etc.) quality of life, and support the economic and social development of the City. However, concepts such as walkability, place-making and serendipity needs to be unpacked in the context of that particular city.

REAL LIFE EXPERIENCES ON THE GROUND: TOURS

Tour 1: Southern Zone

Making Cities more inclusive is a global challenge and priority. The City of Buenos Aires has set out to address the existing inequalities between the north and the south of the city through a regeneration programme. This programme seeks to put real value back into the southern neighborhoods and so demonstrate that another south is possible".

Policies involve interventions to improve local inhabitants for local residents, broadening out access to culture, mobility and transport, improving safety and security, health and education, and strengthening the equal rights and opportunities that by its very nature, citizenship should bring.

> **Lessons Learned:**
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> To bring about transformation, the City Beunos Aires uses a working methodology known as the Integrated Urban Project. This instrument allows for public and private resources to be harnessed and coordinated undertaking specific interventions in defined territories that will improve quality of life and well-being for local residents. It works with the participation and consensus of the local community for whom the works are intended. These works have a secondary role which is to help regenerate and boost economic and human development in this neighborhood for a more lasting social legacy.

N.B. During this tour, we visited the City Tower. It offers a fantastic panorama of the south of the City. Participants got a bird's eye view of how the programme to revitalize the Southern Zone is being rolled out. We also visited the city's Metropolitan Design Centre where innovation is being nurtured as one of the city's strategic objectives. We also experienced the "community in action" in one of the neighborhoods.

Tour 2: City Centre

The Plan for the City is about redesigning public space in the central city blocks known as the micro-centre, respecting Original Street and building architecture, but applying new technology and upgrading infrastructure for greater sustainability. Using public private mechanisms, the Plan addresses long standing deterioration in the city centre with restoration projects to recover the original character and features of the zone, making it more attractive and safe for residents, workers and visitors. The plan seeks to reduce vehicle emissions, manage transport and waste more efficiently, and develop the areas residential capacities, increase security and safety, and promote the centre as the vibrant cultural, tourist and gastronomic hub. The plan has been designed and implemented alongside another flagship City programme: The Sustainable Mobility Plan. This plan is about giving priority to public transport, promoting a more sustainability mobility with efficiencies in transport times and security and the introduction of new technologies that offer information to the commuter in real time in order to create a more inclusive, healthy and modern city.

Tour 3: Metrobus (BRT), Bus Terminal, EcoBici System and Pedestrian Routes

During the City Centre tour, we visited some core interventions as mentioned above.

The Metrobus

The metro buses offer an exceptional historical and cultural panorama of the city. The routes take in the famous neighborhoods and the city centre. The buses are the cheapest way to get around the city. Over 180 bus lines run regularly with reduced frequency after midnight, and several connect with districts in the greater BuenosAires area. The Metro Bus (Bus Rapid Transit) system has improved travel times significantly during rush hours. Several Metro Bus stations also have free WiFi access.

The Subway

The sub way is the quickest way to get around the city. Four lines run in parallel from the centre to the western and northern outskirts, while the other two run north – south and connects the two major train stations. There is also a pre – metro service in the south west which connects to other lines. Maps showing the subway lines are obtaineable at the station.

EcoBici

The EcoBici programme promotes the use of bicycles as environmentally friendly, healthy and efficient forms of transport. This Public Bicycle Sharing System allows registered users to borrow bicycles for free, 24/7. Users can take bikes for up to an hour. If they want to continue to use the system, they must wait 15 minutes before picking up a new bike. Real time updates on the availability of bikes at bike stations, together with pick up station addresses and cycle path maps are available through the system.

METROPOLIS WORKSHOPS

Youth

Metropolise Youth is the sphere of Metroplois that looks towards the future to deal with themes that will affect lives and livelihoods in the world's large cities. With metropolis youth, they are seeking to understand more about how our cities work together with young people in urban management. Metropolis Youth has the following objectives:

- Identify and study the different models of youth participation developed by the metropolis member cities
- Give visibility of good practices of youth participation among Metropolis member cities
- Contribute to the global debate on youth participation in urban issues
- Empower youth as future urban leaders of metropolises with an international outlook
- Ensure that metropolis youth is represented in all the activities of the association and promote intergenerational learning

The workshop is a dynamic space for exchanging city wide experiences together with young people participating in urban management. It is aimed at young people helping to influence the transformation of their city, as close dialogue with their city administration. Participants will therefore be in technical, political roles or management roles.

Women

It was in the framework of the Beijing declaration and Platform for Action at the recent Beijing +20 that the Dual Strategy for advances in equality and full achievement of the rights and opportunities of women was formulated. The Strategy looks at articulating specific policies for women and at committing to the trans versatility of gender or gender mainstreaming. It comes 20 years on from when we first recognized the difficulties in making real, lasting changes to policy processes and agendas – the key objectives in gender mainstreaming. Beyond considering what development of the Dual Strategy will actually mean and why it is important to equality promotion, it will be useful to exchange experiences and proposals for how it will be rolled out in practice.

What does the transversality of gender mean and what is its impact on local policies and on the wellbeing of citizens? The reasons for including gender perspectives in local policy at the global level will be analysed. Case studies will be offered – to give participants the opportunity to look at the application of transversality principles in practice. The session discussed and pinpointed what can be done in the metropolis women's network and other member cities, to promote gender mainstreaming.

CONCLUSIONS

There are three major world events that will take place in 2015 and 2016: the United nations Summit to adopt the post 2015 development agenda (New York, September 2015), the 21st United nations Climate Change Conference (COP 21, Paris, December 2015), and the 3rd United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat 111, Quito, October 2016). All these events will have a considerable impact on the vision of urban development, urbanization and the life of people in the 21st century.