



RAPID PLANNING STUDIO

Concept Note

JANUARY 2016

Summary

Cities and municipalities in rapid urbanizing countries do not have the capacities to plan in advance and at scale for the expected population growth failing to make available serviced land. The result is often that urban growth happens in the form of slums and informal settlements.

The Rapid Planning Studio (RPS) is a workshop integrating the three basic pillars—urban legislation, urban finance and economy, and urban planning and design—of sustainable urban development simulating a full planning process in a rapid, three-day format for municipal staff. It harnesses the knowledge, talents

and energies of all parties to identify a process towards sustainable urban development. Based on UN-Habitat principles for sustainable urban development, it discusses city-wide urban analysis and profiling, strategic planning, urban transformation and public spaces, focusing specifically on answering the challenges of participating municipalities regarding planned city extensions. It aims at strengthening planning capacity of the participating municipalities for sustainable urban development and providing a clear planning methodology and an actionable roadmap to supply serviced land for rapid urban growth.

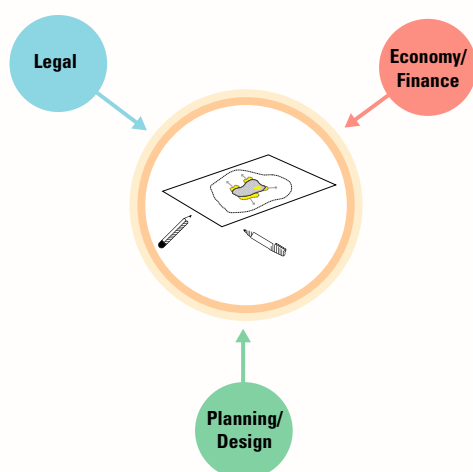
Context

The present RPS method has been developed, evolved and tested during the last four years of cooperation between the Urban Planning and Design Branch, the Urban Economy Branch and the Urban Legislation Unit within the framework of the 'Achieving Sustainable Urban Development' (ASUD) and Kenya Municipal Programme (KMP) projects as well as individual planning studios in Nigeria, Malaysia, and Ethiopia among others. Some elements of the workshop have evolved from the "urban planning for city leaders" trainings, others draw on the methodological approach developed as part of the ASUD programme.

Target audience

The primary target audience are senior and technical municipal staff from planning, budgeting & economy, legal and regulatory, public works and related departments. Also mayors, senior officials and decision makers – representing communities and the private sector – possibly for a shorter and less technical variant of the workshop (such as the 'one day learning sessions' we facilitated within the Kenyan Municipal Programme). A combination of the two above participant groups is possible. Inclusion of national government representative and active participation from local and/or international academic experts has proven to be a valuable addition.

Integrated 3-pillar approach



The training simulates the planning process taking the participants through its main phases. Each step is then discussed from a legal, financial/economic and spatial planning vantage point. Each set of input lectures is followed by a practical integrated

exercise, where the discussed topics are applied to the unique situation of the workshop-hosting municipality using real data that the participants collect before the training.



Learning by doing

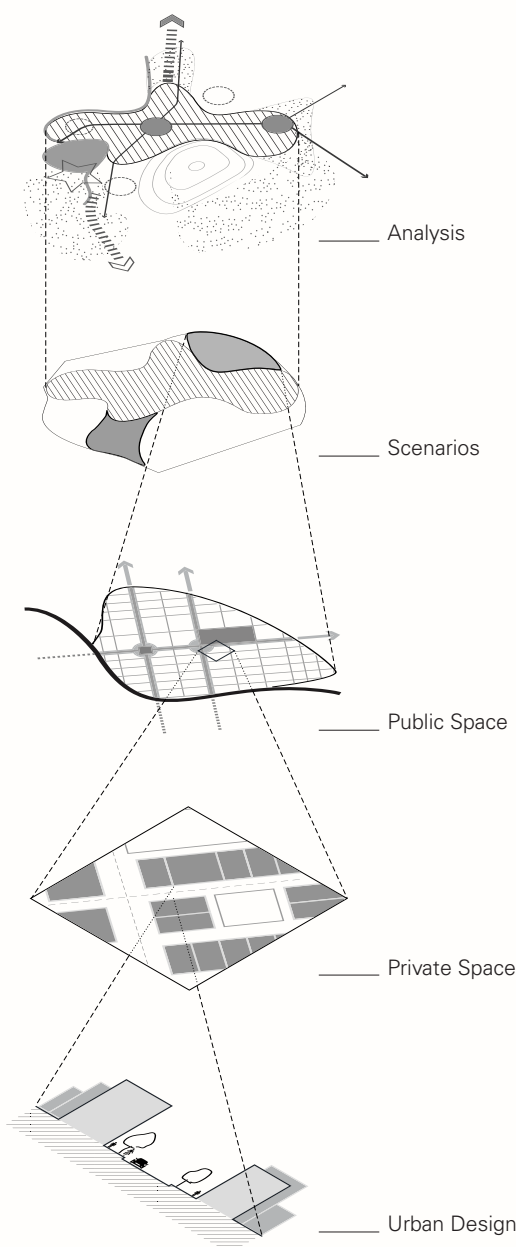
The workshop participants use the knowledge acquired through the input presentation sets illustrating UN-Habitat's approaches and principles in hands-on exercises. In the exercises the principles are localised and applied to the topical challenges. This is where abstract best practice approaches and knowledge from case studies is transferred to the participants and substantiated in a direct, applicable and functional way.

During the workshop, short input presentations illustrating principles and case studies from UN-Habitat facilitators, each accompanied by a handout outlining the main concept 'take-aways', practical case studies, group exercises, guiding questions as well as subsequent presentations and interactive group and plenary discussions of the exercise results.

Process-based

The RPS is a three-day simulation of a full planning process that usually takes 6-18 months. Each of the planning steps are addressed and discussed, from initial assessment to plan implementation. The outcome of each integrated exercise forms the base of the next exercise and planning step.

The RPS does not produce 'correct' plans, but rather gives participating municipalities an overview over good planning processes and allows them to identify gaps and challenges in their existing planning system. Upon completion of the RPS, participants have the knowledge and tools to implement the full process.



Participants at the centre

The subject and centre of the workshop are the participating municipalities. Thus all exercises focus directly on the participants' own challenges and discuss possible answers to these.

The RPS employs general principles and supporting case studies which are linked and localised to the challenges of the host cities in the exercises and discussions.

The RPS starts and ends with the participants and their needs and aspirations: The first element of the workshop are presentations of the participants' city profiles; the last element is a discussion led by the participants addressing main implementation challenges/risks to manage and the steps to take after the conclusion of the RPS.

Peer-to-peer learning

Peer-to-peer learning and horizontal exchange allows planners and urban decision makers to come together to reflect and exchange on the basis of their experience as practitioners with positive mutual learning effects.

The participation of city leaders and planning professionals from cities with similar challenges, opportunities and potentials will establish relations of professional exchange and strengthen urban development capacity. This will also help cities to develop a culture of mutual support based on needs and demands. These interactions enable the participants to make their tacit knowledge explicit and translate it into planning for urban development.

Facilitators

It has proven to be successful to include a technical expert from each of planning, legal, and economy branches, one moderator familiar with both UN-Habitat principles and the local context, plus optionally a higher-level UN-Habitat representative (engagement with city leaders), and a rapporteur for documenting the process and outcomes (ideally preparing the output brochure in parallel to the workshop).



Components and Materials

The RPS starts before the actual workshop days by both establishing city profiles of the participating municipalities in form of posters and presentations where participants take the stage as well as disseminating brochures describing UN-Habitat's approach and principles.

During the workshop, short input presentations illustrating principles and case studies from UN-Habitat facilitators, each accompanied by a handout of the main take-aways alternate with practical demonstrations, group exercises, guiding questions as well as subsequent presentation and interactive group and plenary discussion of the exercise results. Participants' feedback and evaluation of the workshop ensures meeting participants' expectations and contributes to perpetual improvement of the method.

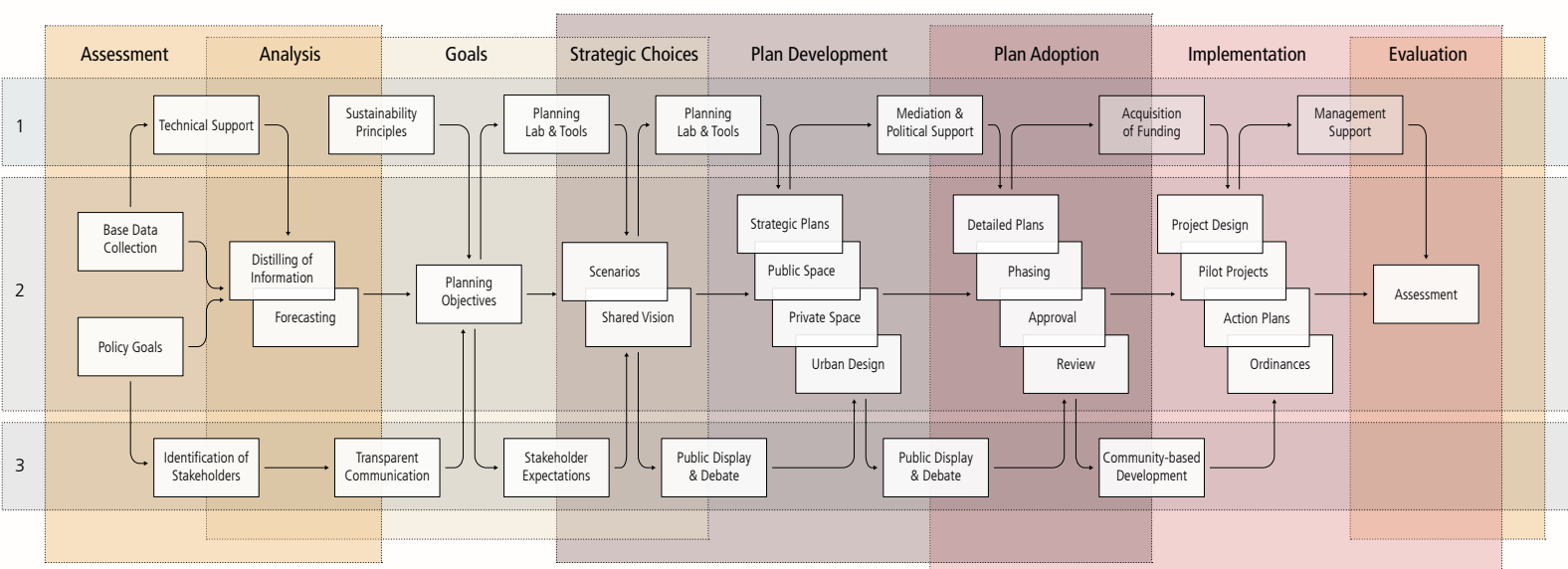
Participants receive a **certificate of participation** upon completion of the workshop. Shortly thereafter, a brochure documenting the process and results of the RPS is produced by UN-Habitat and distributed to the participants.

Optionally, the planning lab or partners backstop and further elaborate on solutions developed during the workshop remotely, which are then presented and reviewed with the participants on the following workshop day.

Existing Tool Integration

The RPS framework allows to integrate and refer to a number of existing UN-Habitat tools, including the **Financial Assessment Tool** (Hong), the **Legal Assessment Framework (LAF)** (Crispi), the **City Prosperity Index (CPI)** and the Street Connectivity Index (SCI) (both Orvados), as well as the Population and Area Projection Tool (Stellmach), or the Plan Benchmarking System (Fundaro). Further, the RPS builds on established approaches and principles, e.g. the International Guidelines for Urban and Territorial Development (IG-UTP) or the Urban Planning for City Leaders publication, among others.

In cities, which previously employed one of the assessment tools (e.g. LAF, CPI, SCI), the RPS uses and benefits from the data gathered. In turn, RPS presentations mention and explain the value of using UN-Habitat tools in a future full planning process.



1 UN-Habitat Planning support

2 Municipal Planning

3 Public Participation



Objectives

- Capacity building
- Harnessing and sharing participants' knowledge of urban development and the role of planning
- Strengthening local capacity and knowledge around the value of planning practice
- Modeling a planning process for local adaptation
- Strengthening the inter-departmental collaboration of the municipality by participatively identifying common development goals, integration and cooperation across sectors
- Understanding the importance and interaction between urban planning and the legal, land and economic dimension of sustainable urban development, in particular for planned city extensions
- Orienting participants on different approaches and modalities on planning for city or urban extension
- Strengthening strategic leadership skills of city mayors and providing a forum for the city mayors to discuss leadership challenges related to urban development
- Equipping leaders of respective cities with basic knowledge on urban planning, urban legislation, land and urban economy instruments to address key challenges related to sustainable urban development, and to be able to assist ongoing or future urban development projects
- Identification of critical gaps in local planning process and how to address them
- Identification of specific critical contextual factors when applying UN-Habitat's approach and principles related to governance, financing, land, legislation, etc, and management options thereof
- Initial development of a sustainable urban development concept for participating cities and formulation of main transformation priorities
- A document of strategic development vision of the city
- UN-Habitat engagement and projects acquisition
- Dissemination of UN-Habitat approach and principles in relation to planning and sustainable urbanization
- Longer-term engagement with partners after RPS
- Engaging cities in the promotion and implementation of guided and planned city extension projects
- Long-term engagement of UN-Habitat with governments and municipalities by providing technical assistance

Background and Rationale

Urban growth in the past 30 years has largely resulted in overcrowded slums and sprawling settlements in the urban fringe. Cities and municipalities are using more and more land to accommodate new developments. In most regions around the world, urban land has grown much faster than urban population, resulting in less dense and in general more inefficient land use patterns.

In many developing countries, the acquisition of land is also not accompanied by the commensurate provision of infrastructure and services making the availability of serviced urban land imperative. Also, the current dysfunctional city expansion is taking place in the absence of a viable spatial structure. Weak governance and rising demand for land result in increased land prices and consequent occupation of marginal land by slums or 'leapfrogging' development with urban sprawl. As a result, living conditions deteriorate and low density makes it costly and inefficient to provide the required services and infrastructure. In the long-term, the overall efficiency of settlements is reduced and

sustainable city development is hindered.

Cities will continue to grow. As a consequence of population growth and intensifying economic activity, cities are compelled to extend its territories to cope with the demands of urbanization. The discourse on urban expansion has always been at the forefront of development debate. As cities and urban areas continue to expand, negative externalities accrue in areas of environmental abuse, exclusion issues, higher demand for mobility and energy, inadequate public spaces and infrastructure services, escalating sprawl and slums, economic opportunity losses, and repeated lapses on preserving and promoting social and cultural diversity. Thus, there is an enormous demand in improving the competencies and capabilities of cities in urban or city expansion planning.

UN-Habitat supports rapidly urbanising countries in developing and improving urban planning methods and systems that address current urbanization issues. The UN-Habitat approach to sustainable urban development applied in particular to ur-

ban or city extensions will enable cities to direct their growth by defining adequate provision for public space and private development, ensuring sustainable and inclusive development and values-based transformation.

This workshop on planning for sustainable city extensions seeks to contribute to enhancing the knowledge of partner city participants and agency representatives in promoting and applying guided urban expansion planning towards a less exclusive and sustainable urban development.

The RPS specifically focuses on sustainable urban patterns. It evaluates various urban typologies and discusses various approaches to more sustainable urban forms, such as compact cities, streets and open spaces, densities and mixed-use developments.

The understanding and awareness of the important linkages between urban planning and urban economic development is vital. To be able to leverage local economic development through urban development projects, urban leaders and decision makers need to possess adequate capacities. Hence, UN Habitat focuses on the linkages between urban planning and local economic production, enhancing their capacity to increase municipal revenues, optimizing local resources for urban development, and enhancing economic value of urban spaces.

The above components demand sound urban governance and legislation to actualise. In that regard the Urban Legislation component was emphasized. Upon the basis that all land is under public/state ownership and existence of strong urban policies, UN Habitat focused on its strong linkages between urban legislation and implementation of urban development projects, and enhancing their capacity to identify the legislating gaps that each leader will have to address in their cities.

Key Outputs

- Identification of city development plans and aspirations and associated gaps in existing planning system
- A planning process framework for local adaptation and use
- A list of needs and aspirations which future training programmes can address
- An action plan identifying the needs and aspirations for urban development and in which way to improve the respective plans using adequate instruments
- List of challenges city leaders encounter
- Draft conceptual plan options with a roadmap for revising and finalizing



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