URBAN TRIALOGUES

LOCALISING AGENDA 21

visions_projects_co-productions

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Foreword

Since the adoption of Agenda 21 in 1992, cities have moved to the forefront of socio-economic change and sustainable development. Half of the world's population is now living in cities and urban settlements, while the other half is increasingly dependent on cities and towns for their economic survival and livelihood. Cities have become centres of innovation and engines of development. It is now generally understood that cities are the key to social and economic advancement and environmental improvement.

But in contrast to their promise, many cities — especially in the developing world — represent today the most alarming concentrations of poverty. The pace of urbanisation is simply too fast to provide and manage basic services for all. In the process, first and foremost the urban poor are marginalised. It is estimated that there are about one billion urban dwellers living without adequate shelter and basic services, in life-threatening conditions of deprivation and environmental degradation. This number is expected to double by 2025.

Against this bleak scenario, it is encouraging to note that over the past decade more than 6,400 local governments in 113 countries have responded actively to the call to engage in Local Agenda 21 processes with their communities. This is a major achievement for local authorities worldwide. However, we at UN-HABITAT feel that more can be done to integrate the needs of the urban poor into the processes of Local Agenda 21. There are many barriers to the accelerated development of this worldwide movement, including lack of local government capacity, insufficient involvement of citizens in local political processes, distorted allocation and management of resources, and above all insufficient political will.

To overcome these barriers a combination of preventive and adaptive strategies are required. In terms of prevention, there is evidence that the most immediate and fundamental bottlenecks to sustainable urban development are not necessarily lack of technology, funding, or international agreements (although these are important) but local planning and implementation capacity and good urban governance. In practical terms, therefore, we need to focus on policies, such as Local Agenda 21, that build capacity in governance, help generate employment, and enable an improvement in the living conditions in smaller towns and villages. Urban-rural linkages need to be understood and addressed if we are to minimise the rush to migrate to larger cities.

As far as adaptive strategies are concerned, sustainable urbanisation lies in forging partnerships between local authorities and the urban poor and empowering them to solve their own problems. We should endorse and popularise the principle of fighting urban poverty without fighting the poor. Our experience shows that urban upgrading programmes with a participatory foundation are visible and effective action plans, which can and should be integrated into Local Agenda 21 processes.

As the UN focal point for local authorities, UN-HABITAT encourages cities to take up the challenges of sustainable urbanization through the Localising Agenda 21 Programme (LA21). Together with its sister Sustainable Cities Programme, LA21 is a major effort by UN-HABITAT and external support agencies to strengthen the contribution that cities and towns make towards sustainable urbanisation in developing countries. Since its inception, LA21 has been able to provide a platform for partners to engage in work related to emerging urban themes.

Through a detailed historical and spatial analysis of four case studies from secondary cities in Cuba, Kenya, Morocco and Vietnam, the present book makes it crystal clear that there are no easy recipes for urban sustainability. The book gives an account of how shared visions were developed and strategic projects designed and implemented, providing a foundation for improved living conditions of urban dwellers. Experience in the cities shows that it is important to pay equal attention to vision building, implementing concrete actions and promoting communication between stakeholders. The case studies also show that considerable time flexibility is needed to change approaches to urban planning and management. In analysing the blockages met with in reconciling opposing views, the book endorses the point that unless there is political will, real change will not happen.

I wish to thank the Belgian Government for its generous support to the Localising Agenda 21 Programme since its inception in 1995. Belgium is among the strong supporters of our agency, with 25 years of uninterrupted backing for a range of UN-HABITAT capacity building initiatives since 1979.

I also want to thank the Post Graduate Centre Human Settlements (PGCHS) of the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven for its conceptual contributions to the LA21 Programme and for taking the lead in this publication. We highly value PGCHS for its in-depth urban research, which complements and inspires our work, and for its remarkable commitment to sustain long-term dialogues with cities, encouraging them to concretise visions into tangible outcomes for all urban dwellers.

I hope that this publication will be an inspiration for those urban planners and managers who are committed to making their cities more sustainable through an expanded base of knowledge and a more effective kit of tools.

Anna Tibaijuka
Executive Director UN-HABITAT

The problems of human settlements (better known under the label HABITAT) have been of concern to the Belgian Development Cooperation for many years. Belgian participants were actively involved in the first United Nations HABITAT Conference (Vancouver 1976), and since 1979 the Belgian Development Cooperation has made multilateral financial contributions to United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (as UN-HABITAT was then named) programmes.

The regular support to a number of important HABITAT programmes has made the Belgian Development Cooperation one of the most steadfast contributors to the institution's multilateral programmes and projects which aim to improve the shelter and settlement conditions of disadvantaged people in developing countries.

In the period from 1979 to the early 1990s, a particular emphasis was given to building up the capacity of professionals, decision-makers and community workers active in more than 34 countries to meet the challenges of facilitating better housing programmes and utilising and improving locally appropriate technologies for shelter provision.

Since 1995, the Belgian Development Cooperation has been the major contributor to the key programme 'Localising Agenda 21: Action Planning for Sustainable Urban Development'. This programme is well rooted in the reality of several medium-sized cities in Vietnam, Kenya, Morocco and Cuba. It deliberately focuses on secondary cities and emphasizes the solving of daily problems of urban dwellers in need of better shelter, water and sanitation, as well as for a better urban environment supporting health and well-being. Importantly, the programme strengthens the capacity to develop long-term visions for a sound sustainable urban development and greatly stimulates the dialogue and active participation of all urban actors to enhance their role as real partners in sustainable development efforts.

The Belgian Development Cooperation proudly supports the initiative to bring through this publication the experiences gained in the LA21 Programme to a worldwide public of professionals, local authorities, policy-makers, community workers and development agencies. It thereby continues to emphasize the importance of capacity-building and dissemination and manifests its appreciation for the role of the Belgian Consortium of universities, professionals, municipalities and organisations coordinated by the K.U.Leuven Post Graduate Centre Human Settlements to systematise its knowledge and its grassroots work in the cities of the programme.

It is hoped that this publication will encourage and facilitate other such initiatives to take off or to be continued, particularly initiatives that enhance the local-to-local cooperation between cities both North-South and South-South in their aspiration towards a more sustainable urbanising world.

Armand De Decker
Minister of Development Cooperation, Belgium

Preface

URBAN TRIALOGUES: Visions_Projects_Co-Productions. Localising Agenda 21 is a critical reflection on the process and outputs of a multilateral programme, *Localising Agenda 21* (LA21) initiated in 1994 by the UN-HABITAT, a Belgian Consortium coordinated by K.U.Leuven's Post Graduate Centre Human Settlements (PGCHS), the Belgian Development Cooperation, and a host of local actors, including the municipalities of the Programme's partner cities of Nakuru (Kenya), Essaouira (Morocco), Vinh (Vietnam), and Bayamo (Cuba).

This collection of essays targets a varied audience including decision-makers, community developers, city planners, managers, scholars, designers, students and interested individuals. It not only offers the way forward on the implementation of the Localising Agenda 21 Programme (LA21) at the local level, but perhaps most importantly it offers a critical reflection on the relationship between sustainable visions for possible futures and strategic urban projects, both elaborated through a co-productive process. Case studies form the core of this book. Documented as independent chapters, each includes an overview of the layered narratives of urban history, the contemporary contestation of territories in contemporary settings, the visions and strategic projects co-produced during the LA21 process. These are further complemented by a series of cross-reading essays that conceptualise and develop particular themes with reference to the case study cities.

Paraphrasing the Belgian surrealist, Rene Magritte, one could say 'Although looking like a book, this is more than a book.' Indeed it is more than a book that expresses the view of a single author and it is not an objective report that presents a totality of facts. The texts represent a kind of collective memory of some of the actors involved in the LA21 Programme. As such, they cannot but be biased, since they are based on a particular blend of views and experiences of academics from the K.U.Leuven, together with colleagues from UN-HABITAT and some of the Junior Professional Officers in the field.

The title 'Urban Trialogues' can be interpreted in several ways, all of which refer to the discursive interaction of separate concerns for development simultaneously engaged in a quest for another urban future. These trialogues do not speak in emptiness, but resonate within particular contexts, the four *loci* of the Localising of Agenda 21, four real cities: Nakuru in Kenya, Essaouira in Morocco, Vinh in Vietnam and Bayamo in Cuba.

This book deals with trialogues between three dimensions of urban planning and development: visions, actions and proj-

ects, and co-productions. Inspired by 'Strategic Structure Planning,' this approach has been adapted to the specific aims and means of the LA21 process in the four cities.

Elaborating, discussing, testing and modifying visions for the future of each of the cities concerned is an important aspect of this process. Visions are not vague utopias, but are based on a critical awareness, the research and diagnosis of each city's problems and potentials, and on a broad-based debate with urban actors. These visions summarise the desired future of a city into appealing images and strong expressions reflecting the natural setting, the built urban heritage and spatial reality, and the unique cultural and social specificity of each city. Such visions are then elaborated and tested with proposed actions and projects of various types and sizes. Small-scale actions can mobilise actors, render processes visible and test forms of cooperation. Large-scale projects translate visions into urban interventions having a structural impact. Visions and projects require intensive co-production involving various actors. Thus, practices of exclusiveness and sectoral separation among different administrations, professional disciplines and social organisations are replaced by powerful interaction and shared responsibilities as a real engine for urban development.

Besides the interaction between these three planning tracks, the title also refers to two other important trialogues. The LA21 approach stimulated discussions between local government, civil society and the private sector — trialogues that represent the essence of the good governance 'triangle' that defines a frame in which private initiatives and the collective interest sustain one another. Elaborating visions, developing projects and organising co-production is an exploration and testing of the potentials of good urban governance.

Finally, the LA21 process supports another remarkable trialogue: the interaction between a local urban team and local actors embedded and engaged in each city's daily struggle, the UN-HABITAT with its international concern for world wide development, and the Belgian Consortium of scholars and professionals from planning and urban design disciplines. This third trialogue, a unique combination of local and international experience, creates a resonance between immediate needs and broad development perspectives.

These trialogues have been developed as a vehicle to localise Agenda 21 in four cities. Yet the cities are working fields, testing grounds, and deliberately so, but involving all local actors in search of more concrete work on sustainable urban development. To highlight this deliberate search for innovation-based-on-practice, the title accentuates the development of visions and projects, not just for a conventional mode of urbanisation, but for another urbanism rooted in practice yet contributing to a sound framework for reflection. Throughout the trialogues, the term 'localising' has been broadened to stress the importance of 'locus' – urban space and civic awareness as a frame and resource for development. This not only provides a new drive for planning and urbanism, but also adds a crucial dimension to the Agenda 21.

The book is a critical reflection on the work done in the Programme for the last ten years and obviously with the benefit of hindsight, the advantage of being able to put approaches, methods and outcomes in perspective, thereby oscillating between theory and practice embedded in the world of the realities of the major partner cities in the Programme (Nakuru, Essaouira, Vinh and Bayamo), and of the continuing global debate and search for more sustainable forms of urban development.

Chapter one not only introduces the LA21 Programme, but also situates it within the world wide effort to implement

Agenda 21 at the local level during the 1990s.

Chapters two, three and four each highlight the particular background, nature and search for developing visions and projects for the cities of Nakuru, Essaouira and Vinh. These three cities are treated with the knowledge of the Programme having operated in the cities for a sufficient length of time to put the work in perspective. The titles of the chapters reflect the context-specific nature of the work. In addition, the graphic and photographic material is all selected from the wealth of material documented over the years.

Chapters five, six, seven and eight — cross-reading essays — highlight a particular entry-point into the overall work done for the LA21 Programme. These chapters form the theoretical basis of the approaches and methods employed throughout the LA21 process and are illustrated with examples of application in the case study cities. The relationship between theory and practice is viewed as a learning process whereby day-to-day reality stimulates reflection and reflection sheds new light on everyday practices.

In chapter nine, work in the city of Bayamo is introduced, but as the Programme only started there in 2002, it is much more an account of work-in-progress so far and could not be treated with the same depth as the other cities.

In chapter ten, a number of lessons learned from the LA21 Programme have been formulated. These are by no means the only lessons, as continual evaluation and other entry-points may add constructive elements to these lessons.

This final chapter may also constitute an invitation to the reader to react and exchange views on the product presented.

We would like to thank all the actors in the Programme, as they have been the true inspiration for the work. We would also like to thank Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka, Executive Director of UN-HABITAT and Armand De Decker, Belgian Minister of Development Cooperation, both of whom have enthusiastically agreed to write a brief foreword.

The editors

Localising Agenda 21

HAN VERSCHURE, RAFAEL TUTS

THE BACKGROUND

Localising Agenda 21: Action Planning for Sustainable Urban Development (LA21), like other programmes and projects, has a history and a contextual embeddedness, with a substantial number of people having been actively involved over the years — people with hopes, expectations, ambition and, above all, a shared purpose to contribute to sustainable urban development.

The LA21 Programme has its roots in the global developmental tendencies of the early 1990s, as well as the more pragmatic concerns of the institutional partners who initiated the Programme. Indeed, the twentieth century has seen an evolution from a world barely urbanised at 13 percent at the start of the twentieth century to one already approaching 45 percent urbanisation by the year 1990. Towns and cities have grown at a rapid rate ranging from two to ten percent a year. In 1976, the Habitat I World Conference drew attention to this rapid urban growth and the dramatic problems linked to it: huge shelter needs, the emergence of squatter settlements and slums, and deficient infrastructure in many low-income settlements.

In 1987, the International Year of Shelter called for providing every household with decent shelter by 2000. Yet the optimism of the 1960s and 1970s, which had developed new concepts to tackle urban problems — sites and services, self-help housing, slum upgrading, incremental growth, adapted standards and locally appropriate technologies — soon disappeared. Indeed, all these solutions, widespread as they may have been in some cities, had not substantially improved the lot of the growing number of people faced with the decreased capacity of states to provide basic services and infrastructure and with economies alternately stagnating or booming but not necessarily benefiting the poor, even in the latter case. In addition, these solutions did not yet fundamentally address the nature and quality of urban places. At the professional and decision-making level, it was clear that new, innovative and locally-rooted solutions needed to be developed. Yet the capacity was often lacking, particularly in fast-growing, medium-sized towns; these were precisely the towns and cities in the 1970s and 1980s that had been given more power and responsibility to implement decentralisation efforts. Thus, capacity-building was urgently needed. It is against this background of developmental concerns that the LA21 Programme was initiated and found its support in some of the following global commitments:

- Agenda 21: the Action Programme 'Agenda 21' was agreed upon at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, better known as the Earth Summit or Rio 1992. Agenda 21 was a culminating point capitalising on a growing awareness, already well highlighted in the 1987 Brundtland Commission Report 'Our Common Future', that there is *only one Earth* and the world community should address more carefully the balance between present options and the chances of survival for future generations.

- Sustainable Human Settlements: Chapter 7 of Agenda 21 calls for active promotion of sustainable human settlements development; the 14th session of the Commission on Human Settlements organised in Nairobi in 1993 defined two ambitious themes for the 1996 global UN Conference of Human Settlements (Habitat II): sustainable human settlements in an urbanising world and adequate shelter for all.

- Local Agenda 21: an emerging movement. In Chapter 28 of the Rio Agenda 21, local authorities and communities are called upon to actively contribute to the implementation of the objectives of Agenda 21. This was further specified in the 1996 Habitat Agenda as "Sustainable human settlement development requires the active engagement of civil society organisations, as well as the broad-based participation of all people. Civic engagement and responsible government both necessitate the establishment and strengthening of participatory mechanisms, including access to justice and community based action planning, which will ensure that all voices are heard in identifying problems and priorities, setting goals, exercising legal rights, determining service standards, mobilising resources and implementing policies, programmes and projects" [UNCHS 1996:104].

In 2000, the Millennium Goals also included specific concerns related to Human Settlements, and they were reconfirmed in terms of commitments at the 2002 Johannesburg

Declaration, with Targets 10 and 11 in particular addressing human settlement goals. Target 10 called for halving the proportion of people without sustained access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015 and Target 11 sought to achieve by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least a 100 million slum dwellers.

Soon after the Rio Earth Summit several programmes were launched with worldwide appeal. It was estimated that by late 1995, over 2,000 local authorities in 64 countries had started a Local Agenda 21 movement, substantiating the growing awareness that sustainable development had to rely on the principle of *think globally, act locally*. The International Council for Local Environment Initiatives (ICLEI) states that this number has grown in 2002 to over 6,400 local authorities in 113 countries [ICLEI 2002], including 18 countries with national campaigns. Local Agenda 21 has indeed become a global movement. However, the movement has not yet reached its full potential as there are still tens of thousands of cities and towns that are yet to make LA21 Programme-like commitments. Moreover, of the 6,400 local authorities that have committed to the LA21 Programme, less than half have gone into the action planning stage. There are many barriers to the accelerated development of a LA21 Programme, including lack of local government capacity, insufficient involvement of citizens in local political processes, distorted allocation and management of resources and, above all, insufficient political will.

Notwithstanding these trends, it remains important to situate our discussion in a more critical review of urban development analysis. In the 1970s and 1980s, most international programmes and donor agencies either had a more rural bias, focused on emergency aid, or generally accentuated the welfare aspects of international cooperation. It was assumed that greater quantitative input, greater participatory involvement and improved allocation and management would resolve the growing urban problems. Yet critical reflection on the root causes of urban (under-)development and the potential paths toward more sustainable urban growth and change was missing.

The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS originally, but now called UN-HABITAT) activities had recognised the growing importance of the urbanisation process and had already initiated or cooperated in several programmes (e.g. the Urban Management Programme, Sustainable Cities Programme, and Safer Cities Programme). Similar to other donor countries, the Belgian Development Cooperation had no strong urban tradition as it emerged from the somewhat anti-urban bias of the 1970s and 1980s. The Post Graduate Centre for Human Settlements, as co-initiator of the Localising Agenda 21 Programme, had for several years already worked on critical reflections on urban issues in a development context. All parties had recognised the growing importance of medium-sized towns because of their high growth rates and, in several instances, because of their fewer opportunities to benefit from capacity-building programmes.

INITIATING THE PROGRAMME

The idea to launch the Localising Agenda 21 Programme was originally the joint initiative of the then-named UNCHS (or UN-HABITAT) and, more specifically, of its Training and Capacity Building Unit and the Post Graduate Centre for Human Settlements, an academic centre within the Department of Architecture, Urban Design and Planning of K.U.Leuven. These two organisations had been working together from 1979 to 1992 on a capacity-building programme named 'Housing in Development,' in which over 400 mid-career professionals from developing countries had been trained.

During an in-depth evaluation of the 'Housing in Development' programme, some reflections led to the idea of launching a new programme focusing on several issues: the necessity to achieve capacity-building through a real impact on the urban environment in a few towns and cities by testing and enabling improved solutions; the necessity to broaden the scope of programmes from housing to urban development; and to contribute to more substantial research and project development on sustainable human settlements in selected spatial and contextual realities. These initial reflections led to the formulation of programme proposals and a project document that was presented by UNCHS to the Belgian Development Cooperation and approved in late 1994.

In initial proposals from 1993, two key areas for interventions were proposed: shelter and shelter-related infra-

structure (closely linked to land management) and solid and liquid waste management (linked to housing-related infrastructure). In subsequent drafts, the need was recognised to more strongly emphasise the strategic urban planning dimension underpinning those two deliverables.

The final Programme proposal was entitled 'Localising Agenda 21: Action Planning for Sustainable Urban Development.' Its initial time-frame was three years but with a five-year outlook. The general and specific objectives of the Programme were stated as follows:

"The general objective of the programme is to contribute to sustainable urban development by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of providing basic urban housing and services through local government and community partnerships in three priority towns and to disseminate the results and lessons learned to other towns and countries" [PGCHS – UNCHS 1995:16].

According to the Programme, the specific objectives to be aimed at in each of the selected towns are:

"To improve access by the poor to shelter, basic urban infrastructure and services through the implementation of broad–based participatory environmental improvement action plans;

To reduce the burden of poverty of low–income communities and groups through the timely delivery and/or operation and maintenance of infrastructure, through the implementation of municipal planning and management action plans;

To promote urban development policies and strategies for more sustainable urban development and management practices by integrating the above mentioned action plans within strategic urban development plans, investment programmes and projects" [PGCHS – UNCHS 1995:16].

The Programme further states:

"These objectives will be attained through a combined action planning and capacity-building process, incorporating incipient and/or ongoing settlement improvement initiatives, aimed at achieving tangible results and visible impact for low-income communities in the selected priority towns. In this manner, the programme aims at promoting more sustainable urban development by integrating specific action plans within strategic urban development plans, investment programmes and projects.

The project approach is to be multi-sectoral, integrative, broad-based and resource-friendly and should encourage short-term visibility within a long-term structuring framework" [PGCHS – UNCHS 1995:16].

The partners in the Programme were:
• UNCHS (now UN-HABITAT)
• ABOS/AGCD (now DGOS/DGCO) Belgian Development Co-operation
• Belgian Consortium of universities, NGOs and potential cooperating municipalities, all coordinated by the PGCHS (Post Graduate Centre for Human Settlements) of the K.U.Leuven
• Partner cities in selected countries — initially starting in three countries, it later expanded to a fourth country — and relevant key local and supra-local actors
• National ministries and capacity-building institutions

LOCALISING SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT

However, above and beyond the objectives, it is necessary to briefly discuss here the question of what were the essential and unique characteristics of the Programme at the time of initiation.

Programme characteristics can be summarised as follows:
• A deliberate orientation towards a more in-depth exploration of what constitutes sustainable urban development at the local level in order to link the economic, social, cultural, and environmental aspects within a context-specific spatial reality, thereby transcending the strong focus on the environmental dimension which other programmes had adopted. From the beginning, the Programme emphasised the need to deal more prominently with the particular dimensions of built space and to

strengthen the capacity to make any interventions in the urban built environment more locally specific. The Programme thereby chose to stimulate and to place itself in a debate on sustainable urban development as illustrated in the following excerpt:

"The more fundamental concern for initiating this programme is however to be found in the observation that some urban development issues raised in Agenda 21 remain too vague to be applied at the local level and that the link between sustainability, built environment and human settlements development is far from thoroughly explored. An important but unexplored aspect of this crucial issue is the achievement of a sustainable built environment. Sustainability is seen here in terms of, *inter alia*, the response to the natural setting and cultural heritage of the town, the structural spatial coherence, the capacity to stimulate social emancipation and personal involvement in the housing delivery process, the search for appropriate and cost-effective building types, the rational use of resources and the support to sound management and economic development. To address these concerns as applied to a specific urban area necessitates a fundamentally integrated view on the envisaged urban development. Sectoral physical planning concepts are largely ineffective for this purpose. More integrated and strategic approaches need to be adopted" [PGCHS – UNCHS 1995:16].

- The Programme's ambition was to contribute in an in-depth manner to an elaboration of the two major interpretations of the term *localising*. On the one hand, to stress the need for further devolving powers and responsibilities from central governments, international or national organisations and global concerns, to the very local scale of communities, with their related authorities and organisations (i.e. all the actors operating at the local level). This *localising* can be partly seen as contributing to the move toward general decentralisation efforts, but also in stimulating a bottom-up approach in the generating of ideas and dynamics from local actors to initiate and guide development efforts benefiting those local actors and the local community as a whole. On the other hand, the Programme wanted to contribute significantly to a more

grounded capitalisation on the *locus* — an oft-lacking element of urban policy and strategy — and on the experiences and potentials of the local place, the setting and its people: its natural and built environment and its spatial qualities, built patrimony and heritage, landscape, vistas, axes, landmarks, nodes, and multi-layered urban tissues. In other words, the entire *collective memory* of its locality as built up by generations of people having shaped their places and also having developed their present-day civic reality.

- The emphasis was placed on secondary towns and medium-sized cities because these had been given less attention in the past, in spite of the increasing evidence that in a development context, growth rates of many of these cities were high. In secondary towns one often finds a better balance between people, power and the locale. In addition, secondary towns proved to be of regional importance as a network of towns countering or balancing the powers of the capital cities. However the capacity to tackle rapid urban development in such cities appeared to be lower than that in the major metropolitan areas and capital cities. Again, the Programme states that "in this perspective, the urban local authority plays a pivotal role as the interface between the central government, the community at large, organised groups, professional advisers, business and industry. Despite this key role, most local authorities lack the capability to plan and monitor local investment plans, programmes and projects, and to integrate those into a coherent and sustainable urban development" [PGCHS – UNCHS 1995:16].

- The Programme also placed an emphasis on capacity-building involving actors at the local level as well as selected capacity-building actors at the national and international level. This capacity-building was viewed very much as a *learning-by-doing process*, which does not start from a set series of pre-programmed recipes but evolves from a building-up and understanding of the local context and the uniqueness of place (locus) as a framework and resource for development. It is a truly locally specific, contextual approach. It thus continues the previous experiences of cooperation in the Housing in Development programme by emphasising the *learning from reality* approach.

- The Programme started from a pragmatic realism in which one cannot resolve all urban development problems at once; it is therefore important to identify key issues and, placed within a broader future-oriented vision for a city, to tackle strategically important issues and problems. Indeed, the optimism of the 1980s and 1990s (e.g. 'shelter for all by the year 2000') was replaced by a more realistic step-by-step approach, but one that was coherently embedded in a strategic and structured planning process.

- The Programme combined the ambition to provide the real learning environment within a city, the testing-ground for developing and verifying visions and principles, and for making the LA21 Programme ideas and principles manifest and, by doing so, make realistic decisions and commitments for implementation. Thus, the ambition of the Programme to make a difference, albeit a modest one, also included the initiation of real actions and projects; these could take the form of tangible demonstration projects (e.g. in the sectors of public housing, water and solid waste) or of more process-oriented actions (e.g. participatory decision-making, transparency in public resource management, cooperation and co-production of visions and actions by several key actors).

MEDIUM-SIZED TOWNS AND THE SELECTION PROCESS

Once the objectives were formulated, the Programme set out to carefully select the partner cities. In general, the guidelines agreed upon for such selections included:

- The focus should be on so-called medium-sized cities (ranging from about 50,000 to 500,000 inhabitants); in practice, selection was concentrated upon provincial capitals.

- The preference was expressed to select cities in the partner countries of the Belgian Development Cooperation at the time of selection; in practice this resulted in the potential selection of cities in East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania), North Africa (Morocco) and Southeast Asia (Vietnam) and much later in the Caribbean (Cuba). The spread over four greatly differing contexts was partially deliber-

ate in order to learn useful lessons for further urban work, thereby highlighting a spectrum of diverse cultural and ethnic contexts, an interesting range of development issues (e.g. ecology, heritage, tourism, stagnation, and reconversion) and a variety of political decision-making structures.

- The cities selected should have an explicit contextual problem situation and challenging opportunities showing a combination of physical, economic, social and environmental issues. These issues could be expressed in terms of *inter alia* scarce economic resources, social tensions or isolation, environmental conflicts between natural resources and urban expansion pressures, as well as opportunities for developing broader-based urban-nature relationships, alternative tourism, and new sustainable production processes.

- The commitment of local authorities to engage in a Localising Agenda 21 process was to be an essential part of the selection.

- In a broader national context, the Programme was meant to contribute to enhancing recent decentralisation policies, thereby increasing responsibilities at the local level and giving an institutional meaning to *localisation*.

Given the above general guidelines, a process of town selection was initiated. On the basis of past experience, familiarity with contexts, expertise in the relevant domains and concerns for concerted effort, initially a list of about fifteen towns in nine countries in three regions was drafted. It was then agreed upon to identify a minimum of six towns in selected countries and to propose three towns for priority action. From the start, it was envisaged that the three partner towns selected for priority action could act as a driving force to stimulate other cities in the region to undertake similar LA21 processes.

The missions for selection of partner towns in East Africa (Kenya and Tanzania) and North Africa (Morocco) were undertaken in early 1995. Because of the intensity of the selection process and the desire to proceed cautiously and incrementally, it was decided to explore the possibilities for partner towns in Southeast Asia in late 1995, but to only start a LA21 Programme in a city in that region in late 1996. After a brief evaluation of development cooperation poten-

tials, the selection mission for a partner town in Southeast Asia was narrowed down to Vietnam. In 2000, the Programme started to explore the possibilities of expanding to other regions. In 2001, a town selection mission was undertaken in Cuba.

During the project formulation phase, the following criteria were suggested as being important for the final selection of priority towns: the scale and type of the town and its importance within a national planning context, the commitment of the local authorities towards sustainable urban development and the existence of convincing local initiatives that illustrate this commitment, civic involvement, NGOs and CBOs, the private sector, aspects of growth and transition with identifiable disadvantaged groups and problematic situations, methodological relevance as example cases and potential for replicability, including short-term results. In the course of the project preparation and assessment missions, these criteria were further refined and the sensitivity of towns for the development cooperation efforts were checked.

A town with a profile that meets the majority of these criteria is expected to perform well as a priority town, is expected to yield substantive results within the scheduled time-frame and with the budgeted project resources, and is expected to minimise the project risks. All the short-listed towns have therefore been systematically assessed accordingly.

It is worth noting that once the city projects got going, some of the selection criteria, such as availability of human and financial resources, accountability and transparency, and civic involvement, were found to be less than adequately present to allow for successful LA21 Programme implementation. The Programme responded to this by explicitly including some of these shortcomings in its capacity-building interventions.

East Africa and the selection of Nakuru
For East Africa, a fact-finding team visited and assessed four towns in January 1995: Eldoret and Nakuru in Kenya and Zanzibar and Mwanza in Tanzania [PGCHS – UNCHS 1995].

The selection of Nakuru was based on some major elements:

- The capital of the economically important Rift Valley.
- The meeting point of several cultural-ethnic groups.
- The challenges raised by rapid urban growth, environmental protection of the vulnerable Lake Nakuru and wildlife reserve and the *Menegai* Crater, and the encroachment on fertile agricultural land.
- The willingness to engage in a LA21 process.

Morocco and the selection of Essaouira
In Morocco, as part of the Magreb region important in the Belgian Development Cooperation, the fact-finding team visited and assessed three towns: Chefchaouen in the North, Essaouira in the West and Tinghir in the South.

Essaouira was finally selected for the following major reasons:
- Capital of one of the Moroccan provinces with the lowest per capita income.
- Major challenge of a city with a historical heritage, an environmental threat, and a need for revitalising its economic, social and cultural potentials.
- Willingness to engage in a LA21 process.
- Challenges raised by promoting international tourism.

Vietnam and the selection of Vinh City
In Vietnam, as an important partner country for the Belgian Development Cooperation, several cities were considered for potential action (Cantho, Vung Tau, Vinh, Hue, and others). After careful consideration and consultation with the representatives of the Ministry of Construction, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Belgian Development Cooperation, and after a fact-finding mission in 1996, the city of Vinh was proposed.

Vinh City's selection rested on:
- Vinh City is the capital of Nghe Anh Province, one of the provinces with the lowest per capita income in Vietnam.
- The city suffered heavily during the Indochina and Vietnam wars and was rapidly reconstructed in the 1970s with modest means.
- It is growing rapidly and faces several environmental challenges, such as encroachment on fertile agricultural land with growing solid waste problems.

- The city has, as yet, not used its riverside and water-based potentials.
- The city council was willing to involve other cities in its initiation of the LA21 process.

Cuba and the selection of Bayamo

In Cuba, a town selection mission was undertaken in May 2001. Eight provincial capitals were assessed and compared, Holguin, Santa Clara, Matanzas, Santi Spiritu, Cienfuegos, Bayamo, Pinar del Rio and Camaguey. After consultations with the Ministry of Foreign Investments and Economic Co-operation (MINVEC), the National Physical Planning Institute, UNDP, the Belgian Embassy and some institutes of higher education, the city of Bayamo was selected.

Bayamo's selection was guided by the following factors:
- Bayamo is the provincial capital of the Granma province in the east of Cuba. This eastern region still lags behind the rest of the country despite efforts to bring it up to the development level of the other regions.
- Bayamo is an important economic centre with environmental challenges (a polluted river), potentials for further growth and agro-industry development.
- Bayamo's local actors were willing to engage in a LA21 process.

A THREE-TRACK APPROACH

Planning and improving cities had, for a long time, been based on so-called master planning approaches, which were more oriented towards land-use planning and often relatively static and unrealistic in their assessment of limited resources and rapid change. The LA21 Programme had, from the start, adopted a more strategic approach so as to be able to combine long-term objectives with short-term solution-oriented actions taking into account rapid change and the limitations of resources, thereby excluding working on all problems simultaneously.

The Programme has thus been inspired by a Strategic Structure Planning (SSP) approach as a major tool for organising the LA21 process. SSP addresses spatial, ecological, social, economic, technical and institutional issues in relation to the problems of urban development. It mobilises key actors from local government, from civil society and from the private sector in a dynamic, continuous and consensual vision-building and policy-making process, thereby strengthening coherence both in its spatial context and between various actors. The process runs in parallel along these tracks:

- Vision: working towards a long-term, shared vision of the desirable future and development path and structure of the city.
- Action: daily action formulation and implementation of actions and projects; testing and training, mobilising and giving feedback.
- Communication/Participation (later referred to as Co-Production): involving actors in vision-building, planning and decision-making processes; resolving disputes between different levels of civic society, creating urban development alliances and effective platforms for constructive and sustainable programmes and projects.
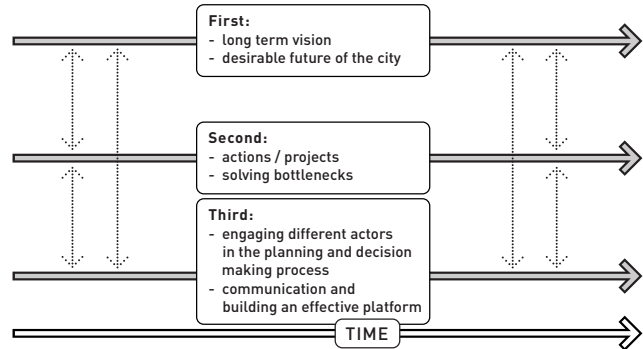
These three tracks must be continuously interrelated. At their meeting points, policy decisions are integrated into the process. These policy decisions are formalised through 'urban pacts,' which are dynamic, result-oriented, negotiated agreements between all responsible parties and integrated into the institutional framework of the local authority. In some cities the activities along the three tracks result in a formal strategic structure plan. This product consists of a vision of urban development, a spatial concept and a programme of action. The local authority plays a key role in the organisation of this process.

Prevailing planning and management practices in diverse institutional contexts show that there is often a lack of balance between the three lines of strategic structure planning. *Vision without actions and projects* does not yield operational synergy, tangible results and necessary feedback. *Action without vision* does not address strategic long-term conditions to ensure that the essential resources for a good quality urban life are available for future generations. *Vision and action without communication* is doomed to fail as it does not take into consideration the aspirations of civil society as a whole and the construction of a social agreement.

A PROGRAMME IN EVOLUTION

Learning-by-doing

The LA21 Programme has been largely based on a *learning-by-doing* approach. In doing so, the Programme incorporated the strengthening of understanding, the gradual but explicit desire to learn from reality, and the potential to improve the process itself, as underlying qualities characteristic of a capacity-building programme. It is evident that such a process requires an attitude of willingness to learn from all the partners.

One of the major strengths of the Programme lies in its being based on the initial belief that all partners have to be part of this learning process. Not only the local authorities of the cities concerned and the local LA21 Programme teams, but also the UN-HABITAT and the Belgian Consortium team, as well as the other regional or national actors involved needing to share this attitude in order to make such a learning-by-doing process productive.

The Programme had a further essential underlying objective in providing a sounder basis for research-grounded programme approaches. In doing so, it was meant to further explore the relation between theory and practice and to do this by emphasising the 'designerly way of thinking in research,' or what we might consider the need to explore and formulate proposals that were not only limited to policies and processes but could also be translated into innovative, yet realistically implementable and physically grounded projects.

In this sense, the Programme was meant to make a unique contribution towards creating a good complement between the specific roles of each main programme initiator: the local towns and their actors, a United Nations policy and programme organisation, and universities or centres of research and capacity-building. A particular effort was also made by the Belgian Consortium to strengthen cooperation between the academic institutions of the 'South' and the 'North.'

This developmental and learning attitude has been further followed in the Programme by incorporating policy recommendations and research findings in the evolution of the Programme itself. A good example one can refer to is the increased attention paid to the reinforcement of the governance capability of local councillors. Another example has been the incorporation in the project proposals of detailed research findings on specific contextual issues (e.g. river-front development, housing upgrading, and town edges) undertaken locally by young researchers.

Capacity-building

This learning attitude is also reflected in the variety of working methods (workshops, consultation, fieldwork, and demonstration projects) utilised throughout the Programme; it is equally expressed by explicitly incorporating educational and research actors into the Programme. In each context, a national training or research institute was incorporated as an actor in the process. Since its inception, the LA21 Programme has thus to be seen as strongly emphasising the buttressing of capacities to meet the challenges of sustainable urban development in medium-sized cities.

Capacity-building was envisaged at three levels:
- At the local level by building up and strengthening a local LA21 Programme team and enhancing the capacity of local decision-makers, administrators, NGOs and CBOs.
- At the regional and national level to strengthen the capacity of administrators in provincial and national planning agencies, of specific university programmes, and of relevant NGOs, if present.
- At the international level to strengthen the capacity of the initiators of the programme itself (i.e. UNCHS, Belgian Consortium, Belgian Development Cooperation, and related international actors).

In addition, training was offered to selected professionals in an international master's degree programme in Belgium and final-year undergraduates and post-graduate students from a variety of countries were offered the possibility to carry out research within the context of the partner cities. Capacity-building was understood by the initiating partners not only in terms of actual training activities and support to institutional development, but also as supportive research to better understand the complexity of urban development challenges.

Actions and Projects

At the same time, capacity-building was also seen by the authors of the LA21 Programme in terms of being able to make a difference in the cities concerned. Strategically selected actions and related projects had to substantiate the planning approaches.

The total budget of the Programme was sizeable, with an overall envelope of core support of US$2.7 million over the period 1995–1999 and US$1.1 million over the period 2000–2003, supplemented by similar amounts of additional earmarked extra-budgetary support by a wide range of agencies. Nevertheless, actions and projects could by no means include large-scale infrastructure investments, but could lead to strategically important interventions by preparing (at times even large-scale) project proposals, thereby addressing the as-yet unexplored potentials of the towns concerned (i.e. the park edge in Nakuru, waterfront in Vinh, urban park and dune front in Essaouira, and riverfronts in Bayamo). These proposals also served to link up with potential donors and investors at the national and international level and to initiate and test demonstration projects, some with immediate impact for improving the quality of life of the more disadvantaged sections of the city's population (examples include the provision of water points, solid waste improvements, upgrading of low-income housing areas, re-housing of flood victims, improvement of markets, greening of neighbourhoods, provision of support to environment-related income generation activities and the like) and other proposals with the deliberate intention of creating a platform for wider action (e.g. a city-wide renovation programme of public housing or a systematic programme of infrastructure improvement).

PARTICIPATION, COOPERATION AND CO-PRODUCTION

From the start of the Programme, it was considered very important to engage all key actors in each of the Programme cities in the process. Local government, civil society groups, and the private sector all can creatively engage in discussions, in proposing actions and in being partners in execution of projects, as well as in resolving conflicts or removing obstacles towards more sustainable urban development.

City-to-city Cooperation

The stimulation and fostering of North-South and South-South city-to-city (C2C) cooperation was envisaged from the early stages of the LA21 Programme.

Nonetheless, the actual process of city-to-city cooperation took some time to evolve. In the first stage, the Leuven–Nakuru initiative was begun, gained substantial momentum and is still active today after almost eight years of activity.* This cooperation has set the tone for several other such city-to-city efforts, not only involving Belgian partnership with cities in the South, but also facilitating the initiation of more LA21 Programme initiatives in the North and South.

Cooperation between Essaouira and the Brussels municipality of Etterbeek was established in 2002. Cooperation between Vinh City and Bayamo and another town in Belgium, in spite of several promising attempts, remains to be consolidated. In addition, several other cases of effective city-to-city cooperation and exchange activities have taken place in the partner cities. Exchanges between cities have been facilitated by the Programme through participation in annual meetings of the Sustainable Cities Programme (SCP), the Human Settlements Commission meetings and international urban development conferences. City-to-city cooperation within the selected countries themselves was established from the beginning and has been implemented to varying degrees in each of the countries concerned.

* The Leuven–Nakuru Cooperation received a Habitat Scroll of Honour Award on International Habitat Day, held in Brussels on October 7, 2002.

Promoting good urban governance

The Programme has gradually increased its emphasis on good urban governance as a set of principles and as a means to achieve its objectives. In 1999, when the Programme reached the end of its first phase, the Global Campaign on Urban Governance had become a strategic priority for UN-HABITAT to be mainstreamed into all Programme work. The LA21 Programme has contributed significantly to the articulation of the principles developed by the campaign. In turn, the Campaign has inspired the LA21 Programme to complement the consultation efforts, which had been a hallmark of the Programme since its inception, with a host of other practical means to promote good urban governance in its day-to-day activities.

Examples include training of elected officials in their roles as enablers, communicators and negotiators; revitalisation of municipal revenues and rationalisation of expenditures; active awareness-raising of civil society associations regarding the issues of sustainable urbanisation; building of capacity for conflict resolution between civil society and local authorities and implementation of selected actions to address the immediate needs of vulnerable groups within the larger concern for strategic action. These interventions enabled the Programme to make its action planning efforts more sustainable and to better target its interventions for the enhancement of the human, physical, financial and social assets of the most disadvantaged sections of the urban citizenry [Tuts 2002].

The challenge of up-scaling

From the beginning, the ambition of up-scaling the Programme was present. In response to requests for replicating city experiences, different mechanisms have been deployed to further LA21 Programme principles at the national level. These include links with relevant ministries, associations of local government authorities and university departments. National replication strategies are under continuous refinement, matching the needs of the cities with the mandates, capacities and commitments of national partners. While peer learning is valuable, experience has shown that local to local dissemination has its limitations as the pilot city does not always have the necessary commitment nor does it necessarily have the appropriate capacity to trans-

fer knowledge and skills to other cities. Morocco is a good example of this in how the experience in Essaouira has inspired the national government to promote the LA21 Programme as a policy and to support its replication in other cities and towns (Marrakech, Meknes, Agadir and small urban centres of the Marrakech Tensift Al Haouz Region). Through experience, the Programme has learnt that national replication agents need to be involved from the beginning in the city projects, as in the case of Cuba, where the Bayamo project is being replicated in three cities (Holguin, Cienfuegos and Santa Clara).

Considering the often limited power and revenue base of local authorities, national governments have a critical role to play in creating a climate conducive to the LA21 Programme. They can run nation-wide programmes for sustainable development awareness, which can go a long way in complementing the initiatives taken by individual cities, as well as removing the legal and administrative barriers that hinder effective implementation of municipal LA21 Programme initiatives. National or regional universities and training institutions have an important role to play In response to this challenge; the building of national capacities for up-scaling the LA21 Programme demonstration projects is one of the partnerships UN-HABITAT is implementing as a follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Within the framework of this partnership, the Localising Agenda 21 Programme expended its supports to new nation-wide programmes, in Senegal supporting the cities of Louga, Matam, Guedawaye and Tivaouane; in Brazil supporting the cities of Beberibe, Paranhas, Quirinopolis and Maraba and in Peru supporting the cities of Arequipa, Chiclayo and Lima-Callao. Today, the Localising Agenda 21 supports about 30 cities and towns in seven countries. At the same time, the Post Graduate Centre for Human Settlements of K.U.Leuven (the co-ordinator of the Belgian Consortium supporting the Programme) is continuing with its efforts to train young professionals from many countries worldwide and to increase its networking on sustainable urban development initiatives.

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LA21 PROGRAMME

5th Steering Committee Meeting; Brussels (29 May 1997)
6th Steering Committee Meeting; Brussels (9 December 1997)

Formulation of first programme proposals

City Selection in Vietnam

Rio+5 Meeting: New York, June 1997 (review of LA21 movement)

Rio Earth Summit: Agenda 21 (Chapter 28)

2nd Steering Committee Meeting; Brussels (2 June 1995) Selection of Nakuru as priority town

Start-up and city selection in East Africa and Morocco

1992 • **1993** • **1994** • **1995** • **1996** • **1997** •

1st Steering Committee Meeting; Brussels (25 November 1994)

Programme proposal approved by Belgian Development Cooperation

3rd Steering Committee Meeting; Brussels (22 January 1996)
4th Steering Committee Meeting; Brussels (2 October 1996)

Start implementation in Kenya and Morocco C2C cooperation Leuven-Nakuru

Habitat II: Habitat Agenda (Istanbul, June 1996)

7th Steering Committee Meeting; Brussels (29 September 1998)

9th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (8 October 2002)

Rio + 10 in Johannesburg: September 2002

Consolidation phase

11th Steering Committee Meeting;
Nairobi (4 May 2004)

Adoption of Millennium Development Goals:
New York, September 2000

Start of implementation in Bayamo
C2C cooperation Etterbeek-Essaouira
National LA21 Programme in Morocco

1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004

8th Steering Committee Meeting; Brussels (22 October 1999)

10th Steering Committee Meeting;
Nairobi (12 May 2003)

Slowdown (limited financial inputs)

Global Campaigns
'Urban Governance'
'Secure Tenure'

External evaluation
City selection in Cuba

EVENTS AND POLICIES
PROGRAMME EVOLUTION
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

AKURU

Structuring Urban Natures

ANDRÉ LOECKX, BRUNO DE MEULDER, LAWRENCE ESHO

Located 160km northwest of Nairobi, Nakuru is one of Kenya's secondary cities and the fourth most populous after the capital Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu (fig. 2.1). The city's origins and subsequent development are linked to its strategic location along an important rail and road corridor,[1] and a picturesque, natural setting on the edge of the Great Rift Valley. Here, its position as a major rail and road interchange node, the overwhelming natural beauty of its immediate surroundings, and the favoured climatic conditions of its rich agricultural hinterland[2] are the propelling forces for the city's historical drive and success. The city is home to a fast-growing population[3] currently estimated at 289,358 (GOK, 1999) spreading across an area totalling about 290 square kilometres.[4] It serves as the region's main commercial, service, industrial and administrative centre.

Nakuru's undeniably magnificent setting and telling history suggest the city should be positioned for a glamorous and prosperous future. While this has certainly been the case in the early stages of the city's development, the full

fig. 2.1 Located 160 kilometres northwest of Nairobi, Nakuru is Kenya's fourth largest urban centre after Nairobi, Mombassa and Kisumu.

realisation of this potential and the benefits accruing thereof are betrayed by a complex and uncertain reality in its current condition. The high rate of growth has occasioned an enormous expansion of the built environment and increased the demand for housing, infrastructure and services, and employment opportunities. These are occurring against a backdrop of a decline in the traditional agro-based manufacturing economy due to global economic trends, diminishing productivity in the hinterland, and competition from rival towns. Locally, an uncertain and sometimes volatile political climate, numerous resource constraints and managerial problems facing the municipality serve to further aggravate the situation. The primary dilemma in Nakuru necessitates a quest to localise powerful ways and means of obtaining sustainable urban development whereby the hidden and under-utilised assets of Nakuru's locus — location, name, nature, people, infrastructure, urban patrimony — are valorised in a useful way that reflects the basic conditions of its natural and human ecology.

The account below, compiled by means of a historical reconstruction of Nakuru's spatial structure,[5] summarises the results of this exploration beginning with a narrative on the city's historical roots and growth trajectory and followed by a synthesis of key aspects of the contemporary urban setting. Subsequently, these serve as backgrounds to the formulation of a common vision complemented by a strategic programme of actions and projects that form the latter part of this chapter.

A HISTORICAL SAFARI THROUGH NAKURU

Nature

Nakuru is located in the spectacular setting of the East African Highlands and the famous Rift Valley arising far north, beyond Ethiopia, and stretching through Kenya and further south to Mozambique. This valley is one of the world's most marvellous geological formations, dating from more than 12 million years ago. Its natural scenery is awesome and breathtaking. The fertile highlands of the Rift Valley have nourished some of the earliest habitations of the human race and harboured many local civilisations ever since. In recent history, the natural assets and the climatic

fig. 2.2 The *Menengai* Crater is one in an assemblage of natural features that dot the entire Rift Valley and symbolises the difficulty presented by the varied and un-dulating terrain of the city's immediate context.

fig. 2.3 In Kenya and East Africa, the railway, the principle colonial instrument for opening up territory, also gave birth to a host of new cities and towns.

comforts of the 'promised land' attracted European settlers during colonial times and tempted them to expropriate the highlands, thus giving rise to the term 'White Highlands' and to Nakuru's origins as a colonial outpost.

Two natural features dominate Nakuru's setting: the *Menengai* Crater, a dormant volcano, and Lake Nakuru, famous as the world's largest natural habitat of flamingos. The city positions itself strategically between the two, one a spectacle of spatial grandeur and the other (fig. 2.2) a saline lake that harbours a rich diversity of animal and plant life. The city spans as a bridge across these two natural poles, which frame the existence and growth of Nakuru. The two poles, while yielding both a poetic and powerful context, sig-nify the dualism of natural forms: high and low, mountain and water, convex and concave, and deep and shallow.

Nakuru:
An 'Immediate' City

The present size and status of Nakuru contrasts with the modest nature of the railway outpost that was founded some 100 years ago as a stop on the Uganda Railway. Like all other major cities in Kenya, Nakuru owes its existence to the Great East African Railway (fig. 2.3). In 1904, the railway reached the extraordinary and perplexing point between two overwhelming natural elements at the edge of the Great Rift Valley. The difficult, undulating terrain of the surrounding

context and the sheer size and spread of these two ele-ments — the lake and the crater — ruled out any possibility for circumvention in any direction. This left no other alter-native for the railway other than to proceed through the nar-row passage (fig. 2.4).

This tracing of the railway in between these two monu-mental natural elements formed a frame and created a field of tension between nature and urbanity that would forever hold Nakuru's development in its grip. There is, on the one hand, a natural landscape that articulates itself by means of the seemingly uninterrupted expanse sweeping down the slopes of the crater to the stretched-out, flamingo-covered shores of the lake. On the other hand, there is the railway, "that imperial instrument par excellence of the nineteenth century", as Lenin once stated, that got the maelstrom of modernity going. This sharp contrast between nature and culture weaving between the great beatings of the land-scape and the sharp line of the railway generated a whole series of opppositions: green versus mineral, solid versus liquid, shallow versus deep, landscape versus city, slow-ness versus speed, and tradition versus modernity. Two notions of history and time and of speed and change also come together in Nakuru: an almost perpetual history of the *longue durée* of which Hyrax Hill, the prehistoric site just beside the Central Business District (CBD) of Nakuru, testi-fies and the ephemeral *histoire immédiate* contained in the

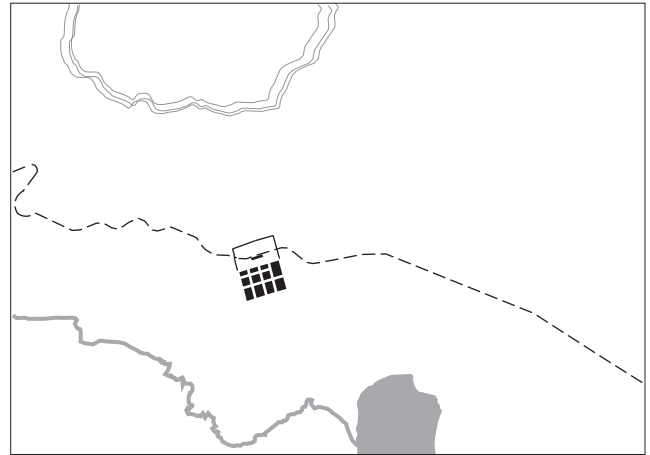**fig. 2.4** The city was founded in 1904, initially as a railway outpost.

fig. 2.5 The crater and lake form a frame for a city borne of a single-track railway. The two natural features create a field of tension between nature and urbanity.

space-time compression that is so characteristic of present-day modernity, that of the 'instant' city, the immediate city that Nakuru has become.

When looking at Nakuru today, it is difficult to imagine the city as being less than a 100 years old. In such a relatively short time Nakuru underwent a transformation from a scratch of railway on the landscape into an urban centre of about 300,000 inhabitants. The dust has never really settled. Normally, urban forms, mechanisms and institutions evolve over a long time, adjusting to the changing aspirations and voices of the citizenry. History shapes this condition and offers necessary reference points for future desires and directions. Although the history of Nakuru is compressed in time, it nevertheless manages to provide such reference points, the strongest of which include the magnificent landscape of its specific and generic setting, the different time-lines of its compacted history, and the heterogeneity and vitality of its present urbanity.

The urban condition in Kenya, unlike European countries, is a very recent phenomenon and, subsequently, Nakuru is a city of here and now. In a way, this is advantageous as it imparts a sense of freedom for the city to envision and design its own future. But again, Nakuru's prime contradiction in its basic dilemma comes to the fore. On the one hand, the ever-agglomerating patchwork of the city, its flows and its fascinating flux, is an expression of dilemma and free-

dom. On the other hand, this flux seems to limit this freedom, especially considering the vastness and the beauty of Nakuru's nature. As stated before, this dilemma warrants reflection on the fate of the city and forms the context of the Localising Agenda 21 Programme. In the narrative that follows, we first summarise the development history, as well as the paradoxical contemporary characteristics of Nakuru.[6] Consequently, we interpret this to highlight the visions and the strategic urban projects developed for the city through the Programme.

Railway City

A century ago, railway engineers drew and gouged an almost horizontal line through this landscape, emphasising its undulating topography. On the site of the future settlement of Nakuru, the railway settled temporarily before lifting itself to another level where it zigzags nervously through the countryside to Kisumu and beyond. From the beginning, the city had an ambivalent relationship with the surrounding landscape; given the difficulty of the landscape, the railway engineers deliberately steered clear of both the lake and the crater. It follows, then, that Nakuru is primarily oriented to the railway. Yet at the same time, the crater, though largely hidden, and the clearly visible lake both exercise an attraction, creating a context, border and backdrop for the city in between (fig. 2.5).

fig. 2.6 The nascent town consisted of a railway yard and settlement accommodating minimal residential, administrative and commercial functions.

fig. 2.7 A view of the main commercial street in the 1930s.

fig. 2.8 The Ballenden Plan represents the first attempts at formal planning and the foundation of the city's expansion beyond the initial grid.

The initial plan of the settlement forms a near perfect square cut in half by the railway. The northern half contains the railway yard and depots with their clusters of track, shunting yards, and loading bays. The southern part forms the settlement itself (fig. 2.6). It is a simple, symmetrically planned grid that marries the administrative, judicial, commercial and recreational infrastructure of Nakuru into a cohesive whole. There is an embodied directionality in this grid, in which streets with an east-west orientation are called *avenues* while those with a north-south orientation are called *roads*. This original dichotomy (railway yard and settlement) defines Nakuru. It also underlies the city's basic constituent elements of an asymmetric and hybrid structure, defined by the linearity of the track and the Cartesian grid of the settlement. The complementarity of these two opposed ordering systems continues to this day, and is reflected in the structure of the city.

Nakuru was invested as the centre of the Rift Valley and the Highlands. The region was duly transformed into a patchwork of large farming estates, with Nakuru as the railway stop for the agricultural region. Consequently, the city became a place of exchange and transhipment. These transport-oriented functions automatically generated a market, services, and administration, but also entertainment, a club, and other lifestyle accoutrements. In short, Nakuru became a central place for exchange, assemblage and collection and a common shared space in which social life could converge and concentrate (fig. 2.7).

Grid & Patchwork

The colonial plan of 1929 (fig. 2.8) laid the foundation for Nakuru's expansion outside of the original grid and in accordance with the then-contemporary planning principles of functional zoning[7] and, by extension, ethnic zoning. To the southeast of the original grid and only touching it at one corner, was the artificially constructed settlement *Bondeni*, a separate location for the Asian community that had flocked to the area in the wake of colonial expansion. *Bondeni* was a distinct entity and acted as the first stepping-stone in the construction of the patchwork that became Nakuru. Nakuru developed into a juxtaposition of segments and neighbourhoods without formal or structural relations.

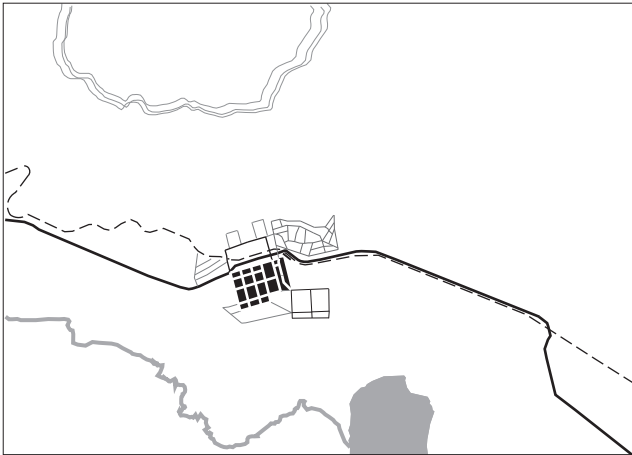The colonial city became an assemblage of clearly de-

fig. 2.9 Map of the city in the 1930s. Note the emergence of the industrial area, European garden district and Bondeni Asian quarter to the north and south, respectively.

fig. 2.10 The Trans-African Highway was constructed parallel to the railway during the inter-war period.

fined segments, each reserved for a particular group and each reflecting the lifestyles, hierarchy, power and status of that particular group: the European garden district, the Asian quarter, the CBD and the industrial zone (fig. 2.9). Only in the 1950s was the working African population permitted to live in the city in a segregated quarter allocated to them. Nonetheless, the very principles of separation also became the tools for neighbourhood formation, with the concept of neighbourhood being rooted in the consciousness of urban living. Borders and edges of each quarter were carefully defined. These notions of segregation, combined with those of neighbourhood formation, impregnated a fundamental tendency into the physical layout of the city. The mode of urbanisation as a 'patchwork' came to be an accepted notion, implying the city could accommodate disparate segments into its totality with the help of a loose structure to amalgamate its different parts. So, although the expansion started in accordance with the zoning concept, the assemblage of neighbourhoods with strong neighbourhood characteristics is clearly different from a homogeneous residential zoning development. It also differs from the usual sprawl of undifferentiated residential peripheries.

Rail-Road Town
Nakuru is not only a patchwork of segments and a summation of differences. From its inception, the city also incor-

porated two abstract ordering systems: the line and the grid. The grid dissolved itself into a patchwork assembled from dissimilar, multicoloured segments. The patchwork-grid offers a minimal and flexible structure. In contrast, the line traced along the rail produces a unity and articulates a prime morphological fact. Between the two world wars, the railway line was complemented with a national highway (fig. 2.10). Like the railway, it developed a trans-African connection of the first order. The highway that presses on through Nakuru connects the Indian Ocean with the Kenyan hinterland and, eventually, the Congo.

From Lanet, a few kilometres to the east of the CBD, where various roads interconnect and where the small airport was built, the road and the railway run almost parallel. They are a kind of double bundle bringing together various local, regional, national and international flows. Pedestrians, cyclists, cars, taxis, *matatus* (public transport vans) buses, lorries, trains, goods and people all flow through this corridor that consequently and undoubtedly forms the backbone of Nakuru. This rail and road bundle has gradually transformed the city into its present disposition as a road and rail town, a stopover both for motorised and rail transport. The movement along this east-west artery has founded and shaped the existence of Nakuru as a plug-in town or as a room along the corridor. The traffic, continuously breathing and pulsating as it passes through the town,

fig. 2.11 Numerous petrol stations along the highway, incorporating other activities such as eating, shopping and resting, are indicative of the city's rapidly changing image.

fig. 2.12 The bundling together of the railway and highway ruptures the city into north and south segments.

lends a sense of vitality and dynamism to an otherwise relaxed and small-town-like atmosphere. The railway was allowed to decline as a dominant mode of transport and the road took over as the primary transportation mode in Nakuru. Nakuru is not a terminus, but an anchoring point in a channel of flows. Primary nodes like the railway or the bus station, as well as the colourful petrol stations that tend to acquire similar characteristics as the latter, are not merely service points, but also activity nodes for eating, shopping and resting (fig. 2.11).

The systematic planting of trees along this traffic corridor forges the whole cluster of infrastructure into one elongated urban spine with majestic dimensions and qualities (fig. 2.12). In short, the east-west bundle of infrastructure eventually acquired the simultaneous role of backbone and collector, which at the same time creates a rupture between north and south and raises issues of access and connection.

A Central Place

Just beside the original city centre grid, the rail and road bundle starts to dissociate and, in so doing, offers an interesting and highly accessible in-between area. At this point, road and rail go their separate ways, effectively ending the city. The funnel-shaped zone formed by the diverging road and rail lines is the site of the industrial quarter. The larger transport depots, warehouses, agro-industrial workshops

and industrial premises are all based here. Connections to and from both the rail and road systems are smooth and generate a system of strips alternating with rail tracks, factories and roads. In a way, the industrial zone resembles a flow chart. As specific as it might seem, the industrial zone is in many respects a *pars pro toto* for the city. The flow chart symbolises movement, but also organises interruption, stoppages, exchanges and interchanges. Paradoxically, the flow chart is just as good a segment as any of the other pieces in the patchwork that form Nakuru. Above all, the zone demonstrates the centrality of Nakuru with reference to its people's industriousness. The city is about assembling, re-assembling and redistributing. From its origin onwards, Nakuru was and remains a place of reunion — a public and central space. To that condition it owes its function as a market, as well as its administrative role as a district and provincial capital of Kenya's Rift Valley Province (fig. 2.13). Headquarters for many agro-based industries and service institutions are located in Nakuru. Maintaining its status as the marketing and industrial centre of its region, Nakuru plays host to farmers from the region and the country as a whole. They flock to the city to exhibit their produce and products in the annual Agricultural Show. Nakuru is therefore a symbol of power, resources, and utopia and, as such, acts as a magnet for rural-urban migration, attracting populations that come to trade, work, or take up residence. And

even with the decline of the traditional industrial economy in recent decades, investment in trade (formal and informal) and urban agriculture have emerged as new engines of development.

The end of the Second World War marked the beginning of a new era of modernisation in Nakuru. In this period, the patchwork established in the city began a steady, unstoppable extension coupled with investment in infrastructure. The industrial quarter developed steadily and took full profit of its favourable location and rail and road connections. The intersection of highway and rail, just before both lines join the CBD, was changed. At the same time, the old station was divided into a goods depot (which remained at its initial site) and a passenger railway station, with a new location chosen next to the original grid (fig. 2.14). This station was thus given an eccentric position — the armpit of the CBD. The modernistic station building was given a forecourt. This was rapidly followed by a bus-park and taxi ranks. The *matatus* arrived soon thereafter. The important flows of traffic that meet here, their movement and concentration, make this location a suitable marketplace. In time, that is what it became: retail market, wholesale market, *jua kali* (informal industry and trade) area, shops and bars giving the area a sense of enjoyable vibrancy (fig. 2.15). The station environment offers a complementary dialogue between opposing antitheses: movement and immobility, passing by and engagement, net and node, and ease and congestion.

Within the old city, earlier aberrations caused by the colonial plan began to fizzle out. The colonial settlement, epitomised by the grid, acquired a new role as the CBD of the expanding African city. And further south, the disappearance of the racecourse yielded new programmes — primary and secondary schools, institutes of higher education, research centres — to enhance the city's central role.

Public housing complexes, first constructed in the 1950s as an effort to house the African population, were the first step in the creation of many different dwelling types that transformed Nakuru into a city for Africa. Following independence from the British in 1963, the municipal rental housing stock increased and is today estimated at 6,000 units. These are located between the town and Lake Nakuru, the main spine being Flamingo Road. Successive migration streams from the hinterland led to the creation of diverse

fig. 2.13 The fact that the country's major agricultural institutions are headquartered in Nakuru testifies to its role as Kenya's farmers' capital and its past industriousness as a leader in the agro-based manufacturing industry.

fig. 2.14 The building of a modern station building, among other additions, signifies the beginning of the modern age in Nakuru in the post-war era.

fig. 2.15 Today, the railway station area is an agglomeration of complementary activities including the retail grocery market shown here.

fig. 2.16 The post-independence African city is a patchwork of disparate neighbourhoods representing a mix of building types, conditions and lifestyles.
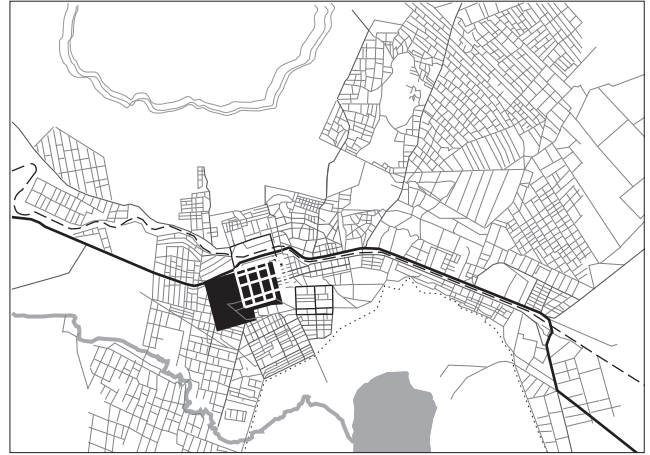

fig. 2.17 Today, Nakuru is an exploding city of 300,000 people occupying an area estimated at 400,000 square kilometres. The 1990s have seen the city expand beyond its previously set western, south-western and eastern extents.

forms and fabrics of urban development. From the exclusive garden district to the densely populated social housing quarters of *Ronda*, *Shabaab*, and others, and the agri-urban lots situated in the periphery, the existing patchwork was intensified (fig. 2.16). In more recent years, the expanding semi-planned residential-cum-agricultural settlements are extending west, southwest, east and northeast of the city.

A game park, the Lake Nakuru National Park, was created in 1968 around the lake and covers an area of about 188 square kilometres. The park's creation had two aims: to safeguard the habitat of the Flamingo waterfowl species, which have made the lake their regular home, and to facilitate its development as a tourist attraction and destination. Subsequently, other species were introduced and now total approximately 450 in variety. In 1990, the lake park was declared a 'Wetland of International Importance' (*Ramsar Site*) to underline the value of its bio-diversity. Unfortunately, the growth of the city increased conflicts between humans and wildlife, leading to the erection of a double fence to separate the park from the city. The relationship between the park and the city has long been sour since the former is managed by a central government agency. The climax of tensions between the Municipal Council and the Kenya Wildlife Service in the 1990s led to the opening of an alternate eastern gate to avert charges levied by the Municipality for use of the Flamingo Gate. Similarly, the city's residents have long

considered the park unaffordable and inaccessible, therefore seldom visited it. The situation is now different as there is greater collaboration between the city and the park, with a recorded increase in domestic tourism.

And as the city's population grew, a series of boundary extensions saw its area grow from 78 square kilometres in 1978 to 290 square kilometres in 1995 (fig. 2.17). The latter expansion was occasioned by the inclusion of Lake Nakuru National Park into the gazetted area of the municipality. Today, the effective urbanised area of the city has increased, bursting beyond its present legal confines. This growth, towards the west, southwest, east and northeast, is directed mainly by the activities of land-buying companies operating in the city's peripheral areas. The formerly large agricultural parcels are being subdivided in response to the rising demand for land for housing development. The kind of development evolving on these plots, averaging 1.2 hectares each, is that of continuous strip development of housing along access roads while the backsides are utilised for agriculture. Falling outside the existing municipal boundaries, the lands bear different land tenure from those within the city boundary (freehold as opposed to leasehold) and are thus administered by the Nakuru County Council. This has created development problems, especially as these areas continue to urbanise without any planning intervention, infrastructure or service provision. There are ongoing dis-
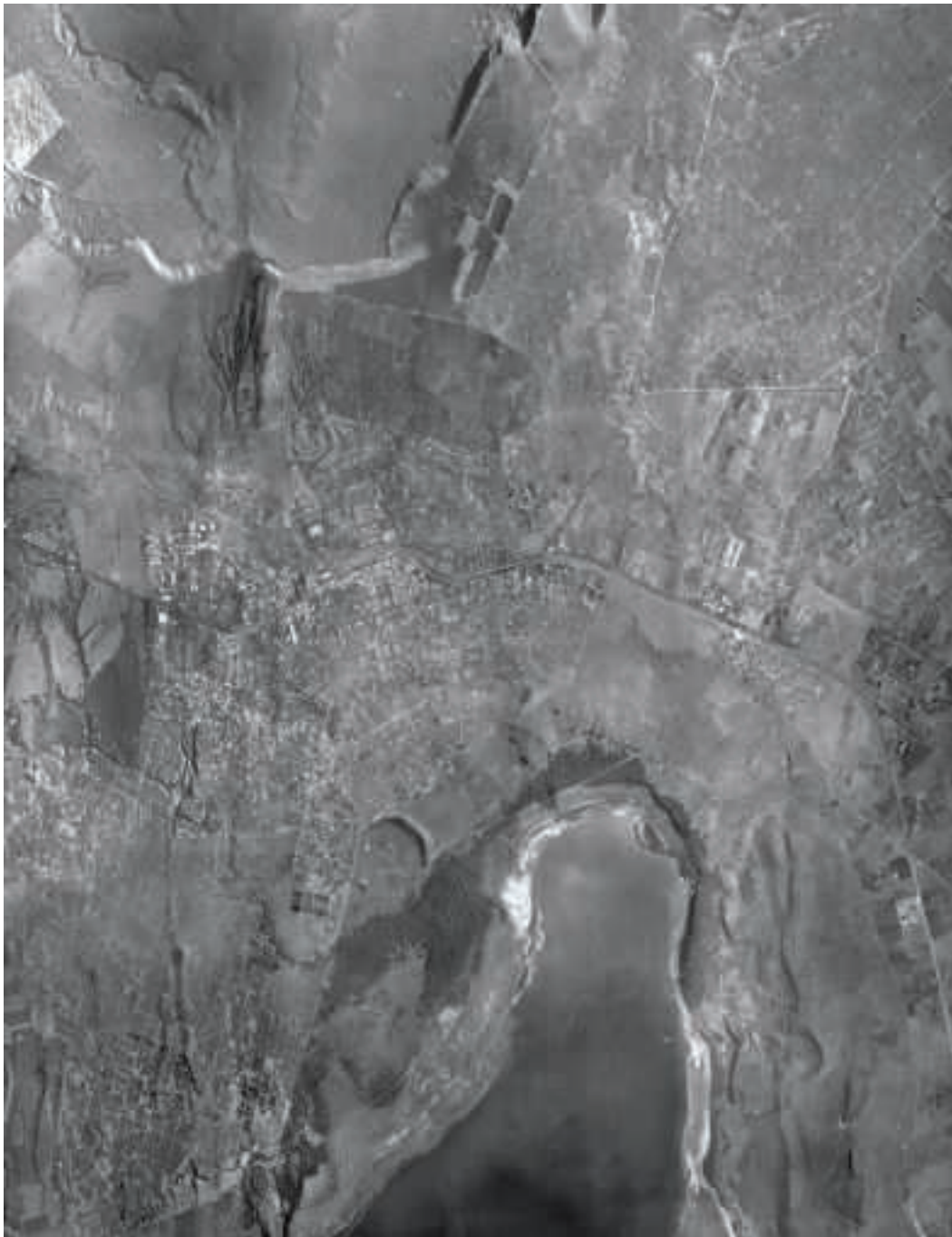
fig. 2.18 An aerial view of Nakuru in 1989.

cussions to bring these areas, along with the *Menengai* Crater, into the jurisdictional area of the municipality to facilitate the provision of services and the exploiting of their tourism potential, respectively.

Today, Nakuru is an African city, an East African city, a Kenyan city and a Highland city (fig. 2.18). These hierarchies express its multiple representations and the difficulty in ascribing any particular definition to a city as unique and complex as Nakuru. Although much still remains of the city's colonial patrimony, the present disposition, the resulting pattern of which is a rich patchwork, reflects the urban life and cultural and social directions of its people. This present condition, sometimes problematic and sometimes captivating, is summarised in the following section and serves as a prelude to a relatively short but nevertheless vital phase of negotiating a vision for the future of the city.

NAKURU:
INSTALLING A FUTURE GLORY

As already pointed out, the context within which the LA21 process in Nakuru was initiated was one characterised by contradictory circumstances. On the one hand, rapid growth and transformation seem to continue a certain historical drive supported by a favourable location and extraordinary natural setting. On the other hand, there existed a general mood of environmental-social-political-economic decline, ensuing in difficulty, uncertainty and numerous tensions. The waning image of a city once regarded as the cleanest in East Africa served to represent what had by then become a daily source of anxiety for inhabitants. Not only were residents concerned with these dynamics, but they also testified to the more evident and disturbing consequences produced by these, affecting individuals and the city in general. During the first workshop organised in the city in November 1995, participants identified what they thought were the key issues requiring urgent attention. There were general concerns about the overall integrity of the urban environment. These derived from two sources: the recognition and acceptance of the city's fragile context — sandwiched between the lake, National Park and crater and stretching over land blighted by geological subsidence — and the increased en-

croachment of human activity onto these fragile landscapes and ecologies. While the former condition is a result of natural and historical factors about which little can be done, participants were more particularly disturbed by circumstances arising from the latter. There were increased levels of pollution as residents and industrialists released and dumped solid and liquid wastes over the fence of the National Park and into public open spaces and storm water drains, among other areas within the town. These eventually found their way into River *Njoro*, underground waterways and Lake Nakuru. Such actions led to conflicts between the city and nature, as exhibited by increased incidences of human-wildlife conflict along the park edge. The erection of structures in areas prone to faulting and deforestation of the crater slopes not only presented a danger to those who inhabited them, but also aggravated the soil erosion and storm water drainage situation.

These problematic circumstances demonstrate the ambivalent and sometimes contemptuous relationship between man and nature in Nakuru. They also indicate a lack of capacity by municipal and governmental agencies to effectively guide and manage growth and adequately meet associated demands. For instance, as the city's population continues to grow, the demand for land for housing development increases. With diminishing space to accommodate more population in the old well-serviced area of the city, land for housing development is frequently made available through the subdivision of land in the city's outskirts. This speculative urban expansion often relies on inadequate and ineffective urban planning approaches and seldom makes provision for the supply of even the most basic of infrastructure. Such chaotic urban expansion affects agricultural productivity in the immediate urban surroundings and threatens the consolidation of a sustainable urban agriculture and gardening culture. In the old city, conditions are not any better as the city centre has gradually become a chaotic hub, with an already overstretched, obsolete infrastructure suffering the effects of years of neglect. In the central areas, the average density remains relatively low. Local congestion coexists with striking under-utilisation of urban land. Rationalisation and densification of existing fabrics would necessitate urban planning and management means that are beyond the capacity of the municipality. And although

the housing supply situation has improved in recent years, courtesy of private sector investment, the aging social housing stock is in a sorry state of disrepair.

The list is endless. Yet the various stakeholders, while acknowledging the magnitude of these problems, also attested to the fact that the city had several potentials that could be exploited to reverse the situation. In addition to the city's natural asset base and its strategic location as a provincial and regional capital, agro-processing/commercial hub and rail-road city, there exist numerous social assets, including a strong civic attitude and eagerness to formulate a vision and initiate activities, which will put the city on the path towards a more sustainable future. Similarly, and notwithstanding the lack of ability of the municipal authority, the possibility for achieving tangible results in the short-term was immense, as evidenced by ongoing initiatives by different actors (individuals, communities, private enterprise, philanthropic organisations such as the Kenya Association of Manufacturers, the Kenya Wildlife Service, the World Wide Fund for Nature, and the Catholic Diocese, among others). As a result, the project could draw both on this experience, existing goodwill and collaboration to achieve its goals.

The pursuit of a vision for Nakuru's future began in earnest with the initiation of the LA21 Programme. The Programme was a multi-partner approach involving *local* (Nakuru Municipal Council, Community Based Organisations, Consumer and other local interest groups) and *external* stakeholders (the Government of Kenya, the UN-HABITAT, and the Belgian Development Cooperation, among others). The forum agreed that it was necessary, as an entry-point, to breathe life into the discourse by recalling memories of the city's 'past glory,' including that of a 'clean East African city.' However, such a recall did not intend to fuel whatever nostalgia of a colonial past still survived, but rather served to inspire an intensive discussion of the possible installation of a 'future glory' that would result from Nakuru's inspiring role as an African town of the twenty-first century. The main task of the process, therefore, was to negotiate and reach an agreement towards such a vision and, subsequently, to formulate an elaborate action programme to commence its effective realisation.

VISIONS FOR NAKURU

Nakuru as an Eco-City

In spite of its impressive appearance, Nakuru's fragile landscape is vulnerable to both natural and man-made threats. As a reserve of pure natural space, the crater's dormancy is betrayed by numerous fractures in its slope, making it extremely unstable for human habitation. The lake relies on its surrounding catchments for water, which sustains the delicate ecosystem of the lake's flora and fauna. Such a geology and ecology, sensitive to even the slightest of interventions and manipulations, often suffers from rapidly expanding urban settlements. The dense and sprawling fabric disrupts the natural drainage flows, while simultaneously leaking wastes into the lake. The city must therefore not only invest a great deal of energy and resources in maintaining the natural patrimony, but also reduce the tension between man and nature. However, this has so far been hampered by a lack of a clear management structure, especially as the park does not fall within the administration of the city authorities nor are revenues collected from the park shared with the city. This has tended to create a culture of indifference between the city and park, ensuing in the intensification of the conflicts between development and parkland. This indifference is clearly illustrated by the lake-park edge that acts as a backside to the city, a non-articulated space that does not play any positive role in the present urban frame. The gate to the park, which is not visible from the city, is even more absent from the mental map of Nakuru's residents and in the concerns of the urban planners.

Nevertheless, the vision is clear. The primary characteristic of Nakuru is the unique co-existence between powerful geological and ecological forces and a booming medium-sized town. Nakuru is not these three elements but one: a sound urban system that is part and parcel of the soundness of the lake-crater-park system and vice versa. This urban system encompasses aspects of environmental ecology (such as natural elements, geologically faulty zones, urban green spaces, urban agriculture, solid waste disposal, water supply, pollution, etc.) and aspects of human ecology (such as rational land use and residential densities, social mixing, integration of urban functions, spatial quality, mobility and accessibility, etc.). Damage caused to the lake's fragile ecol-
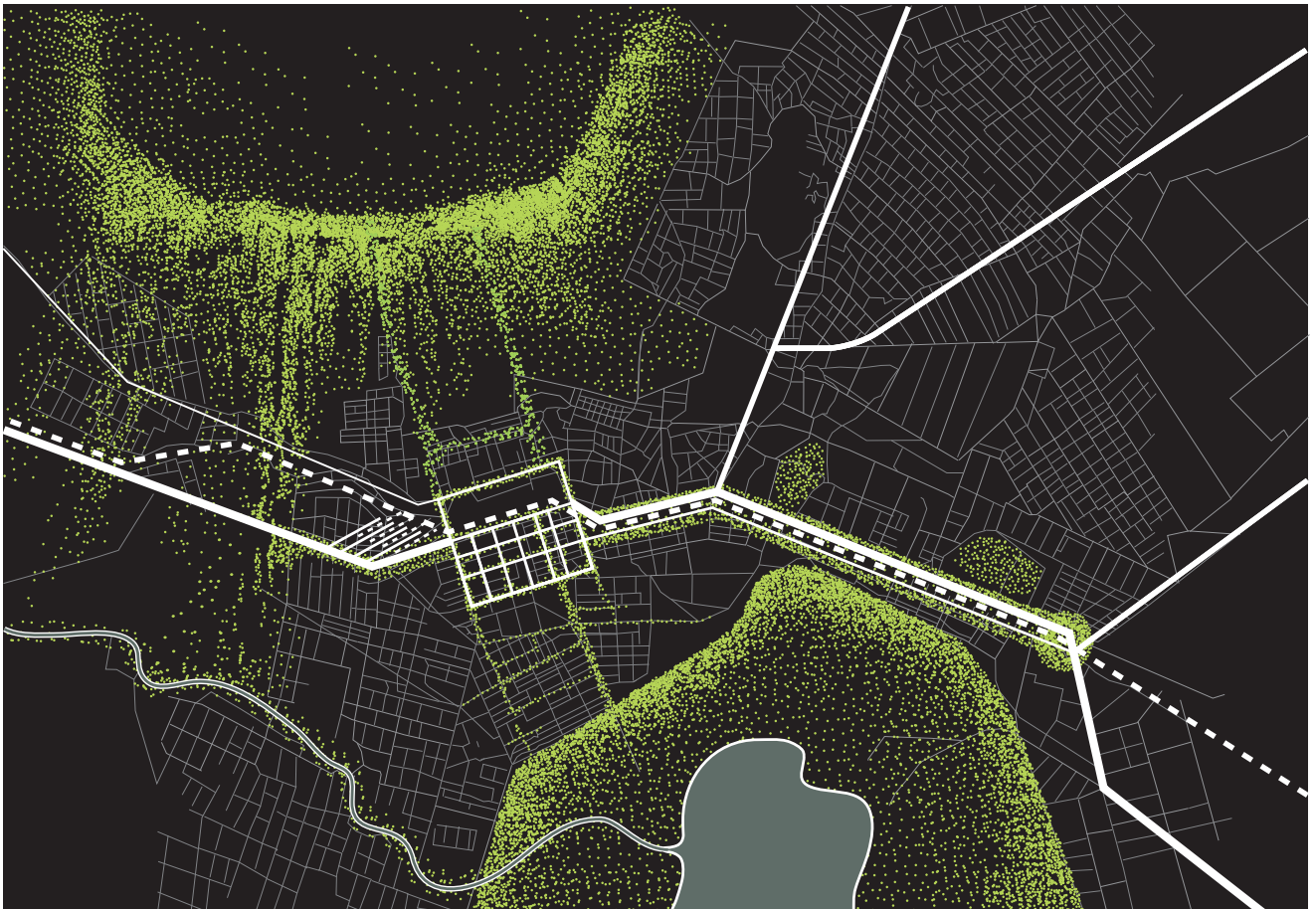
fig. 2.19 The vision of Nakuru as an eco-city seeks to turn around the tension between nature and the city and substitute it with a culture of sustainable cohabitation through accentuation of its heritage of natural assets, protection of fragile ecologies, articulation of park and crater edges and city extents and the promotion of a green urban fabric.

ogy reduces its value as a prime qualitative feature.

Nakuru as eco-city turns the conflict between nature and the city into a sustainable cohabitation within a single eco-urban condition. As crater and lake-park offer structure and monumentality to the city, the city, in turn, provides care and hospitality. The vision of an eco-city would necessitate various imperatives: valorisation of the natural assets and heritage and their protection from urban sprawl and urban waste; protection of geologically unstable areas from habitation; sustainable management of services and infrastructure; promotion of green urban fabric; articulation of lake-park and crater edges and interfaces with the city; retention and promotion of urban agriculture in specific peripheral zones; guidance of urban growth and densification; and definition of margins of urbanisation in peripheries (fig. 2.19). It also necessitates the establishment of a common partnership and management structure that would in-clude all stakeholders, especially the city and lake administration. This also calls for the broadening of the range of tourism products offered to include cultural tourism, in addition to eco-tourism, and the promotion of an integrated tourism that promotes access to the park by city residents (domestic tourism) and the city by foreign visitors.

City of Agri-Culture

Agriculture is the foundation of the Kenyan economy and Nakuru is the 'Farmers' Capital' of Kenya. As in colonial times, agricultural products such as cereals and flowers are still the key commodities that sustain the city's economy. Nakuru, the nerve centre of agricultural activities in the country, is headquarters to national farming institutions such as the Kenya Farmers Association, Pyrethrum[8] Board, and many others, as well as the venue for an annual Agricultural Show (exhibition and trade fair). Since independence, many patterns of agricultural activities in the region have changed with the subdivision of large farms and ranches[9] into smaller plots. This subdivision has turned into a mode of urbanisation as the city uniquely incorporates agriculture within its fabric and peripheries (fig. 2.20). Many urban residents practise agriculture and livestock farming within their plots as a primary or secondary source of livelihood. Agriculture is therefore not a transitory phenomenon signifying transformation from rural to urban, but rather it

is an integral and permanent part of the urban economy and society. In the face of declining industrial growth and investment, urban agriculture reveals its potential as a viable, eco-friendly and sustainable development option in Nakuru. This entails two consequences. First, appropriate patterns of subdivision and building have to be researched, formulated and implemented so as to guarantee the sustainability of urban agriculture and gardening. Second, prime agricultural lands need firm protection from threats of chaotic urban expansion.

City of Motions

As previously argued, Nakuru is like a room in a corridor. It is a node situated on a double international transportation network: the East African Highway and Kenya-Uganda Railway. Both networks have high economic and infrastructural potential in spite of their presently poor physical and technical conditions. The railway, though currently under-utilised, offers a vast potential for future revitalisation. The combination of railway and road offers interesting possibilities in terms of traffic interchange and transportation management for servicing a wide area. The parallel rail and road lines traverse the town from east to west, defining a clear morphological structure that completes the natural crater-lake, north-south bipolarity. This east-west thoroughfare acts as the spinal cord of the city and incorporates a number of urban functions and activity nodes, making it an important economic and spatial resource.

However, the sense of flow in the city is not only expressed in the east-west backbone, but also by the grid layout of the inner city and its vast network of roads and tracks that expands outward from it (fig. 2.21). Both the grid and the network illustrate diversity and hierarchy. Roads, streets, lanes and tracks of all characters and conditions can be found. Busy commercial roads lined with buildings contrast themselves to quiet residential lanes lined with trees. Neighbourhood streets echo village life. Open, informal markets along many streets and at junctions impart a colourful and lively character to the ritual of flow in the city.

The vision of a city of motions would imply perspectives for reinforcing the parallel railway-highway ribbon as a strategic element of the city with high structuring capacity. This includes allowing it to maintain its distinct identity as a
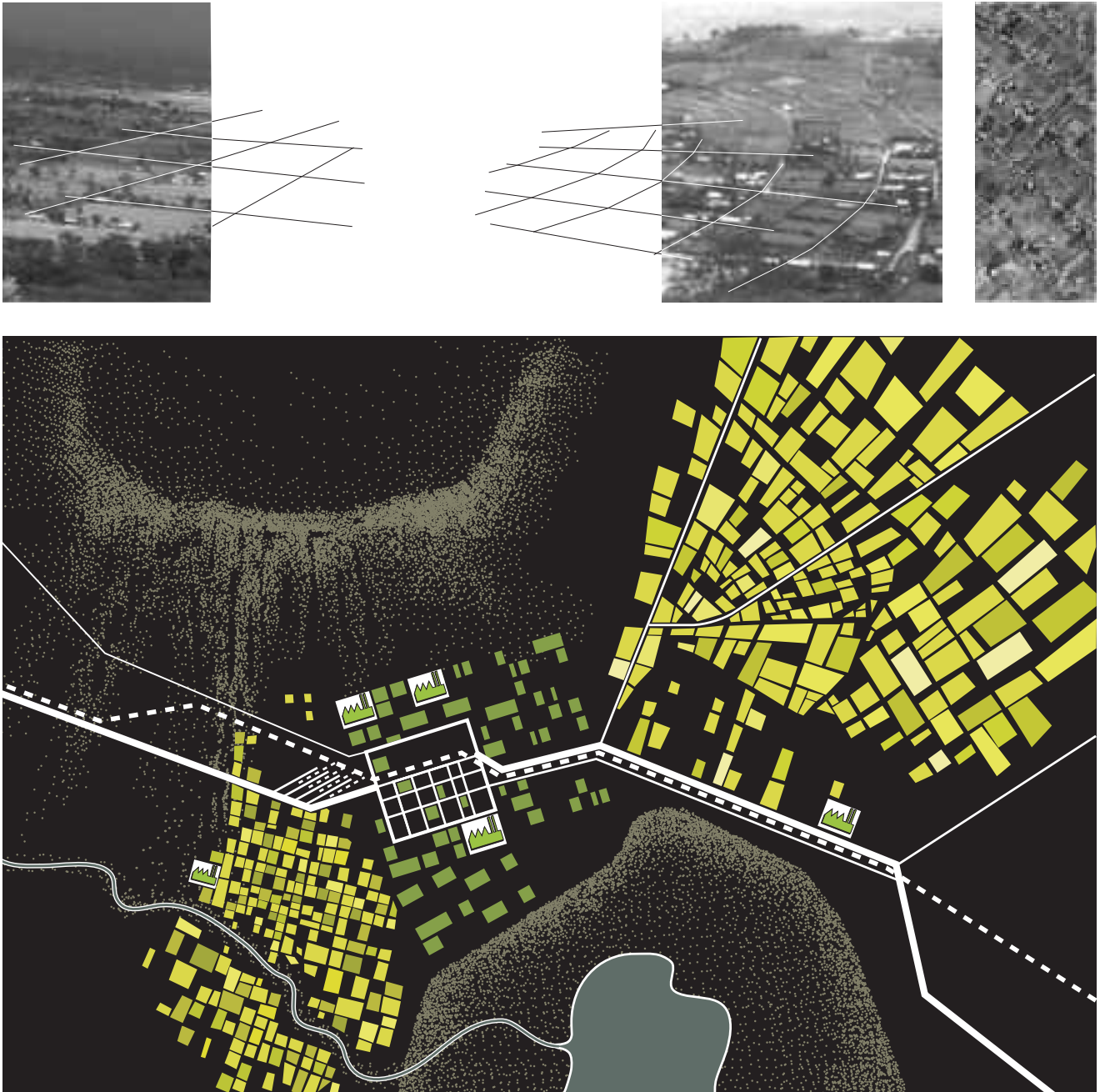
fig. 2.20 The vision of a city of agriculture seeks to render urban agriculture a viable, eco-friendly and sustainable development option for Nakuru by assimilating it as an integral urban function.
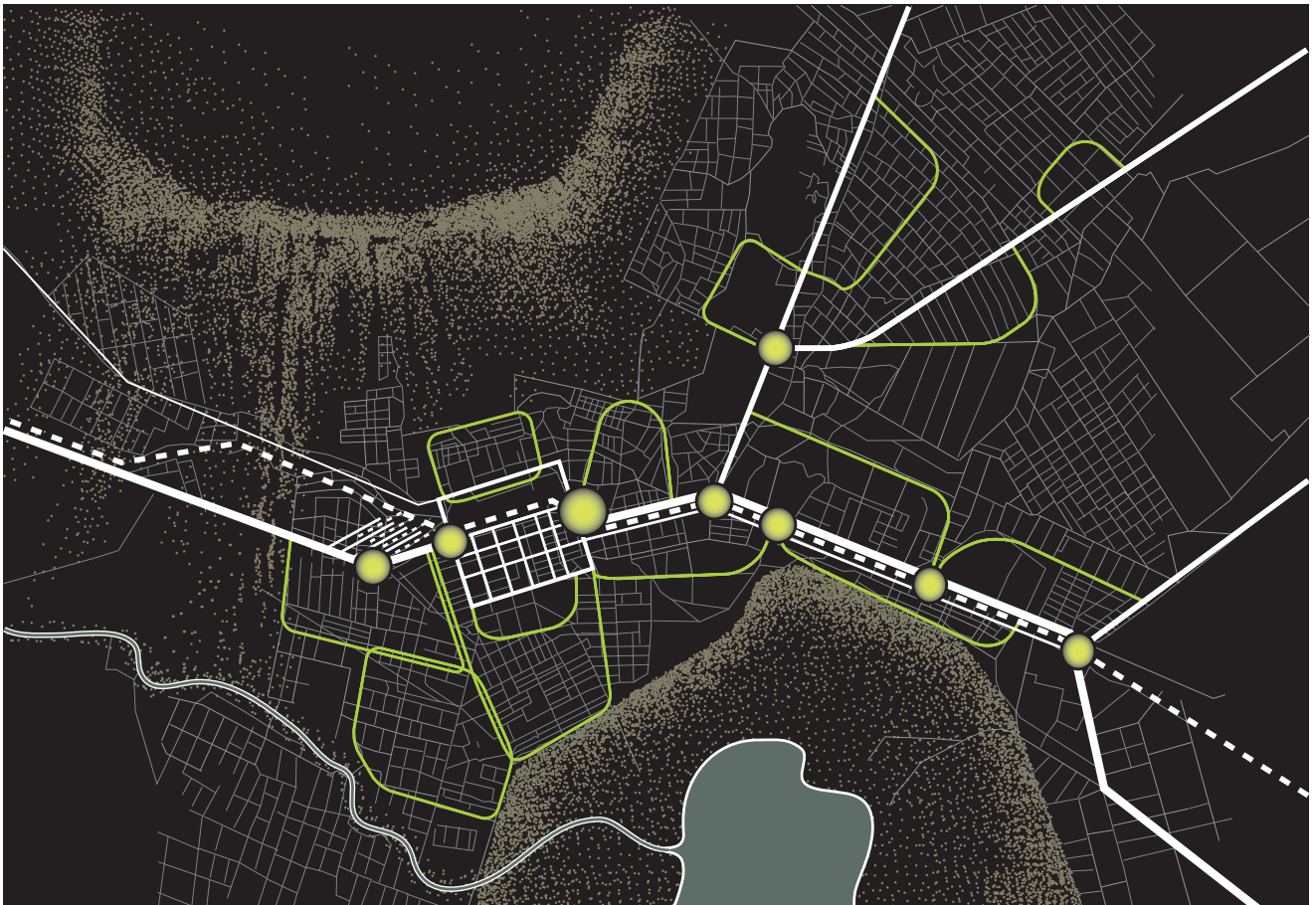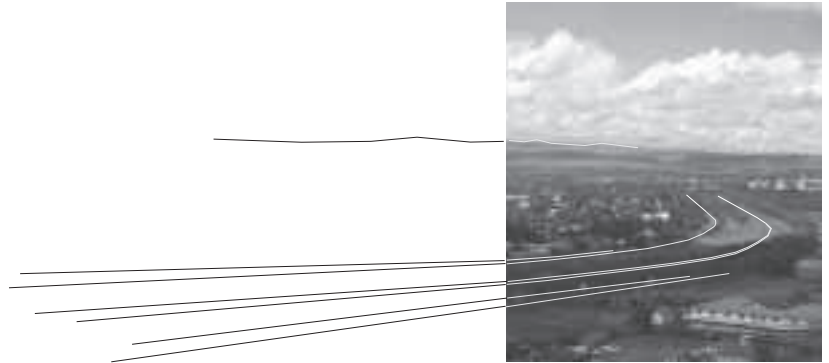
fig. 2.21 The vision of a city of motion seeks to exploit the multiple flows generated by both the railway-highway ribbon and the city grid as strategic elements of the city's growth and economic well-being by reinforcing and enhancing their structuring capacity and efficient operation.

conduit for through east-west traffic, while simultaneously improving the organisation and management of transport nodes and networks, thereby also exploiting their economic potential. It also implies retaining the railway infrastructure as a future reserve for revitalisation and stimulating its re-adoption as a sustainable mobility option.

City of Neighbourhoods
The city centre developed as a clear grid of commercial and green streets; the European quarter became a garden district and the Asian quarter became a grid of compact townhouses with internal courtyards. Later, as the city grew, more segments were added, usually by way of a 'patch' defined by a former estate. The initial housing quarter for African workers followed a camp-like arrangement of single room units for bachelors. After independence, many provisions were made to house the African population, as in *Kaloleni*. The city expanded rapidly and new neighbourhoods were added in an ad hoc manner: one realised by the council (Flamingo Estate, *Kaloleni*), another by a land-buying co-operative (*Ronda*), and still others through private initiatives that have been allocated government land.

The result is a proliferation of patchwork agglomerations (fig. 2.22), through which the town has largely erased its segregationist logic, replacing it with a logic of articulated urban differences inscribed by income categories, housing sectors and site conditions. Ultimately, Nakuru has acquired a large range of dwelling environments representing the diversities of income categories, lifestyles and sub-cultures. Although the boundaries and borders between different neighbourhoods are fluid and open, different neighbourhoods retain a distinct character and atmosphere. As mentioned previously, the railway line divides the city into halves and engineers the distinct nature of settlements on its northern and southern sides. *Ronda*, a semi-informal settlement in the southwest of the city, presents a contrasting reality to the northern neighbourhood of *Milimani*, the ex-European enclave that nestles itself on the flank of the crater and overlooks the city. Now a suburb for the rich with big plots and beautiful gardens, *Milimani* is worlds away culturally, yet only a stone's throw away geographically.

Considering the size and scale of the city, the range of dwelling environments is truly remarkable. Nakuru has

transcended the original oppressive motivations of its patchwork and has instead turned it into a valuable asset today. The 'disjunctions' or the tendencies of incongruence between various parts and segments imply the freedom and fluidity of urban dynamics. In a sense, Nakuru achieved an ingenious combination of the neighbourhood unit principle — that in the planning discipline acted as a correction of or an alternative to the mono-functional and uniform modernistic zoning dogma — and the post-modern reference for fragmentary and discontinuous urban planning. As such, the patchwork of neighbourhoods is a minimal but performative urban structure that offers an alternative, as much to the sterile metaphor of zoning, to undifferentiated peripheral sprawl.

An African City 'Prototype'
Within the range of medium-sized towns, Nakuru is developing a mode of urbanity that may become a prototype of future urban development in Africa. This model refers simultaneously to qualities of the landscape, built environment and urban life. Urban neighbourhoods, relatively dense and low-rise, present themselves as the appropriate settlement pattern. Nakuru marries nature and townscape, urban green meshing with built fabric, and urban agriculture with residences, to create a spaciousness and openness evocative of the African countryside and rural villages. Against the threat of possible sprawl of an unarticulated shantytown carpet, the 'urban village' articulates a manageable scale of neighbourhood and community.

Like other African cities, the post-independence influx of rural immigrants into Nakuru has made the city a mosaic (seldom a melting pot) of multiple identities, the percentage composition of which is almost the same as that of Kenya. And although multiple cultures living together in many parts of Africa are still very vulnerable, it is an evolving fact in Nakuru, assisted by an overwhelming spirit of co-existence. Urban life in Nakuru is epitomised by a climate that encourages outdoor life and the intensive use of public and open spaces. The urban public realm presents itself as a mediating scale that stimulates encounter, exposure and exchange across ethnicities, cultures and social strata. This plurality is not limited to culture, but also includes the people's resourcefulness. Today, competing interests and forces
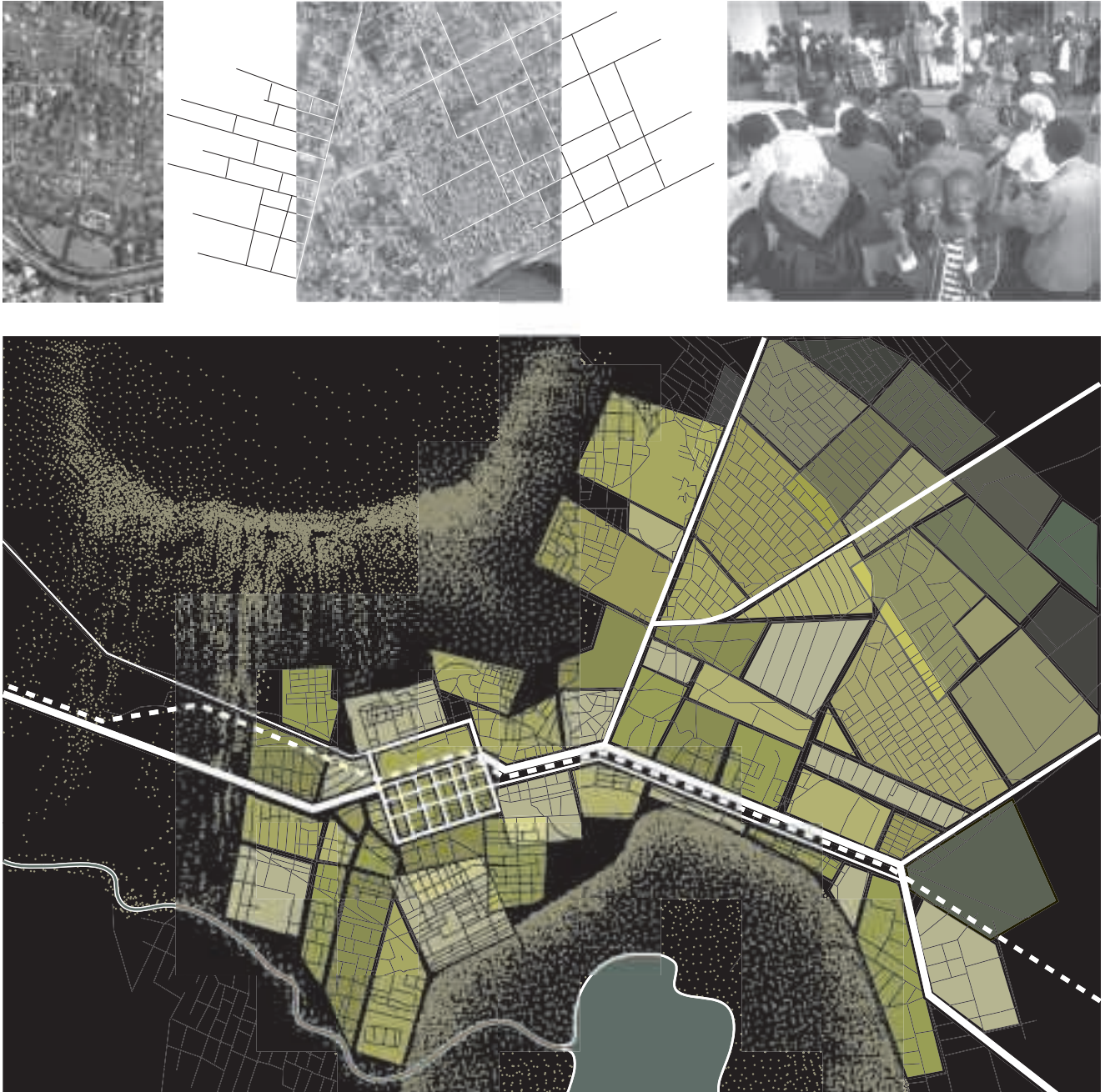
fig. 2.22 The vision of a city of neighbourhoods seeks to turn the mosaic of dwelling environments and cultures into a valuable asset for the city by eliminating the prevailing tendency of incongruence between various parts, thereby enhancing the freedom, vitality and fluidity of urban dynamics.

have developed a great ability to find their expression irrespective of support, patronage and formal regulation of governing and managing establishments. Numerous self-help and informal networks are at work in the city, evolving into complementary and even dominant ways of operating in many urban sectors, such as public transport, housing provision, distribution, security, and others. The chains and nodes of informal 'markets', quickly and spontaneously locating in strategic, accessible points and yielding multiple functions and intense interaction, reveal authenticity, ingenuity and resourcefulness, and suggest a new economy of space. Perhaps these qualities might explain the prevailing exuberance that city residents continue to exhibit despite the persistent harsh and uncertain circumstances that often characterise their existence.

Even as the civic sense of urban living struggles to cope with an ever-expanding scale of urbanity, attempting to define whether its constituent cultures are a mosaic or a melting pot, the city's urban culture continues to use multiple frames of reference — the individual, the family, the ethnic, the community, the urban, the regional and national, to communicate that identity. The identification and interpretation of Nakuru's essence was an engaging subject within the LA21 process, with debate on what must be retained from tradition and present and what must transcend into the future. The rest of Africa could learn a lot from the epic story of Nakuru, part of which has already been narrated in the brief historical exploration, and the other, which is part of the continuously evolving vision as elaborated in the previous account.

The reader may notice a certain spatial bias in the formulation of visions. Two reasons for this can be highlighted. First, there is the fact that Nakuru's historical drive, and the critical awareness of its identity, closely relate to its spatial condition: location, natural setting, infrastructure, and fabrics. Second, in considering the collective formulation of shared visions, the natural and built environment act as a common frame of reference that facilitates the formulation of abstract ideas and desires into concrete and localised scenes of a future life.

To conclude, it is important to stress the fact that the formulation of visions is not a unique event limited to the start of the LA21 Programme. On the contrary, it is a continuous track of elaboration, synthetic formulation and illustration, evaluation and reformulation of visions in close interaction with the development of the Programme along the three tracks.

Co-production in Nakuru

In Nakuru, the second track encompassed both the initiation of tangible short-term actions and the promotion of strategic long-term actions. Some of the initial actions and projects included *studies* (such as a geo-physical survey, an urban land-use study, assessment of municipal revenue sources, design research of the park edge, bus-park and rail and road spine potentials, etc.), *action plans* (mapping project, remote sensing project and mapping of Nakuru south-west-*Ronda*, revised design of World Bank bus-park intervention, rationalisation and pricing of municipal services, etc.), *capacity building and awareness* creation measures (Town Planning Unit, cleaning campaigns, training workshops, etc.), and *construction projects* (solid waste transfer chambers, tree nursery, cobblestones project, Flamingo habitat upgrading, etc.), among others.

These activities were part of a gradual process of a step-by-step realisation of a plan for a desirable future for Nakuru. These activities were not all initiated by the Programme. Many were the specific or partial contribution of different actors, but fitted within the Programme's overall strategy. For instance, the Programme was facilitated through funding and logistical support from the Belgian government (BADC) and the UN-HABITAT. Most of the assessment studies and evaluation reports were either individual or collaborative efforts between the local Planning Team, the University of Nairobi (DURP, HABRI), the Belgian Consortium and other consultants. The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) carried out the mapping project while the UN-HABITAT carried out fieldwork (ViSP) on the *Ronda* Settlement Upgrading Programme. Construction projects were joint ventures between different actors, such as the cobblestone and Flamingo Estate and *Bondeni* School upgrading projects by the Municipalities of Nakuru and Leuven and the promotion of the use of stabilised soil blocks for housing production by residents advised by the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG). Individual schools also joined in the process by establishing nurseries for trees

to assist the city's landscaping efforts. Various Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), such as the Zonal Development Committees, were instrumental in publicising the Programme's goals, mobilising broad support and acting as a crucial link between the Programme, the Municipal Council and the city's inhabitants. The list of actions and projects — those initiated by the LA21 Programme, as well as those associated with or promoted by it — illustrate another key function of the second track, namely the convergence and structural integration of previously introverted and isolated actions and projects into the coherent and collaborative frame of the project.

Most of these actions and projects became possible through the integration of a third track for collaboration, communication, and participation, which ran alongside the previous two. The third track involved continuous communication between the city's diverse interest groups and had multiple goals: stakeholder mobilisation, information gathering, brainstorming on key challenges and possible remedies, management of involvement in key planning and decision-making processes, and learning from the experience of ongoing strategic intervention measures. The eventual aim was to enlist their participation, support and collaboration towards realising collective visions, goals, actions and projects. Similarly, it was this track that facilitated the arbitration of disputes relating to certain decisions, in effect, leading to a harmonisation of diverse interests. Such action, for instance led to the improvement of relations between the Municipal Council and the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), whose relations hitherto were strained over the issue of who should manage the Lake Nakuru National Park and consequently benefit from the proceeds of game-based tourism activity, among other issues. The same was instrumental in re-orienting the then-outward-looking tourism promotion activities of the KWS towards the promotion of local tourism, the results of which saw increased access into the park by city residents, facilitated by the KWS, and a reciprocal stoppage of habitual dumping of waste over the park fence. The third track also led to the formulation of agreements on a number of issues and actions. Such agreements, whether between all the actors or individuals, were translated into policy decisions and in some cases were the starting point

of project implementation and realisation (see chapters one and eight). In Nakuru, three 'urban pacts' or major agreements between stakeholders were formulated and serve as binding commitments for the joint realisation of actions and projects. Other agreements included one between the Belgium Consortium and the World Bank to amend the designs of the bus-park to be in tune with the strategic structure plan being prepared at the time. Although the revised plans were not eventually adopted and implemented by the World Bank, the initiative was nevertheless a positive one.

Another output of the third track includes activities aimed at capacity building through institutional re-structuring. The local team in Nakuru, drawing its membership from the MCN, Physical Planning Department, Provincial Administration, and other advisers, was also a result of such an initiative. It served both as overseer to the Programme activities at the local level and as a planning team for the preparation of the Nakuru Strategic Structure Plan (further elaborated below), a role for which the Municipal Council did not have adequate capacity to achieve on its own. The functions of the local team, as well as the implementation of the future plan, were to be sustained through the Town Planning Unit set up within the Municipality as one of the LA21 Programme's capacity building measures. On another level, the Programme's collaborative framework led to the creation of grassroots institutions, specifically the Zonal Development Committees, as a formidable citizens' arena and as a means for the strengthening of citizens' networks, thereby improving the relations between them and the Municipal Authority.

THE NAKURU STRATEGIC STRUCTURE PLAN

A significant achievement of the LA21 Programme in Nakuru was the preparation of the Nakuru Strategic Structure Plan. The preparation of a new plan for the city followed the resolution of a consultative workshop organised in Nakuru in 1995 at the inception of the LA21 Programme. Prior to this, the city's spatial growth and expansion was taken into account by two parallel modes of planning. First, the overall urban development was successively charted by a series of physical development plans, the so-called 'master plans.' They laid the foundations for the town's expansion in accor-

dance with the then-contemporary principles of functional zoning. However, these 'master plans,' fashioned along vague visions and debatable theories on the 'ideal city' or 'ideal social order,' seldom reflected the social and physical realities of Nakuru, nor were they adequately responding to the functional and technical needs of the people and specific locations. Hence, they increasingly lost their persuasive power and the city exploded in a rage of spontaneous expansion that defied their very dictates and resulted in uncoordinated development. Although master planning often did not get the political, legal, economic and social support it needed for its implementation, it is this planning heritage, among other problems, that is blamed for the general decline of the urban environment. The second mode of planning, operating in the 'planning void' left by master planning, consisted of a host of piecemeal, ad-hoc planning interventions, many of which were hardly more than pragmatic and opportunistic subdivision schemes that offered a kind of legal basis for peripheral sprawl. It was against this background that Nakuru's stakeholders felt the necessity to refine a range of activities for streamlining urban development and upgrading the quality of the urban environment, the ensuing efforts of which culminated in the preparation of a new strategic structure plan for the city.

The need for an overriding framework for the Programme coincided with the search within the country at the time for a contextual, dynamic and responsive planning approach and effective tools for guiding development. This protracted discourse culminated in the enactment of Kenya's new Physical Planning Act in 1996. The Act recognises structural planning as a key component of urban planning. Consequently, in an apparent departure from the prevailing 'master planning' approaches, it embraces the fundamental principles of the strategic planning approach, already in use in other parts of the world (see chapter 6).

The plan covered about 440 square kilometres of the Nakuru Metropolitan Area, including what was by 1995 the city's effectively urbanised area (inside and outside the municipal boundaries), the Lake Nakuru National Park and the *Menengai* Crater. Its project cycle consisted of three major phases — orientation, synthesis and drafting — stretched over a five-year period. As a summary document indicating the long-term perspective for the city, the preparation of the strategic structure plan is an activity belonging to the first track. However, as a project, the plan enlists the participation, contribution and collaboration of all of the city's actors and stakeholders, incorporating their experiences from ongoing actions and projects, while also outlining and incorporating several strategic projects. The process is indeed the end product of all the three tracks (visions, actions and projects, communication and collaboration). These encompass familiarisation with the context, survey and research by design, brainstorming on issues requiring critical attention, and arriving at agreements on strategies, actions and implementation programmes. The whole planning process entailed a careful reading and interpretation of key spatial components and sectors. Supplemented by more detailed surveys and design study projects, they yielded a relatively comprehensive account of the city's main challenges, assets and potentials. Insights were summarised in a diagram of the 'existing spatial structure' (fig. 2.23), showing the spatial dimension of emerging issues. Based on this, and following a consideration of the experiences of a few concurrently executed actions, many of the earlier negotiated *visions for the city* were successively translated in planning terms and intervention measures formulated. As an indicative, rather than precise frame, it combined spatial concepts (such as the rail-road ribbon as the spatial cord for the city, etc.) to communicate the structuring principles of the desired future scenario for the city. These were summarised in a diagram of the 'intended spatial structure' (fig. 2.24). These were supported by a 'programme of long-term and short-term actions and projects,' which aimed at facilitating their actualisation. Upon completion in 1999, the document became the first plan to be approved under the new planning legislation and by extension, Nakuru became one of the few secondary cities with a recent plan fashioned along the principles of the strategic planning approach.

Nakuru's Strategic Structure Plan identified four basic areas of major structural and strategic significance to the attainment of the overall goal of sustainable urban development. Summarised here below, they are the foundation of the strategic urban projects further elaborated below.

• The rail-road ribbon, of which the structuring role for the city has to be strengthened
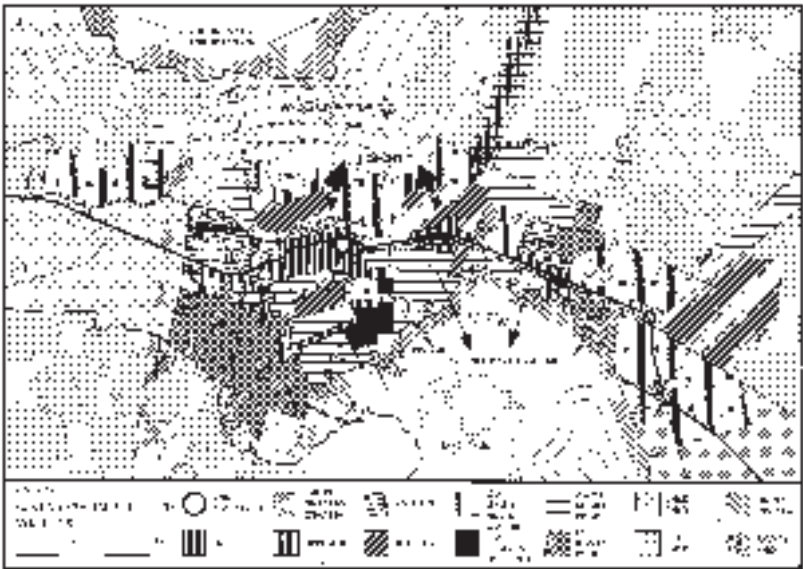
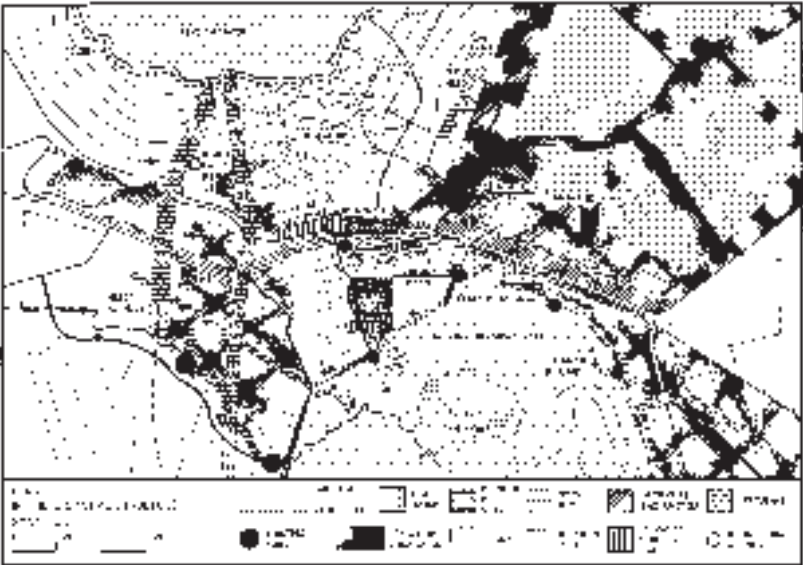**fig. 2.23** Map showing the existing spatial structure.

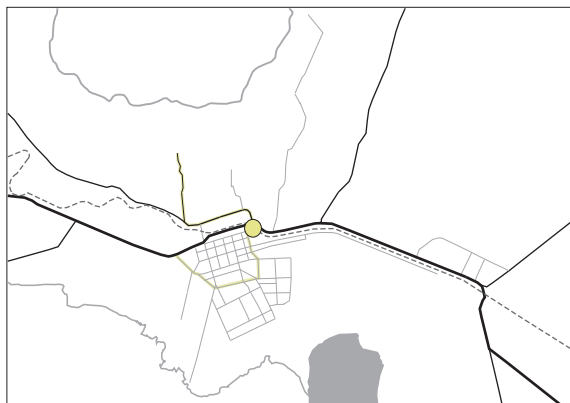**fig. 2.24** Map showing the intended spatial structure.

fig. 2.25 Located at the eastern edge of the Central Business District (CBD), the bus park structures the link between the city, periphery and region.

fig. 2.26 The bus park area taps into the flow of through-traffic and is therefore a major player in Nakuru's urban economy.

fig. 2.27 The important flows of traffic which meet at the bus park area make for a suitable marketplace. In time, it has become a retail market, wholesale market, and an informal trade/hawking area, giving the area a sense of lively congestion.

- The city and nature interface, as partially represented by the edges between park/city and between crater/city
- The western limits and south-western extents, for which natural features (fault-line, river and large institutional farms) are exploited to stem and guide the urban sprawl
- The eastern extents whose patchwork of agri-urban neighbourhoods were to be guided and restructured

In addition to providing a framework for integrating all of the Programme's diverse activities, the strategic structure plan aimed to provide a framework for the sustainable development of Nakuru. In so doing, it enhanced the local authority's capacity to prepare plans and to facilitate and guide development. The Physical Planning Act allocates the responsibility for plan preparation in Kenya to the Directorate of Physical Planning (a state/public agency). However, it also makes the incorporation of stakeholder views (a diverse array of interest groupings) and collaboration between key decision arenas (public and private) a mandatory requirement. Compliance with this latter canon was the hallmark of the Nakuru planning project.

STRATEGIC URBAN PROJECTS

The translation of development visions within the strategic structure plan is a necessary, but far from sufficient action to secure the realisation of these visions. This necessitates a whole range of strategic urban projects. These projects have three objectives: first of all they elaborate, test and eventually modify components of the intended spatial structure that have a strong strategic and structural impact; secondly, they form a platform of communication, feedback, negotiation and modification and consensus and/or agreement between actors, stakeholders and users; and thirdly, they act as a frame of reference for concrete, realisable actions and interventions. Within the four areas earlier identified by the plan as having strategic and structural qualities, specific sites were selected, studied in detailed, and design strategies for possible future urban projects prepared. These are further elaborated in the following sections. Although none of these have been fully implemented, they nevertheless facilitated some first steps and remain

fig. 2.28 The lack of well-structured traffic accessibility options constricts the city's northern artery, congests the main commercial street (*Kenyatta* Avenue) and clogs up the two roundabouts.

EXISTING CONDITION

1   railway office
2   railway police office
3   shops
4   Lenana primary school
5   railway station
6   parking
7   parking + informal market
8   lion garden
9   municipal market
10 bus station
11 informal market (kanu)
12 Goan institute
13 Patel brotherhood club/school
14 informal market
15 wholesale market
16 matatu station
17 mosque
18 menegai high school
19 petrol stations

fig. 2.29 Poorly defined and unarticulated spaces, coupled with on-site congestion, compromise the efficient operation of the bus park area leaving petrol stations and road reserves to absorb spontaneous spillover activities.

important points of reference for future planning action and for communicating the plan's basic strategy.

The Bus-park Area

Located at the eastern edge of the CBD (fig. 2.25), the bus and railway station area, called the 'Bus-park area,' which incorporates the railway station, bus/*matatu* stations (fig. 2.26), and municipal markets (fig. 2.27), not only structures the junction between the city centre and the city's periphery, but is also one of the city's most active hubs. This strategic urban area represents the clustering of competing yet complementary land/space users and concentrates different modes of transport, thus allowing a high degree of synergies and economies of scale between various combined functions. The importance given to the bus-park area testifies to its role in tapping into the passing flow of traffic, thereby becoming a major player in Nakuru's urban economy.

However, the high level of potential for efficient operation of the site is compromised by endemic chaotic congestion, complicating ease of access and movement. The lack of adequate and well-structured accessibility options means all traffic in and out of the area is through the northern detour off the A104, thereby overburdening the connecting roundabout and obstructing circulation on the city's northern

artery (fig. 2.28). Uncontrolled proliferation of kiosks and informal sector activities, total confusion between pedestrian and vehicular traffic and lack of clarity of movement leads to modal conflict and further compromises security and safety. This congestion pushes some functions out of the bus-park area, thus leading to the spontaneous, unstructured and opportunistic spill-over of activities to other spaces within the CBD and along the highway (mainly petrol service stations and road reserves), thereby impeding the capacity of the local authority to collect revenues (fig. 2.29). The bus-park area is also experiencing a shortage of quality facilities and amenities for use by passengers and other users, leading to general physical decay and widespread environmental degradation. Paradoxically, some facilities, such as those within the railway station, remain under-utilised due to the low level of use of the railway transport mode.

The area's stakeholders, including the formal and informal commercial sectors, retail and wholesale marketeers, public transport operators, the Railways Corporation, and the Municipal Council of Nakuru, generally agreed that it was necessary to enhance the central role the bus-park node played in structuring the city and to sustain the synergies engendered within and between various constituent functions and the city's other functional areas (fig. 2.30). This

fig. 2.30 At the city scale, the bus park is structured as the main node among the city's numerous other nodes and as the primary convergence and departure point for local, regional and national traffic.

fig. 2.31 Access and circulation are to be improved by opening up an *Oginga Odinga* Avenue link for local traffic.

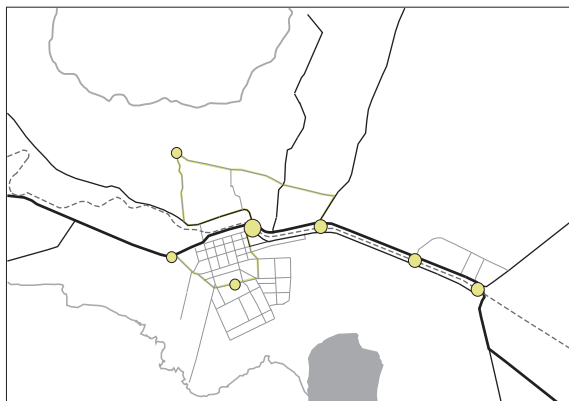**fig. 2.32** Alternating strips of built and open spaces combine the mobile (informal sector) functions with the built forms and sedentary uses and allows for the flexibility of movement.

was to be achieved by strategically structuring the node as an important public space of the city. To improve access and ease traffic flow it was proposed to open up a south-eastern point of entry, via a link to the *Oginga Odinga* Avenue, dedicated mainly to the bus-park and with limited access to *Kenyatta* Avenue (fig. 2.31). Further strategies were adopted to facilitate the harmonious co-existence of complementary functions while at the same time allowing for the expansion of their capacities. It was thought that preventing ongoing decentralising tendencies would not only maintain and enhance the area's vitality, but the agglomeration of complementary functions would also be advantageous for both business and consumer interests. To reduce congestion and conflict however, the need to decentralise some of the functions to other suitable locations was acknowledged. While most other functions, such as the railway station and the regional bus station and support services, needed to retain their agglomerated nature, some other functions, such as local traffic or *matatus* termini, as well as some markets, could be decentralised without necessarily affecting their efficient operation.

Another strategy for organising the bus/*matatu*-park is the morphological principle of alternating strips of built and open spaces (fig. 2.32). This principle combines the mobile (informal sector) functions with built forms and sedentary uses and allows for the flexibility of movement and transformation of built functions over time. Different phases of the reorganisation process aim at modifying the existing form to create clarity of organisation and flexibility of space use. To improve ambient quality, it was proposed to reconstruct the three termini and the adjacent public park, complete with all requisite amenities and infrastructure. Prudent management practices involving all the stakeholders were also proposed as a way of promoting the area's efficient functioning (refer to the map summarising the project). Although much remains to be done, the project is on track with sections of the rehabilitation of the local and regional bus termini having been completed through a World Bank-funded initiative (KUTIP), initial landscaping works carried out on Lions Gardens and through private investment, and a new facility erected above the existing municipal wholesale market to accommodate additional retail market activities (fig. 2.33).

fig. 2.33 A three-dimensional representation of the future of the bus park area upon completion of the project.
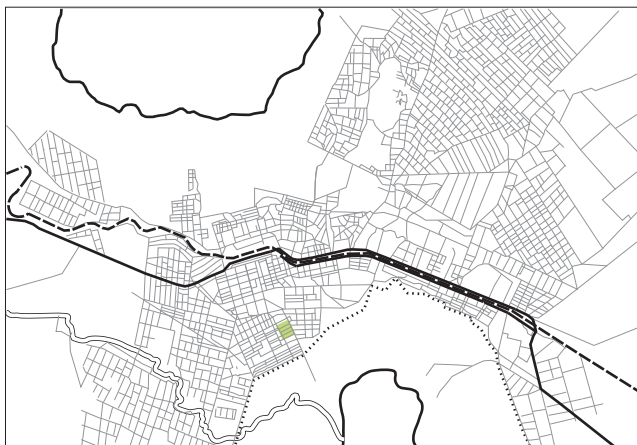
fig. 2.34 Flamingo Estate is an assemblage of symmetrically arranged, camp-like, single-room units situated in the southern part of the city.

fig. 2.35 Public housing estates in Nakuru, such as Flamingo, pictured here, have over time experienced a structural disintegration of housing stock, as well as that of the general neighbourhood ambience.

Flamingo Estate

Flamingo Estate is an assemblage of symmetrically arranged, camp-like, single-room units situated in the southern part of the city, right at the heart of the rental-housing zone (fig. 2.34). Over the years, the vagaries of time have subjected both the dwelling units, as well as the neighbourhoods to a near structural disintegration and an overall deterioration of environmental quality. The main issues include the dilapidated condition of its housing stock, coupled with inadequate provisions for the dwelling needs of current occupants (limited space, poor sanitary conditions, and so forth), (fig. 2.35). In addition, the current rent structure, being very low, fails to guarantee a return commensurate with the cost of operation and maintenance. The density of built versus open spaces in Flamingo-I is considered to be too low in comparison to other housing neighbourhoods. Furthermore, the neighbourhood does not offer a range of dwelling typologies and requisite services to accommodate the inhabitants' varying socio-economic needs (fig. 2.36).

Following the Council Rental Housing Study carried out by the Housing and Building Research Institute, in collaboration with other partners, several policy recommendations were adopted by a number of stakeholders and subsequently translated into a council resolution in July 1997. The primary aim was to revitalise Nakuru Municipal Council's rental housing stock. Through a strategic selection process, it was decided that a programme of revitalisation be carried out with Flamingo Estate as a pilot project with possible future extension to other housing estates. The Flamingo Pilot Project involved three strategies, namely rehabilitation, expansion and servicing of existing dwelling units, structural re-organisation of constituent spatial elements, and neighbourhood densification through the insertion of additional dwelling stock and other suitable functions (fig. 2.37), (fig. 2.38). The former was especially found to be necessary not only to guarantee an improved living environment, but also to justify the increase of rent for cost-recovery purposes. The option of densification presents new opportunities for not only increasing the housing stock and existing dwelling capacity, but also for spatial re-structuring. As a prerequisite, various access and circulation options were explored for both vehicles and pedestrians as part of facilitating the spatial re-ordering of neighbourhood clusters, sub-blocks and focal/public spaces (fig. 2.38b, c). To give the neighbourhood a mixed-use character, the design incorporates semi-commercial buildings to front Flamingo Road, which in turn is to be upgraded and redeveloped as the main gateway to the lake-park (fig. 2.38d). Consequently, any future insertions are to incorporate a mix of design and functional typologies. These range from the existing single room detached units, upgraded to include service cores, a kitchen

fig. 2.36 Some of the main issues in Flamingo-I include its low space-use density and the very limited range of dwelling typologies.

0   25   150 m

EXISTING CONDITION
Site and Cluster organisation
1   Community centre
2   Church
3   Shops / Community facilities
4   School

0   25

NEW PROPOSAL
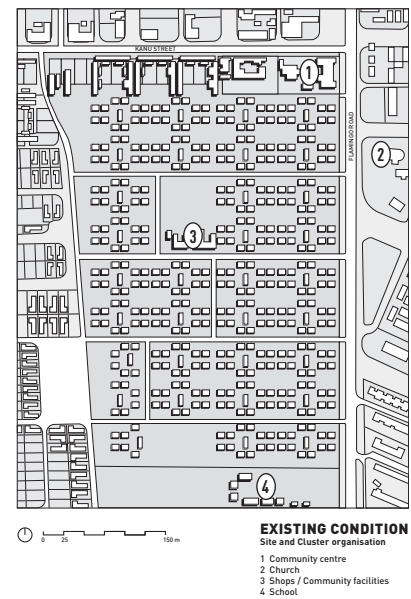
fig. 2.37 Design showing various restructuring options.

A

DEMOLITION
- UNITS ALONG FLAMINGO ROAD
- SHARED SANITARY

B

SPATIAL REORGANISATION
- VEHICULAR AND PEDESTRIAN LINKAGES
- PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

C

DENSIFICATION
- PROPOSED BUILT VOLUMES ALONG VEHICULAR STREETS
- ADDITION OF RESIDENTIAL UNITS AND SERVICE BLOCKS

D

SPATIAL REORGANISATION
- COMMERCIAL FRONT ALONG FLAMINGO ROAD
- SUBDIVISION INTO SUB_BLOCKS

fig. 2.38a Diagram showing the buildings earmarked for demolition. **b.** Map showing more efficient circulation and roads earmarked for improvement. **c.** Diagram showing the proposed densification. **d.** Proposed restructuring and redevelopment along Flamingo Road.
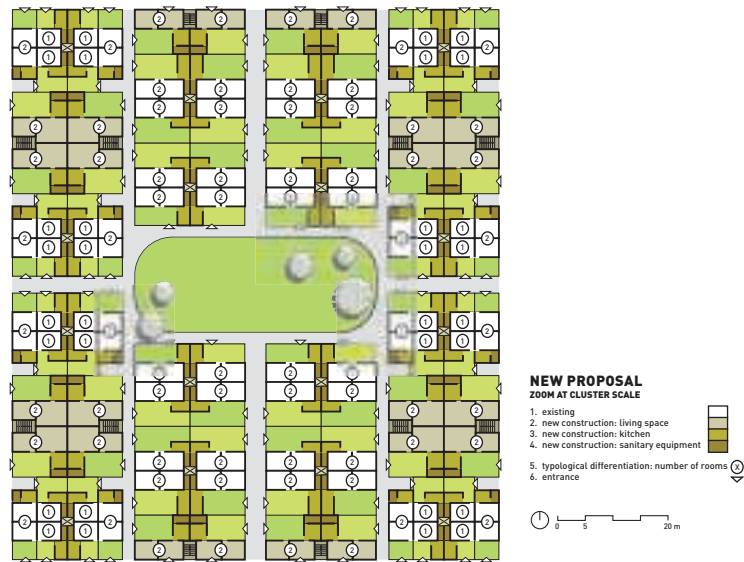
fig. 2.39 Proposed restructuring of the dwelling types.

fig. 2.40 A three-dimensional representation of the future of the Flamingo Estate area upon completion of the project.

and outdoor semi-private space, to maisonettes and multi-storeyed apartment blocks (fig. 2.39), (fig. 2.40).

Another strategy proposed by this project was the possibility of involving the private sector and residents as partners in the revitalisation process, both as developers and/or future buyers of some of the units. This approach is however hampered by prevailing political considerations and restrictive regulations and management practices that impact on the use and sale of public land and assets, thereby slowing down the realisation of all of the project's intentions. To jumpstart the process, cooperation efforts between the city of Nakuru and its partner city of Leuven in Belgium committed some funds to the first phase, resulting in the successful accomplishment of a demonstration project (fig. 2.41).

fig. 2.41 Ongoing upgrading of the housing dwelling units courtesy of cooperation efforts between the city of Nakuru and its partner city of Leuven, Belgium.

The Eastside

The Eastside[10] is a large settlement of more than 100,000 people living on urban agriculture upon the eastern fringes of Nakuru. It evolved out of the subdivision, undertaken by land-buying companies, of large farms.[11] In the absence of any form of formal regulation or guidance, the Eastside, like the other peripheral areas, has been left to the whims of speculative market forces that define the growth of urban expansion and orchestrate the continuous transformation of the character of the urban fabric. The land subdivision patterns often follow spatial 'logics' that hesitate between neighbourhood functions comparable to those of the old town and pure chaotic peripheral sprawl. It has a characteristically continuous-strip pattern development along the Mombasa-Kisumu railroad and along regional roads.[12] The subdivision of pieces of land with different sizes, orientations and locations, according to the number of shareholders, as opposed to the plots' functional use or their spatial logic, has split the territory into an incoherent agglomeration of differentiated fragments that vaguely contain some neighbourhood characteristics, most of which combine urban living with agriculture (fig. 2.42).

fig. 2.42 The Eastside's characteristic continuous strip pattern along access roads bears a mix of residential and agriculture development.

It was decided in the framework of the LA21 Programme to carry out a study to ascertain the implications of this unique development to the sustainability of urban systems. The study established several problems. First, the settlement has expanded extensively to the point where developments have begun to encroach and inflict harm on environ-
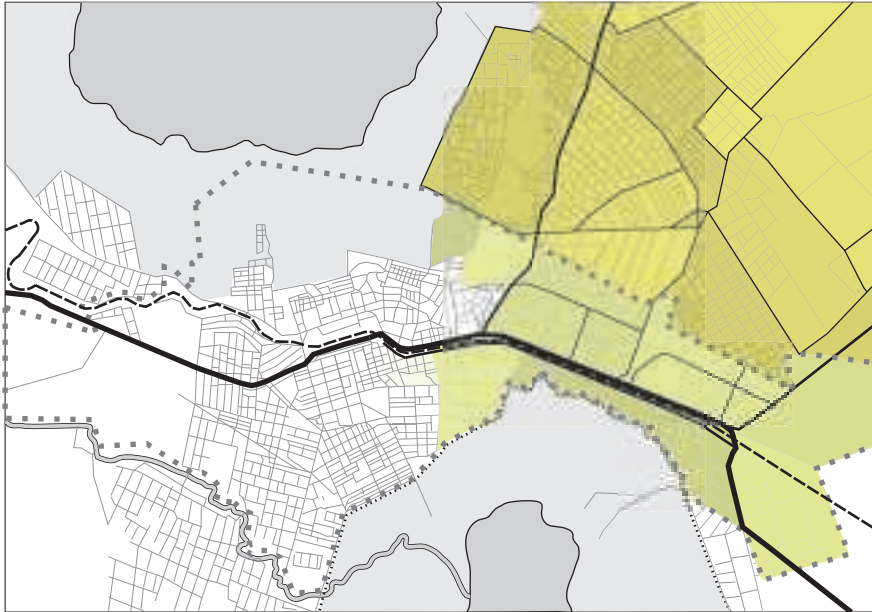
fig. 2.43 The developments within the existing municipal boundary are structured well, while those outside are not.

different conditions
different spatial logics

municipal border

fig. 2.44 Proposed strip and nodal development of the Eastside.

mentally sensitive zones. Similarly, they often lack character and definition, notwithstanding the fact that different farms imply some neighbourhood designation. And despite the evolving sense of ordering through amassing nodes, foci and strips, the spatial structure is still largely unintelligible (fig. 2.43). Open and public spaces, if any, are unplanned, while hit-and-run investments fail to make provisions for requisite infrastructure and services. As the area becomes more populated, the effects of this unplanned and unstructured development begin to be seen.

Following this study, design proposals were made with the possibility that they could serve as background to a future urban project for the Eastside. The chief aim of the proposals was to facilitate a sustainable urban expansion through the following actions (fig. 2.44):

- Structuring the urban-rural interface, by enabling a certain degree of urbanisation while guaranteeing a sustainable level of agricultural production
- Strengthening the relationship between the core city and the periphery by structural connections and services
- Weaving a coherent and harmonious settlement fabric inspired by Nakuru's neighbourhood patchwork and structured by prime roads and strategically located nodes

The main strategies included boundary delimitation and articulation; land-use densification and intensification; settlement reorganisation and upgrading; and the streamlining and opening-up of existing and new linkages and accesses. It was generally found desirable to maintain the area's dominant peri-urban character (residential/agricultural mix), (fig. 2.45), while exploiting the emerging strips and nodes to stimulate neighbourhood formation and give definition to the settlement fabrics (fig. 2.46). However, a detailed survey is required to define the contours and morphologies of possible neighbourhoods to yield a balance between agriculture and urban/residential activity. A variety of mechanisms, such as public acquisitions and land pooling/readjustment, were to be explored in order to increase the stock of land available for infrastructural networks, public services and amenities, among other critical but presently missing functions.
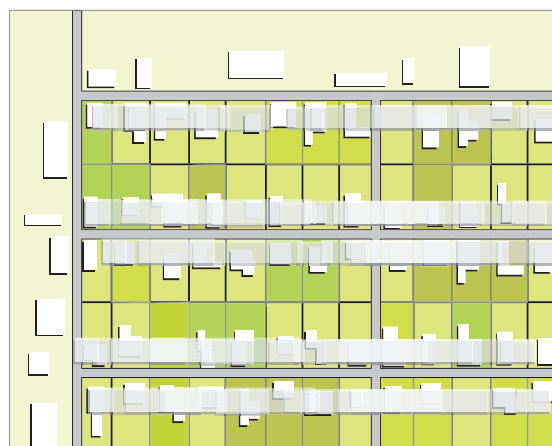

fig. 2.45 & 2.46 In order to retain the prevailing rural character, densities are to be kept low by preserving existing agricultural land.

fig. 2.47 Position of the park edge in relation to the crater.

fig. 2.48 The fence separating the city from Lake Nakuru National Park, human from wildlife activity, represents a rather abrupt transition and acts as a city backyard.

The Park Edge

The park edge is one of the primary places in the city where the tension between man and nature is especially evident (fig. 2.47). The area's dominant feature is the fence that separates the city from the lake/nature park, thereby dividing human and wildlife activity (fig. 2.48). Together with the crater's edge, they act as buffers preventing human encroachment on fragile ecological and geological spaces. Similarly, they act as the city's southern and northern barriers to expansion. However, this significant role is repudiated by the edge's current configuration. The park edge represents a rather abrupt transition and acts as a city backyard, as opposed to a front, as if residents want nothing to do with the park. The exception is *Naka*, a high-income neighbourhood, where residents accept and use the edge as a front. Inhabitants use the land across the fence as a dumping ground. On the other hand, the adjacent city does not exist on the mental map of park visitors as they seldom acknowledge or visit it. Furthermore, the park management does not share any of the proceeds of tourism with the city. Yet, the city of Nakuru is an inseparable part of the park's present reality, a tie between the natural context and that of the man-made.

The challenge is clear. The urban and the natural and inhabitants and visitors have to look for a new balance, a new culture of harmonious cohabitation, which prides in, invests in and takes care of the natural resource. Living with fragile natural forces of this magnitude is a challenge, as well as an art that Nakuru is genuinely exploring and seeking to perfect. The urban project for the park edge sought to eliminate these growth problems and make this vision a reality. The main approach was to structure the park's edge as an open, green and public front for the city. While it was and remains necessary to maintain a fence, it was generally agreed to restructure the park-to-city interface in order to reduce the rupture between the two. The urban project for the park edge proposed to achieve this through four strategies (fig. 2.49):

- The creation of a transition zone between the park edge and the city[13]
- The restructuring of existing nodal developments[14] in addition to creating nodes of public spaces along the park edge
- Integrating the Njoro River/park interface as part of the park edge
- Re-orienting the adjacent settlements towards this front and the introduction of domestic tourism

Although not all of these have been accomplished, the latter set of programmes has achieved considerable results. The park edge is now clear of any waste, while the city's

NEW PROPOSAL

1. Njoro River Riparian Reserve
2. New Sewage
3. Honeymoon Hill
4. Power way leave
5. Main Park Entrance
6. Crescent Hill
7. Old Sewage, wild corridor
8. South Cemetery
9. Hyrax Hill
10. Neylan historic site
11. Sirikwa holes
12. (back)-gate park

fig. 2.49 Through a nature trail beaded by a series of recreational nodes, the design hopes to turn the park edge into an open, green and public front for the city.

fig. 2.50 A three-dimensional representation of the desired future for the park edge.

inhabitants, facilitated by the park's administration, frequently use the resource for their recreational needs. There is now goodwill on the part of the city and park administrations, and the residents, perhaps leading to the pursuit, possibly with the cooperation of external parties, of all the intended actions (fig. 2.50).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it might be necessary to highlight what may be considered as the achievements of the Nakuru process. We hasten to add however, that the experience of initial stages of implementation is not sufficient to facilitate a critical assessment of the Programme's success.

Given the dynamism in Nakuru at the time, the identification of a collective vision for the city's future was frequently compromised by clear urban constraints and a challenging planning context. It is clear from the foregoing account that a considerably atypical approach was used to circumvent prevailing circumstances, formulate that vision and design measures to adequately address some of the city's problems, as well as to pursue the wider goals of the LA21 Programme. The acknowledgment of the integrating value of urban space as a framing reference for all policy fields is especially crucial in coming up with not comprehensive, but more integrated outputs, thereby seeking to overcome contradictions that characterise the often-fragmented policy framework in Kenya. Moreover, the spatial bias allowed to formulate a perspective of sustainable urban development that generates opportunities to overcome the fundamental split that occurred between Nakuru's historical drive and its geographical and landscape assets, as well as its incapacity to deal with the daily needs and multiple difficulties of an ever-growing African town. On the other hand, visions and project formulation stressed the often hidden and neglected values and opportunities of urban space as a resource and support for development.

The main success of the Nakuru case had to do with the fact that it not only coincided with the enactment of the new Physical Planning Act, but also took advantage of this new legal framework to introduce and promote innovative approaches, techniques and concepts for urban planning

and development. The Nakuru case may thus be viewed as a capacity building exercise, jump-starting the adoption of the new planning procedures and processes, and transferring new knowledge to planning professionals in the public sector, as is evidenced in the process of preparing the strategic structure plan. Additionally, the mere incorporation of stakeholder views and collaboration between key decision forums enriches the plan-making process and pools the requisite resources. This is imperative considering the incapacitation of the municipality with regards to technical and financial resources. It is also a critical step towards a more devolved but integrated decision-making framework in line with the 'subsidiary' principle of distributing functions and responsibilities between different scales and levels of competence, from the global to the local and the generic to the specific. Already some of the innovative implementation mechanisms are in place, including the newly established Municipal Town Planning Unit and Zonal Development Committees, and are facilitating the realisation of the actions and projects.

Further agreements are being reached between key stakeholders through internal and external partnerships, such as the one between the Municipal Council and the Nakuru chapter of the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (Borehole rehabilitation project), and the Municipalities of Nakuru and Leuven in Belgium (Flamingo housing revitalisation and cobblestones projects), as part of a continuous collaborative process of planning and plan realisation, monitoring and evaluation. The participative nature of the process is also credited with the arbitration of conflicting interests and change in perception and amelioration of relations between different actors and interests (such as between the City and National Park administrations, the residents and the municipality, the municipality and government departments, and the residents and the wildlife, among others). The benefits of these new relations are already being reaped by the residents and the urban environment.

It is encouraging to note two recent initiatives from the Government of Kenya aimed at institutional capacity building for local authorities. The Local Authority Strategic Development Plan (LASDAP), requiring that the municipal authorities collaborate with residents in identifying projects, will add to the above collaborative initiatives. Improving the financial

base of the Local Authority Transfer Fund (LATF), if well-implemented, will not only supply the municipality with badly needed funds to implement proposed actions and projects, but will also go a long way towards reducing the necessity of securing the donor funding on which these institutions presently depend.

NOTES

1. East-west twin railroad transport corridor linking the Indian Ocean port city of Mombasa to destinations in western Kenya and Central Africa.

2. The city stands at an altitude of 1,850 metres above sea level with an average maximum temperature of 26°C and has two rainy seasons — March to May and October to December — receiving approximately 1,000mm of rainfall per year.

3. A growth rate of approximately 5.68 percent by 2000 estimates.

4. Out of this area 158 square kilometres consist of a National Park while the rest represents the city's built-up area.

5. The justification for choosing a largely spatial lens in studying Nakuru is elaborated in detail in Chapter Five.

6. The first part of this text is to a large extent recuperated out of:
    B. De Meulder, H. Heynen, A. Loeckx, e.o., *Nakuru. An African Town*, Leuven, Gemeentebestuur Leuven, 1996, in particular the texts: B. De Meulder, *Nakuru – Patchwork* (p. 13–33) and
    N. Kulshreshtha, *Nakuru – An African town today* (p. 35–73).

7. This includes an industrial zone, residential quarters for the various social classes, a suitable location for a hospital and cemetery, and recreational facilities.

8. A crop of flowers used for making pesticides.

9. In the early settler schemes, million-acre (about 400,000 ha or 4,000 square kilometres) plots were given to each settler on 999-year leases.

10. Bounded by the *Menengai* crater to the west, *Bahati/Dundori* Range to the North, the Lanet Barracks to the east and the city's north-eastern boundary to the south.

11. Acquired from the colonial settler community after independence. Some of these settlements were formed to rehabilitate migrants uprooted due to the ethnic clashes in the countryside and due to the government policies of removing traditional settlements from forest areas in the countryside, as these became 'reserved' areas.

12. Solai, Dundori & Elementaita.

13. From the *Njoro* river up to the Stem gate.

14. Flamingo and Stem gates.

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PREPARATORY PHASE

1st Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (25 November)

2nd Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (2 June): Selection of
Nakuru as priority town

Assessment mission to East Africa (11–26 January)
Recommendation of Nakuru as priority action
town for strategic structure planning
and action planning
'Consultative Workshop' (6–9 November)
Strategic Structure Planning adopted as
framework followed by Preparation of
Urban Pact 1

Start Local Team (July)

Urban Pact 1 (9 November)
Agreement on vision for Nakuru, including
development of decision making-structures
and related action plans.

1994   1995   1996

● NAKURU

3rd Steering Committee Meeting; Brussels (22 January)
4th Steering Committee Meeting; Brussels (2 October)

'Councillors' Workshop' (May)
Nakuru Planning Workshop' (22–27 September): support of local authori-
ties, evaluation & development of SSP & working sessions on Bus Park,
Council Rental Housing and Settlement Planning in Ronda
'Councillors' Workshop' (October)

New planning legislation in Kenya (November)

Start Local Coordinator (March)
Local Team Group-Training on Leadership (May)
Local Advisory Committee meeting (27 September)
Workshop for councillors as 'Guardians of the Environment';
Local Team Group-Training on Solid Waste Management (October)
Dissemination meeting (26 November)

Setting-up of Bus Park and Market Area Committee and revised design of
World Bank KUTIP intervention; Nakuru Brochure by Local Team,
UN-HABITAT and PGCHS (May)
Establishment of Tree Nurseries in Primary Schools (August)
Partnership with Municipality of Leuven, Belgium; Geological Survey
Nakuru West and Study of Underground Water Bahati;
Action Plan: Bus Park and Market Area; Construction of solid waste
transfer chamber in Pangani (September)
A flight of flamingos: Video programme (15 min) by UNCHS

Research project: Nakuru Council Rental Housing
by HABRI (August–September)

INTENSIVE PROJECT PHASE / ALL PARTNERS

5th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (29 May)
6th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (9 December)

Visit of Representatives of MCN and the LA21 Local Team to
Leuven (13–19 February): Review of Nakuru–Leuven C2C coopera-
tion and planning activities and capacity-building initiatives
BC mission to Nakuru and Nairobi (10–12 April): Fieldwork as part of
the Phase I SSP exercise
BC mission to Nakuru and Nairobi (6–18 July): Evaluation of Phase I
of the SSP and preparation of framework for Phase II
Workshop reviewing links between CBOs and the MCN;
By-laws Workshop (November)

Local Team Group-Training: Environmental Planning Ronda
(January)
Setting-up of Solid Waste Task Force;
Seminar: Safe water-use and disposal (February)
Seminar: Municipal revenue rationalisation and pricing of
services (22–26 March)
Local Team Group Training: DURP Master Studio (April)
Arrival of first JPO (June)
Setting-up of Planning Section (September)
Establishment of Zonal Development Committees (November)

1997

●

Green Towns project: Environmental development plan and action
plans Ronda/Kaptembwa (January)
Action Plan: Safe water-use and disposal (February)
Action Plan: Revenue Rationalisation and pricing of services (March)
Inventory of Pollution Emissions and Transfer Registers (April)
Creation of a Municipal Resource Centre (May)
Study: Nakuru East Side (July)
Action Plan: Mwireri Women's Group (August)
Mapping project: Mapping project: Town map updating; Action Plans:
Greening of old sewer environs, estate cleaning campaigns,
borehole rehabilitation (September)
Flamingo Pilot Project for Rental Housing Revitalisation
(October 1997–September 1998) (Based on the 1996 HABRI research
and partially funded by Leuven through the C2C cooperation)
Action Plan: Quarry Rehabilitation Naroka; Action Plan:
Moi Estate Densification (December)

Study on Revitalisation of MCN Rental Housing by HABRI (January)
PGCHS Design Studio (January–March)
Preparation of Phase I of the SSP by the DURP planning studio
(January–July)
Methodological note on Urban Analysis for the Nakuru Structure
Plan (March)
Project report: Nakuru Strategic Structure Plan Phase I
by DURP and MNC (August)
Project report: The Nakuru Town Bus and *Matatu* **Park**
by the BC (September)
Project report: Rental Housing Revitalisation Nakuru:
Re-densification of Flamingo-I by the BC (October)
Flamingo pilot project for rental housing revitalisation in Nakuru:
inputs from the BC (October 1997–September 1998)

7th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (29 September)

BC mission to Nakuru (18–24 January); Review of ongoing SSP process; task-definition for phase II
'Thoughtfully Dealing with the City':
Workshop Leuven–Nakuru in Leuven (16 March)
Planning workshop and advisory board meeting
(18–22 May) Expert mission to Nakuru to review ongoing SSP & discuss final draft of Urban Pact 2
BC mission to Nakuru (15–21 August): Review of ongoing SSP process; working sessions with team
'Technical workshop on SSP Nakuru'
(27 September–3 October): Preparation of documentary
'Stakeholders Workshop' (1–6 November): Discussion of draft SSP; Review of Flamingo Pilot Project; Follow-up on Leuven–Nakuru cooperation; Implementation of by-laws project ITDG

Local Advisory Committee meeting (20 May)
Local Team Seminar (9–10 December)

Action Plan: Stormwater Diversion Gilani (January)
Nakuru, An African Town – Stad in Africa Exhibit in the Leuven City Hall (12–30 March)
Urban Pact 2 (20 May): Agreement on city-wide priority measures, SSP, creation of Town Planning Unit (TPU) and establishment of Zonal Development Committees

1998   1999   2000

FOLLOW-UP PHASE

Partners' workshop (25–31 January): Review of SSP execution; discussion on Urban Pact 3
Stakeholders' workshop on the revitalisation of the bus park

Establishment of indicators to monitor the implementation of the SSP;
Preparation of a funding proposal to AFD on solid waste management

Urban Pact 3 (January): Implementation of SSP (mechanisms & monitoring); the built environment & spatial action plans; formation of planning department and land control committee; short-term action programme; dissemination
Cobblestone project (July): In the framework of the Nakuru-Leuven Cooperation

Proposal for the Flamingo Estate rental housing revitalisation;
Preparation of a funding proposal to AFD on solid waste management

10th Steering Committee Meeting; Nairobi (12 May)

Monitoring and information
Activities to establish indicators, monitoring and information functions were also implemented with the support of ITDG and UN-HABITAT Global Urban Observatory; **Decentralised cooperation**

2001   2002   2003   2004

Stakeholders' Workshop (June)

Approval of the SSP and Regional Plan for Nakuru (April)

Synthesis Report 'LA21 Programme in Nakuru' by the BC (January)

8th Steering Committee Meeting; Brussels (22 October)

SSP Work Session (March)

Nakuru, an African Town Exhibit in Nakuru (29 June–3 July)
Production of Final Document: Nakuru Strategic Structure Plan: Action Plan for Sustainable Urban Development of Nakuru Town and its Environs (July)
Project proposal: 'Provision of clean water supply and community training in Ronda/Kaptembwa' and approval by ICLEI within Incentive Grants Project (September)

Follow-up of SSP Nakuru: Inputs from the BC
(November 1998–May 1999)
Dissertation 'Responding to the challenges of implementation. An analysis of the LA21 initiative in Nakuru' by A.M. Swai, DPU (September)
Project proposals by the MCN (October)

11th Steering Committee Meeting;
Nairobi (4 May)

Up-scaling of demonstration projects
(e.g. Flamingo Phase 1); park edge and crater structure plan; establishment of a municipal information centre on sustainable urban development; replication of the water kiosks demonstration project; and continued C2C with Leuven.

9th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (8 October)

Establishment of the Zonal Development Committees; Physical rehabilitation of the bus park; Improvement of sanitation facilities in Flamingo Estate; Completion of four water kiosks
HABITAT Scroll of Honor awarded to Nakuru on World Habitat Day (Brussels) for its decentralised cooperation with the city of Leuven, Belgium

'Institutionalisation Workshop' (19 – 23 August):
Consolidation of LA Nakuru; Discussion of Urban Pact 3; Visit of LA21 action areas in Nakuru

Study on solid waste completed by AFD (July)

▬	STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS
▬	WORKSHOPS AND MISSIONS
▬	LOCAL TEAM ACTIVITIES
▬	MAJOR OUTCOMES
▬	STUDIES, RESEARCH PROJECTS AND OTHER EXTERNAL INPUT
▬	IMPORTANT NATIONAL AND LOCAL EVENTS

DUIRA

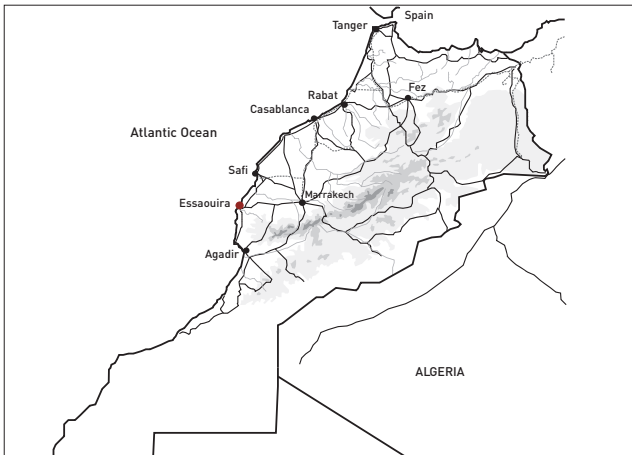# [Re]Editing a Compact City

BRUNO DE MEULDER, ANDRÉ LOECKX

fig. 3.1 Essaouira, a coastal town on the Atlantic Ocean, is situated on the foothills of the Atlas Mountains. Roads towards Marrakech and Agadir link the quite peripheral city to the rest of the country.

fig. 3.2 Essaouira, a compact city between sea and dunes, seen from the belvedere situated along the road from Marrakech.

ESSAOUIRA AS AN ISLAND

Essaouira, a Moroccan coastal town, is situated 175 kilometres to the west of Marrakech (fig. 3.1). It is the provincial headquarters of the Essaouira Province and has approximately 63,000 inhabitants, half of which live in the historical *medina*. Population growth is estimated at 2.5 percent. The municipal area, some 10 square kilometres in 1990, was extended to 90 square kilometres in 1996 and today incorporates *douars* in its hinterland known as *Diabat*, *Lghazoua* and *Laraab*.

Essaouira has a marvellous setting between the Atlantic Ocean and a dune forest. Prominent natural features include the sea, the rocky peninsula on which the historical city is anchored, dunes and, more to the south, the valley of *Oued Ksob*. A belvedere, offering a panoramic view of the compact city nestled among the rocks, reveals the unique character of Essaouira (fig. 3.2). Essaouira is still indeed a compact city. Due to the unsuitability for construction on the sea and the dunes, Essaouira does not have to cope with peripheral zones — at least, not so far. Unlike most other cities, Essaouira has neither to struggle with endless ribbon development, nor contains any sprawl worth mentioning. Essaouira is literally an island flanked by two majestic natural elements: the ocean and a sea of dunes covered by a sandy forest. Between the city and these monumental landscapes are two discontinuous elements: a lagoon at the foot of both dunes and city and a sandy beach between the sea and city. The two act as membranes mediating between the prominent natural features.

A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The origins and the rich urban identity of Essaouira
Essaouira's history dates back to antiquity.[1] Phoenician presence in the seventh century BC was followed by the attempts of Carthage, Rome and Portugal (1506–1510) to establish outposts at this strategic point on the Atlantic Ocean. The real take-off point of Essaouira as we know it today was the moment Sultan Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah (1757–1790) decided on the foundation of a new strategic and economic port on the site. In 1765, the sultan charged Théodore Cornut, a former French military engineer, with this ambitious undertaking. Essaouira's origins explain its duality. It is a double entity: port and city. Both elements are distinct and interdependent. The port has proper gates and *Skala* for its defence. The city wall articulates the very clear and distinct form of the *medina*. The *medina* and port are separated by an open space (and originally also the sultan's

fig. 3.3 Gravure *Suira*, from Georges Höst, 1779. The port of Essaouira was founded by the Sultan in 1776 to punish the city of Agadir, where rebellions against the leading power took place. Soon after its foundation until the first half of the nineteenth century, the port was the most important trading port between Europe, Africa and the Americas.
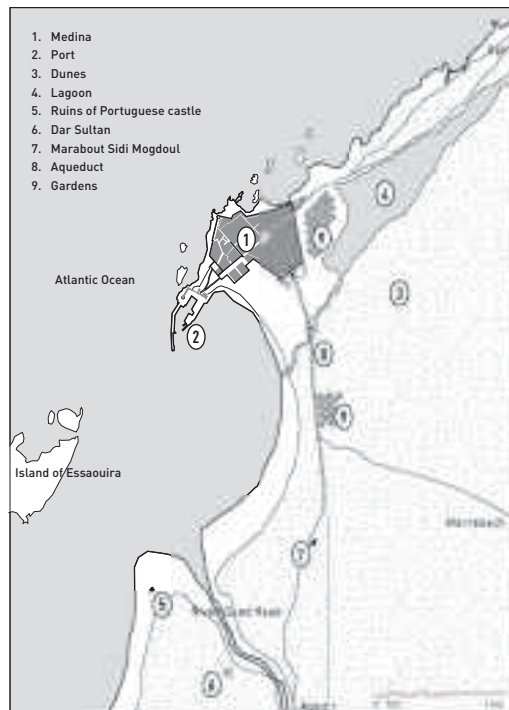

1. Medina
2. Port
3. Dunes
4. Lagoon
5. Ruins of Portuguese castle
6. Dar Sultan
7. Marabout Sidi Mogdoul
8. Aqueduct
9. Gardens

Atlantic Ocean

Island of Essaouira

fig. 3.4 Historical scheme of Essaouira, based on a plan from 1895–1896.

palace) open to the sea on both its northern and southern side (the wild ocean to the north, the quiet bay to the south), (fig. 3.3).

Essaouira is a 'founded' city, meaning it was planned from its inception. The development of the *medina* originally followed a geometrical plan. A strong axiality, defined by the figure of a cross, determines the basic structure and fundamental organisation of the *medina*, the division into quarters, the circulation and the centre. One axis links *Bab El Menzeh* to *Bab Doukkala* (and realises a connection between the port and the old track to Safi). The other axis crosses the first one in the city centre, where the *Souk* was located, and leads to *Bab Marrakech* which used to link up with the road to Marrakech (fig. 3.4). The city is an intersection, a bridge between the port, the sea and two destinations: Safi and Marrakech. The strong axiality of the city can perhaps be explained by the original function of the city: a thoroughfare between port and road, sea and land, and the external markets and the Sultanate (fig. 3.5).

The overall form of the *medina* is determined by the peninsula and articulated by the wall that encloses it. The *medina* is built on the rocks as the dunes were not suitable for building.

Part of the *Kasbah* was realised following the *plan Cornut* (1765). In 1767, Ahmed El Eulj took over the planning of the city. Later, the *medina* was strongly influenced by the Islamic tradition of urbanism with its organic system of alleys and dead ends, its sophisticated sequence of thresholds, its rich diversity of activities incorporated within the fabric, and the patio housing typology, among other traits. This Arab urban tradition inscribed itself within the described axial structure.

The *medina* is not static nor without differentiations in its form and fabric. Even from outside one notices an east-west and a north-south difference. The northern wall, facing the sea and strong winds, is higher and more closed than the southern one. To the west, with the *Skala* of the *Kasbah*, the town has a frontage where it establishes a dialogue with the sea and the bay, which is Essaouira's gate to the world. Here to the west of the *medina* is where the economic (port), religious (mosque) and political (palace of the sultan) powers are represented. But it is also the place for the *other*. It is here that we find the ruins of a church and many former consulates, which testify to the hospitality of the city, the

importance of the original port, the gate of the Sultanate to the world and, conversely, the concentrated presence of the world in the Sultanate.

Essaouira is fundamentally a hybrid city. As a port on the ocean it was by definition an exchange point, a crossroads of cultures. A strong sense of civic individuality has historically not overwhelmed the city's open reception of outsiders, its willingness for accepting cultural and social exchange, and its ability for developing a characteristically rich cultural dialogue. This hybridism has reflected itself in a unique way in the form and structure of the city, combining Western urbanity with the Islamic urban tradition: a predefined axial structure and wall that over the years has become filled in with a traditional Islamic urban tissue — a wall that for its northern segment facing the sea follows Western planning principles and for its southern segment facing the dunes follows Islamic principles of defensive architecture.

In Essaouira's form, geometry and organics, order and variation, regularity and variety, unity and diversity, go hand in hand. Since its origin, Essaouira has embodied and united two very different modalities of urbanism. This makes Essaouira unique compared to other *medinas* in North Africa (fig. 3.6). Essaouira has always been a living crossroads of cultures with Islamic, Jewish and European cultures intermingling at ease. Essaouira also functions as a hinge between the Berber-speaking *Haha* region and the Arab-speaking *Chiadma* region [Mana 1991]. From the sixteenth century onwards, successive waves of black people have also been integrated into local society. They were, among other things, involved in the actual construction of the city. As a city, Essaouira has always embraced and welcomed difference. Here again (as for the concept of the compact city) Essaouira already fulfils and embodies fully what in urban planning literature is formulated as a prospect and a goal: the city as a crossroads of cultures. In Essaouira, planning visions and the reality of the city seem to match.

Functionalistic interventions in Essaouira

Over time, Essaouira lost its strategic importance for the then-Sultanate and primarily became a modest fishing port. While a protectorate, Essaouira attracted industrial activities (fishing industry, leather, ship building, etc.) and during this time had its facilities and infrastructure (port, road
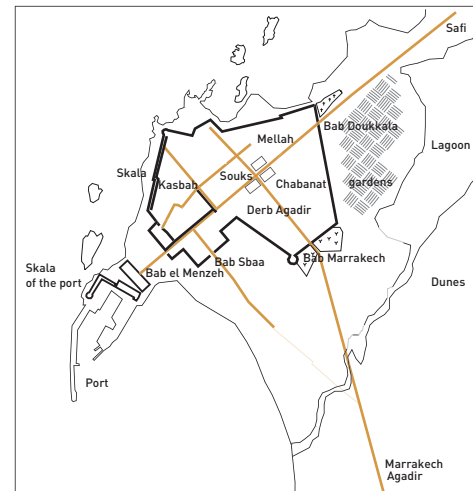

fig. 3.5 The scheme of the structure of the *medina* illustrates a strong axial configuration. Situated on the cross to accentuate centrality, *souks* are the main commercial markets of the city (different *souks* for food, gold, and, in the past, slaves). The city is an interface, a place of interchange and regional and international trade.

fig. 3.6 Map of the *medina*, showing the internal hybridity between different urban traditions: an introvert Islamic urbanity enclosed by a wall combined with a strong axial system that turns the *medina* into a radial city.
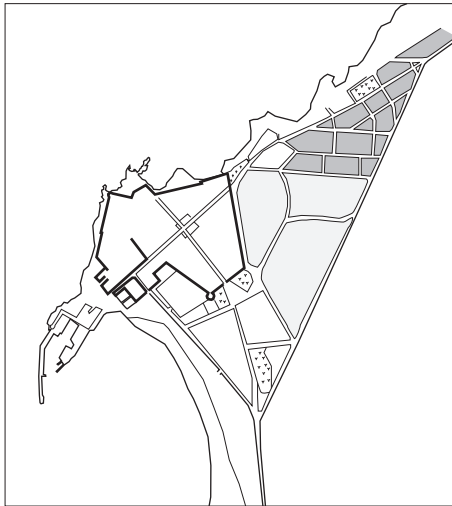
fig. 3.7 Scheme of General Urbanisation plan from 1922. This plan forms the base of the colonial interventions and foresees the extension of the port, the creation of a low-density residential neighbourhood and an industrial quarter and civic centre in between. Unfortunately, the connection between residential and industrial quarters never got realised. Instead, the interstitial area became occupied with gardens. The conceptualised triangle became two bi-polar relations: *medina*-residential quarter and *medina*-industrial quarter.

1. **Industrial quarter**
2. **Colonial residential quarter**
3. **Military camp**
4. **Sports ground**

Island of Essaouira

fig. 3.8 The scheme of the colonial extensions from 1912 to 1956. The functional extensions take some distance from the *medina* (in between are the graveyards at *Bab Doukkala* and *Bab Marrakech* and the military camp at *Bab Sbaa*).

connections) modernised and extended. At the same time, Essaouira was discovered as a beautiful city in a splendid natural setting. This led to a development *extra muros* for which the functionalist principles of French colonial urbanism were applied. An industrial zone was created at the northern edge of the city. The European residential quarter was built along the bay and the embryo of a civic centre with its allied public services (schools, sport facilities) was situated between these two. Each of these new specialised zones had its spatial organisation adapted to its function and fitted within a partially realised general urbanisation plan dating from 1922 (fig. 3.7). The *medina* remains practically untouched in this plan and remains the centre of gravity for the city, the predominant element in the unfolding setting. Indeed, the other quarters have no meaning or definition, except through their relation with the centre — the *medina*. The new quarters are, in a way, additions rather than extensions; they do not empty the *medina* of its sub-

stance, content, or meaning (fig. 3.8) [Belgian Consortium 1996a:8–14].

Seafront and industrial zone
Consequently, from this time onwards, the city has to be read as a series of bilateral relations completing the original dual relationship between *medina*-port, *medina*-industrial zone, and *medina*-European residential quarter. This last relation is quite important from the viewpoint of the global image of the city because it links the bay to the city. The construction of the road and promenade bordering the beach create a scenic entrance to the city (and sets *Bab Sbaa* against *Bab Marrakech*) together with a modest seafront. *Medina* and seafront again reproduce a double entity — body and tail. Together they constitute the face or 'image' of the city.

The seafront was originally quite undistinguished and modest. After the Second World War, some larger scale elements slowly inserted themselves, piece-by-piece, along the

fig. 3.9 A 1960 aerial view from the northeast of the *medina*, the port infrastructure and in the background, the river *Oued Ksob* estuary. Slowly, the *medina* loses its position of obligatory place of passage as tracks are being created outside the wall.

fig. 3.10 Aerial view from the south of Essaouira in 1960 with its densely built *medina*. Outside the wall, in between the villa-neighbourhood and the industrial quarter, the area is occupied with small-scale productive gardens and the start of some new developments that will lead to the future civic centre.

length of the seafront. A modernist, multi-storey hotel and the provincial headquarters were built and now mingle as new elements on the seafront. The seafront becomes, to a certain extent, the modern city — the city of cars and movement and the city of tourism and leisure. The bay, with its promenade, becomes a public space, a path for walking, and a strolling space adopted by all the inhabitants. The seafront is an extravert urban space and forms the scenic entrance to the city. But the full potential of the seafront has not really been realised. It is an ambivalent space with prestigious projects along the bay (*Hôtel des Iles*, provincial headquarters) jostling with peripheral functions such as gas stations, garages, and cheap hotels.

The industrial zone to the north of the city, on the contrary, can be qualified as an introverted, closed space behind the *medina* and between the sea and the dunes. It does not present itself. It has no face nor is there a scenic trajectory leading to it. Here, the sea is a negative space. The industrial buildings show their backs to the sea in an attempt to protect themselves against strong winds. In this sense, it reproduces the characteristics of the northern face of the *medina*, which is much more closed on its northern side as well. The disappearance of the track to Safi, a consequence of the ecological instability of the dune landscape, adds to its isolation (figs. 3.9 and 3.10).

CONTEMPORARY TRANSFORMATIONS

A complementary civic centre

While a protectorate, a series of public services were introduced in Essaouira: a post and telephone office, the treasury, primary and secondary schools, the state police, a dispensary, and others. They were localised *extra muros* behind the 'European residential quarter' and to the south of the industrial zone. The *plan de la ville nouvelle* (Ecochard, 1960)

fig. 3.11 Scheme of development in the 1960s. The empty patches between the sea and Boulevard *El Akaaba* are filled with several housing projects, the new civic centre and other facilities and the fragile balance between city and nature is increasingly problematic.
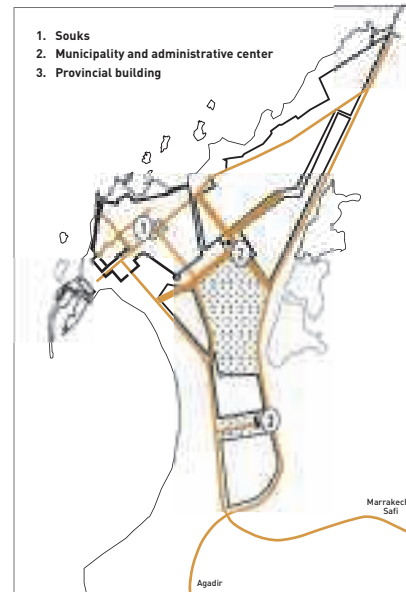

fig. 3.12 Scheme of development in the 1960s. The new centre is organised around a set of orthogonal axes and is given importance by the strategic location of public places, the municipality, and the governor's palace.

extended this zone where public services were centralised into the whole area, till then left vacant except for vegetable gardens, between the industrial zone and the European residential quarter (and the later patchwork of *lotissements*). This plan introduced a new system of orthogonal axes (in fact, a translation of the axes of the *medina*).[2] At the crossroads of this new axis, the Municipality has been constructed. After independence, the Governor's palace and public plazas were added to underline the significance of this crossroads. While translating and transposing the axial system of the *medina*, the plan inversed its spatial system. In this new 'civic' centre, the extremely dense urban fabric of the *medina* was converted into a system of open spaces. Walls, fences and other demarcations delineated the difference between public space and private space (as for example, a school campus). Urban fabric was practically absent here or was diluted into free-standing buildings, often nothing more than pavilions [Belgian Consortium 1996a:15–16]

[Van Loon 1997] (figs. 3.11 and 3.12).

Over time, public functions were added (hospital, training institute, sports facilities and stadium) or existing ones were extended (as for the cemetery). In this way, a quite substantial zone of public services grew within the geographical centre of the expanding city. Paradoxically, this new civic centre, which is surrounded by dense urban quarters (the *medina*, the densifying seafront, the industrial zone and in the future the patchwork of *lotissements*) is predominantly empty and under-utilised, given the disproportion between open space and the implemented programmes. Ironically, this disproportion is the result of urban planning regulations that provided these public institutions with provisions of land that, even in the long term, they will probably not be able to use (fig. 3.13).

Essaouira extra muros: a patchwork of 'lotissements'
The construction of a highway *El Akaaba*, linking the indus-

fig. 3.13 Zoom on the new civic centre, *extra muros*. Essaouira is a city of contrasts: dense and crowded urban spaces enclose a vast open space. The city has a hollow belly.
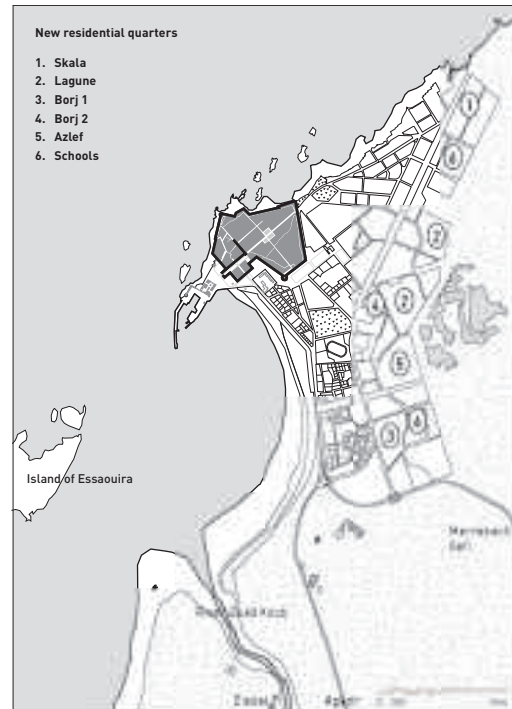

New residential quarters

1. Skala
2. Lagune
3. Borj 1
4. Borj 2
5. Azlef
6. Schools

Island of Essaouira

fig. 3.14 Contemporary situation of Essaouira. A whole belt of *lotissements* has been added during the last three decades, further moving the city edge eastward.

trial zone to the crossroads of the Marrakech and Agadir roads at the southern edge of the city, allowed motorised traffic, which is impossible in the *medina*, to bypass the historic city and to reach the industrial zone. Over time, this over-scaled infrastructure (originally intended to re-establish a road connection to Safi) also became the backbone of the new residential city, which developed *extra muros*, as the *medina* no longer had the capacity to absorb substantial population growth. From 1962 onwards to this day, an impressive series of quite dense housing estates (*lotissements*) has arisen on both sides of this monumental north-south boulevard. For this purpose, the lagoon was filled and dunes were levelled. Today, these *lotissements* constitute the driving force of Essaouira's urbanisation (fig. 3.14). A large number of these are initiated by public and semi-public agencies, such as the *Etablissement Régional d'Aménagement et de Construction* (ERAC) and the *Société Nationale d'Aménagement et de Construction du Tensift* (SNEC), which have the

technical and financial means to prepare the sites for building. The technical constraints placed by the unsuitable soil conditions and the resultant financial consequences both explain and generate the density (an average of more than 100 houses/ha) and the important critical mass of these *lotissements* (usually more-or-less 1,000 plots for an average of 1,500 dwellings, usually three storeys). Low-cost public housing is the dominant component of this intensive and ongoing construction north of the city. More to the south, one also finds a substantial stock of medium-cost housing. In this way, Essaouira succeeds in creating fairly acceptable living conditions in its new residential city, with good connections to the service networks of the main city (water, electricity, roads) and a low level of cohabitation and congestion. By tripling the urbanised surface of Essaouira, the city of *lotissements* adds tremendous volume to the housing stock (in the period between 1979 and 1992, some 6,000 houses were built) and enlarges the variety of housing

fig. 3.15 Morphology of Essaouira.

1. Medina
2. Industrial quarter
3. Colonial residential quarter
4. Boulevard El Akaaba
5. New residential quarters
6. Seafront
7. Dunes and lagoon

Island of Essaouira

fig. 3.16 View on the *lotissements* in 1995.

options that Essaouira offers its inhabitants (although the *lotissements* in themselves are usually quite monotonous in character), [LA21 Local Team, UNCHS, PGCHS 1996a], [Belgian Consortium 1996a:15–33] (fig. 3.15).

Nevertheless, these massive operations of housing production have a problematic side. The patch-by-patch realisation of the city of *lotissements* is only loosely structured along the north-south orientation of the boulevard *El Akaaba*. No other real integration of the different large patches of *lotissements* is taking place. It merely leads to juxtaposition, a loose patchwork of *lotissements* that operates as a disconnected fragment in the city. The lack of and the insufficient quality of transverse connecting structures that relate the patchwork of *lotissements* to the rest of the city is striking. The same goes for the city's relation to the fragile dune landscape on its eastern side. The patchwork of *lotissements* shows its back to the dunes and abuses them as a worthless dumping ground, a non-space to be eventually colonised with new *lotissements* (fig. 3.16). In short, the absence of integration distorts the coherent urban structure and the relation of the city as a whole to its fragile neighbour, the dune forest [Belgian Consortium 1996a].

OUTLINING ESSAOUIRA'S HISTORY OF THE FUTURE: VISIONS

Today, Essaouira is a medium-sized city with a fairly compact structure (fig. 3.17). Demographic growth is moderate (approximately 2.5% per year), [Decorte 2004]. Essaouira is isolated from the main national communication networks. Urban employment is limited to sectors such as tourism and handicraft production. The previous economic base provided by the fishing industry is in a crisis. The current economic decline has had severe repercussions, both on the quality of life and the built environment. The cultural heritage has suffered degradation as well. The continued expansion of the city inland is threatening its fragile ecosystem and, in turn, the very survival of the city. These developments present several contentious issues. On the one hand, the geographical and ecological setting of the city induces severe development constraints and calls for limiting the growth of the city. On the other, the general eco-
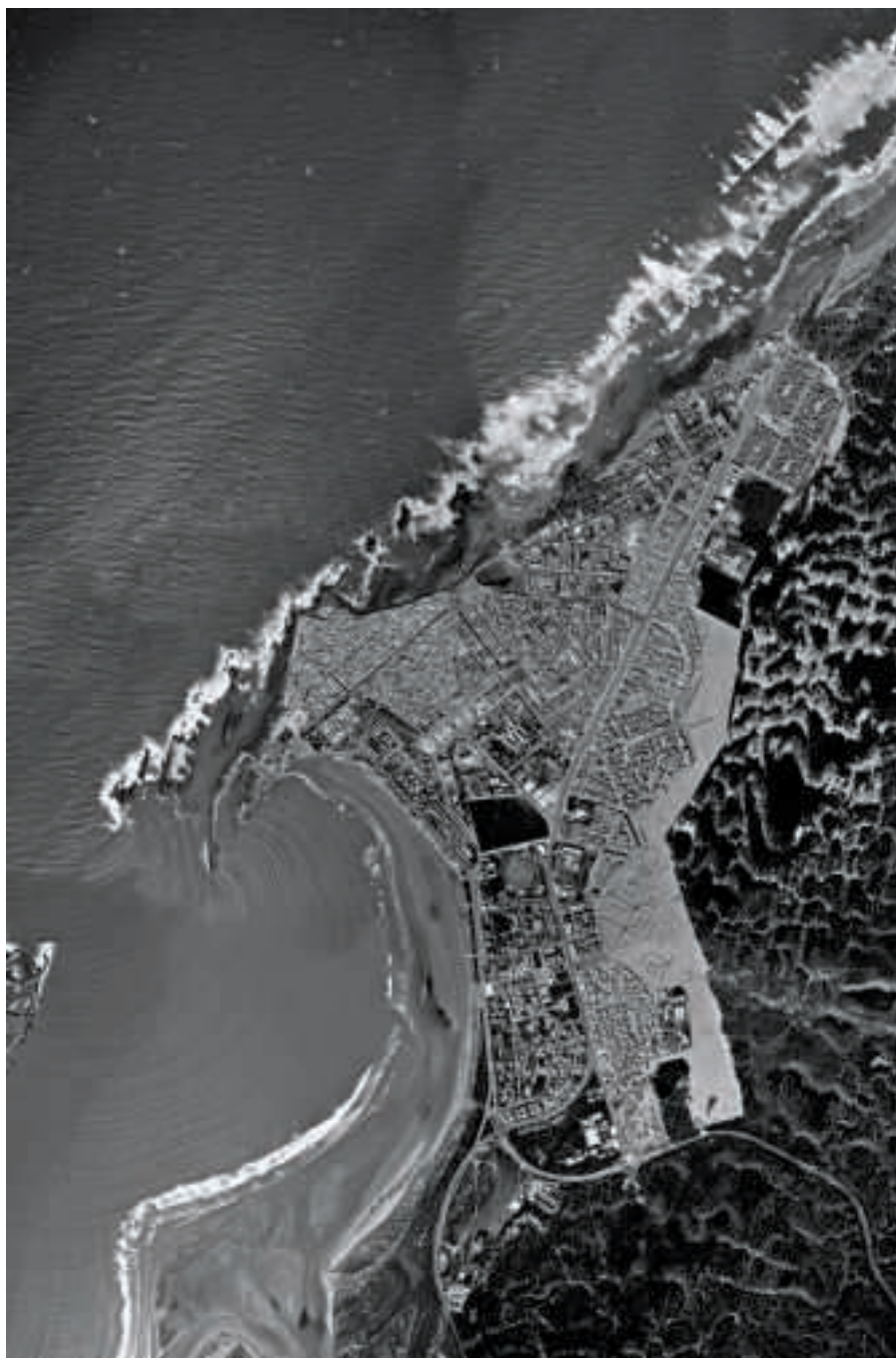
fig. 3.17 Aerial photo from 1997, before the final realisation of the neighbourhoods *Azlef* and *Lagune 4*.

nomic stagnation and population increase calls for enhancing the urban development, which can only further jeopardise the ecosystem.

The resultant complexity of the situation calls for achieving sustainability through a new strategic action approach, which consists, as explained in the introductory chapter of this publication, of basically three interactive lines: vision, action and projects, and co-production.

As an initial step, a series of visions were developed by the LA21 Programme for Essaouira. They were first discussed during the *Atelier de consultation*, the opening seminar of the LA21 Programme coordinated in January 1996 in Essaouira, which united experts of the Belgian Consortium (centred around the PGCHS of the K.U.Leuven with an architect from La Cambre), UNCHS, national consultants, other local experts and a wide variety of local actors (ranging from representatives of different national and provincial administrations, the municipality and NGOs and the architect in charge of the development of the SDAU). Based upon presentations given by the local actors,[3] the documents they delivered and the intensive discussions in thematic workshops, collective site visits, field work carried out by the experts and consultants, and a study of available reports, studies, projects and plans, the first formulation of collective visions, which later in the course of the LA21 Programme were further refined and amended, were determined. This vision was the collective result of the first seminar and consensus-building session. It was inscribed in the first Urban Pact of 1996, together with the actions agreed upon in the first seminar, as being necessary to start up the process of strategic structural planning in Essaouira (see chapter six) [LA21 Local Team, UNCHS, BC 1996a].

The city's historical development, as reviewed previously, has already explained a number of the particularities of Essaouira and some elements of its actual development condition. While its specific urban condition saddles the city with constraints, this historically produced condition also contains enormous potential(s). Consequently, the starting point of the LA21 Programme, in which many actors on the Essaouirian scene were involved, was a critical assessment of the city and a diagnosis of its development condition. This was done in the above-mentioned first seminar. This overall vision, which is only a temporary synthesis, formed a general frame of reference for action and planning which was summarised as follows:

City of heritage

Essaouira is obviously a heritage city (fig. 3.18). Spread over its territory are remarkable relics and buildings, from archaeological sites dating from antiquity to the ruins of a Portuguese fortress or a sultan's palace to more recent buildings (in the French art deco and modernist traditions) and even recent ensembles (as, for example, the provincial headquarters). The cornerstone of Essaouira as a 'city of heritage' is, nevertheless and without doubt, its walled *medina*, which accommodates an important architectural and urban patrimony (port, *skalas*, walls, *babs*, etc.). Above all, it is the *medina* as a whole that has to be considered as a patrimony. Its dense and rich urban tissue and the hybrid character of it make Essaouira's *medina* an exceptional and unique urban environment of the highest quality. In recognition of this fact, it was decided in the very first seminar in 1996 that it was necessary to establish a *cellule medina* charged with the immediate planning of the restoration and renovation of the *medina* (some pilot projects included the urgent restoration and technical improvement of the northern wall, demonstration operations in the *Mellah* — the former Jewish quarter — etc.). Due to the uniqueness of the *medina*, the proposal for constructing a tourist replica at the other end of the bay near *Oued Ksob* was heavily criticised during the first vision-building LA21 Programme seminar organised in Essaouira. One need not stress the uniqueness of the *medina* by building a pastiche next to it, even if it would answer to higher and more contemporary norms of comfort.

But the process of the *medina's* upgrading does not necessitate an orthodox restoration. The layered identity of Essaouira's *medina*, which testifies to a rich and glorious past, does not exclude its transformation over time for the fulfilment of contemporary and future needs. Safeguarding the *medina* does not mean freezing its development, but instead the adding of a layer — the re-editing of an already rich text. The creation of a museum city is not on the agenda, but rather the clever and respectful exploitation of its capacity for mutation and transformation.

The centrality of the *medina* and its meaning must be protected. Competition with other areas of centrality has to be
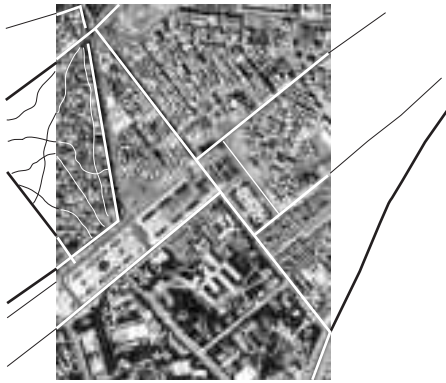
fig. 3.18 City of heritage: cultural and natural amenites.

avoided. Other areas of centrality have to be complementary (as, for example, the new civic centre which houses the larger-scale public functions, which cannot be integrated into the fine-grain maze of the *medina's* tissue) and limited in number and importance. Only then can the natural centrality and the evident dominant role of the *medina* in the future functioning of the city be secured.

The heritage of Essaouira does not merely limit itself to the built and urban elements, but also comprises the natural elements. The dunes, the island, the bay, the beach and *Oued Ksob* are all natural elements that structure the city and combine fragility with potentiality. It is essential to preserve these natural sites and above all to recognise them as a natural reserve of incontestable ecological value. This implies the protection of these sensitive sites against all devastating forms of urbanisation. The valley of *Oued Ksob* in the south is a clear example of this (at the start of the LA21 Programme, a mass tourist development project for the area was on the table), but so too are the fragile dunes at the eastern edge of the city, a habitat which until now has been carelessly taken over and destroyed. This vision of the protection of the natural assets of the city does not imply a total prohibition of construction in these areas. What it does imply is that the natural environment, in any case, must be protected and allowed to remain the major and structuring element of the city's fabric. Development consequently has to remain very selective and has to inscribe itself within the landscape. The campus idea might be a more suitable model for this development, marginal in volume but performative in terms of delivering value and quality. In the long run, more sustainable forms of tourism could be developed by making use of this quality and by limiting it to the selective development of an alternative. Given the scale of the city, a type of tourism that values the qualities of scale, of nature and of the authenticity of Essaouira might be more appropriate than the projects for mass tourism that regularly appear and reappear on the table of the municipality.

Compact city

Essaouira is literally an island flanked by two majestic natural elements: the ocean and a sea of dunes. As an island, it has a clear overall urban form (fig. 3.19). At the same time, Essaouira is a compact city with an interesting overall density. This unique quality distinguishes Essaouira from the vast majority of cities that are spread out and struggle with their diffuse and limitless peripheries. This character allows Essaouira to undertake sustainable development by capitalising on, exploiting and developing the synergies the concept of a compact city holds out as a prospect.

This basically implies two things. Essaouira can build upon its compactness (in other words, its manageable size and economic dimension) by producing synergies, strengthening its integration, and absorbing new developments, while at the same time remaining a walkable city with human dimensions. Giving more attention to the transverse (east to west) connections that ameliorate the integration of the different major components of the city (*medina*, industrial zone, seafront and the patchwork of *lotissements*) is important in this respect.

Essaouira has a clearly distinguishable overall form nestled within an interesting and rich natural environment. It should capitalise on this environment by entering into a productive, but at the same time respectful relation to its surroundings: the ocean and the dune forest. The current mode of urbanisation, through a juxtaposition of *lotissements* is, in the long run, not sustainable. Instead, Essaouira should delimit itself and define a clear border presenting a front to the dune landscape.

The expansion south of the road to Marrakech is in this respect problematic. Urban expansion cannot go any further than the fragile ecological structure of *Oued Ksob*. Urbanisation south of the road to Marrakech has to be of a different nature if it is to occur at all. A campus model, in which the open natural space remains the dominant spatial component, absorbing a minimal, high-quality volume of construction (which takes the form of pavilions introduced into the natural landscape) seems appropriate. This form of minimal urbanisation fits the nature of the city's site better and complements the rich variety of urban fabrics (*medina*, civic centre, *lotissements*, and seafront) that Essaouira can and does contain within its overall form and structure.

Finally, this vision of Essaouira as a compact and integrated city implies that growth, which cannot be absorbed within the limits of Essaouira, should be accommodated in satellite centres. *Douars* such as *Lghazoua* and *Laraab* situated within an accessible distance from Essaouira are in-

fig. 3.19 Compact city. A city with a compact structure, an open centre and campus-style development in the south. Further development of the different urban fabrics and the satellite towns *Lghazoua* and *Laraab* could guarantee the city's compactness and its clear overall form.

tended to be developed in this manner. Plans for developing one of these satellite centres were already on the table during the first seminar of the LA21 Programme in Essaouira. Intense discussions were undertaken on the quality of this development (large-scale standard *lotissements*). Consensus was reached on the recommendation to first fully utilise the remaining capacity of Essaouira itself, integrating the development of the southern campus zone, and to use this densification to strengthen the structure of and the synergies within the central city.

So, is Essaouira a compact city? Here again, Essaouira is exceptional in the sense that an idealistic planning concept (the polycentric garden city surrounded by greenbelts) is within reach. Planning concepts like the polycentric garden city, the compact city and the concept of the city as a crossroads of cultures fits perfectly within the character and conditions of the present urban and natural landscape. For most of our cities these ideal visions are *fata morganas*, which in practice are very difficult, if not quite impossible to attain. Essaouira is in the exceptional position of not having to ask how to reach this ideal, but on the contrary, how to safeguard and protect the qualities that correspond so remarkably to those of the sketched ideal visions.

City of hospitality

Essaouira is a double entity — a port and a city — and, as we have seen, is fundamentally hybrid in character. As a port, it is a gate, an exchange point and a crossroads of cultures. The proper identity of the city has been and is developed through the past and present exchange with the outside. This nature of Essaouira as a crossroads of cultures is translated into the very form and structure of the city that marries geometry with organics and unity with diversity. Over time, this rich and multiple hybrid character came to represent its welcoming nature and the co-existence of diverse ethnic (Berber, Arab, etc.), religious (Jewish, Christian and Islamic) and social groups. The city had its own Jewish quarter (the *Mellah*) and the numerous consulates in the *Kasbah* quarter are witness to a long and international presence in the city. During the 1960s, Essaouira became a famous subcultural centre. Today, the remaining French presence is reinforced by a small European community that values the peacefulness and authenticity of the city. Some reside per-

manently in Essaouira, while others have a second house in the city. As the city continues to develop and expand beyond its original historical character, the reiteration and the (re-)valorisation of this rich cultural identity, as the basis for a sustainable urban development, has been one of the primary concerns of the LA21 Programme in Essaouira. Essaouira is a city of hospitality and of co-existence (fig. 3.20). The peaceful and provincial character of the city and the serenity of the landscape strengthen this aspect. This character should be further reinforced so Essaouira can capitalise on it to its own advantage.

This reiteration of its rich cultural identity — a crossroads of cultures and point of osmosis between different urban modalities — asks for new forms and means. Tourism is one of the obvious contemporary means, as long as it is a form of tourism that is in accordance with the scale and the particularities of the city being developed. Both international and national tourism that does not aim towards mass tourism, but instead opts for a more selective and qualitative approach could play an important role. Such a specific form of tourism could bolster the conservation and preservation of the patrimony (both built and natural). This specific niche of tourism could be initiated by programmes such as the existing *Gnaoua* music festival, competitions for surfers, or circuits for walking tours, among other prospects. During the LA21 Programme, a number of initiatives have been taken in this respect, including the development of a sustainable tourism charter in 1998 and the organisation of a series of *Université Convivial* meetings by the association 'Essaouira-Mogador.'

In spatial terms, the development of tourism requires places of reception. Accommodation facilities such as hotels and guest rooms can easily be absorbed into the rich patrimony of the city. There are, of course, also the public spaces that should radiate a welcoming atmosphere, one open to exchange and interaction. The *medina* plays a key role in this, but so too do the surroundings of the *medina* wall, the bay with its beach and promenade and the port. Potentially, a park edge surrounding the city could play a complementary role to the bay and, as previously discussed, the 'campus-landscape' could be conceived as an additional and complementary space of reception.

Meeting and exchange is not just a privilege for visitors,

fig. 3.20 City of hospitality. Five important spaces of reception: the beach and bay, the *medina* and its surroundings, the park edge, the boule-vard *El Akaaba* and the planned southern campus.

but is a general human necessity. In this respect, the above-mentioned spaces of reception are, of course, also simply public spaces. The boulevard *El Akaaba*, nowadays nothing more than an underdeveloped highway, can be re-conceptualised as a space of reception (regional buses have their stops along this boulevard) and as a public space serving as collective and shared space for the adjacent patchwork of *lotissements*.

Eco-city

Since 1925, following the large-scale and careless cutting of wood (for the clearing of plantations, firewood, etc.) from the sixteenth until the nineteenth century, the *Administra-tion des Eaux et Fôrets* has tenaciously carried out a comprehensive program to fix and stabilise the dunes and to restore the dune forest [Mana 1991]. Systematic re-planting and the construction of three enormous artificial dunes were among the means used to prevent erosion and the instability of the dunes that arose from this historical defor-estation. Since the 1960s, the construction of the *lotisse-ments* has been causing remobilisation of the sands. The boulevard *El Akaaba* and the surrounding neighbourhoods suffer regularly from the sands of the shifting dunes. Controlling this fragile equilibrium between city and nature has always been and will always be one of the main challenges for the city of Essaouira.

Maintaining the equilibrium between urban and natural spaces calls forward a number of priorities [ONEM 1996]. First among these priorities is the total protection of the valley of *Oued Ksob* as a zone *non aedificande*. The river delta and the bay form a continuous ecological landscape that encapsulates the city naturally on its western and southern sides. The bay and valley function as membranes that medi-ate respectively between ocean and city and dunes and city. The second priority is for the conception of a border for the city on its eastern and northern side, organising the transi-tion between city and the dunes. The dune forest remains a vulnerable ecological structure. The heavy winds and the ongoing urbanisation in the dunes are the two main factors that jeopardise the ecological equilibrium of the dunes. It is imperative to safeguard the dunes. This protection of the dunes does not imply that they have to remain a non-space (as they have been perceived by the Essaouira population to date). Giving the dunes a specific use and significance for the city, while at first sight a contradiction, might be the best method of ensuring their protection. This can be achieved by creating a green belt around the city (fig. 3.21).

Firstly, working on the equilibrium between nature and city concerns itself with the mediation between the city and the two majestic natural elements that surround it. How-ever, this does not mean that nothing can be done in the city itself. Management of solid waste, sustainable water treat-ment and purification, and other environmental concerns have to be addressed and translated into programmes, actions and projects. In spatial terms, the greening of a number of public spaces and the elaboration of the east-west transverse connections acting as links between the two dominant natural elements (sea and dunes) is an im-portant issue which, at the same time, articulates, clarifies and enriches the spatial structure of the city.

STRATEGIC URBAN PROJECTS

The formulation of these visions, a collective effort of the major actors on the Essaouirian scene sustained by aca-demic inputs by PGCHS, was one of the most important first steps of the LA21 Programme. Although undergoing their own process of elaboration during the LA21 Programme, the authors of the official *Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme* (SDAU) intensively discussed the visions of the LA21 Programme in order to strengthen and focus them toward an achievable reality. The SDAU is the legal planning instrument that defines the general frame of reference for the future development of the city. Several elements of the visions were therefore translated into a plan of the intended structure of Essaouira, which was at this point taken into consideration by the authors of the SDAU into the legally required format of the SDAU.

The inclusion of elements of these visions into the SDAU was a necessary, but far from sufficient step to secure their real impact on the city's development. It necessitated a whole series of actions, ranging from mobilisation campaigns and stimulation programmes that give incentives to the creation of development alliances and networks, undertaken prior to the making of plans and the realisation of strategic urban
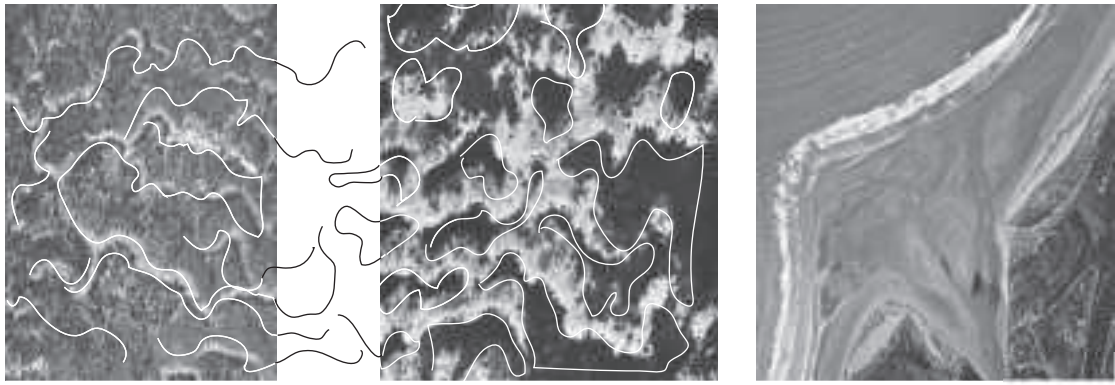
fig. 3.21 Eco-city. The sea, the northern rocky coast, the bay in the west, the lagoon system and the dunes form a succession of terms that fundamentally define the natural setting of the city. This setting presents both the most important natural assets and future challenges for Essaouira.
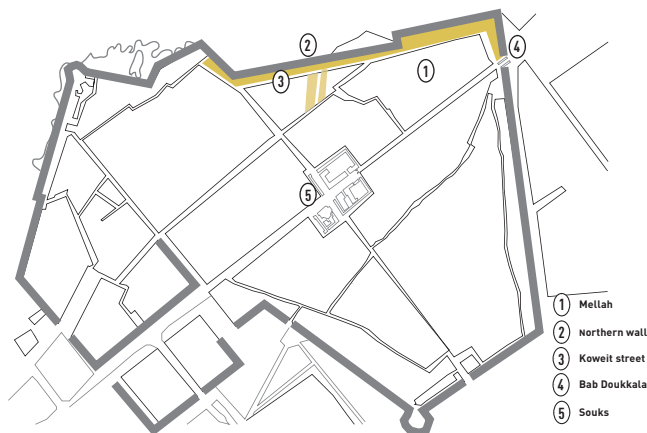
fig. 3.22 Location of the collapsed and damaged houses that were incorporated into a proposal for a pilot restoration project.

① Mellah
② Northern wall
③ Koweit street
④ Bab Doukkala
⑤ Souks

fig. 3.23 Northern wall of the *medina.*

projects (see the section Instruments for co-production). A number of these diverse actions have been initiated by the LA21 Programme and inscribed into subsequent Urban Pacts, the documents that lay out the commonly agreed-upon engagements of all involved partners in the LA21 Programme.

In the following sections, a few strategic urban projects that translated the visions into concrete interventions in the urban spatial frame (second track) are discussed. The LA21 Programme initiated urban projects including the surroundings of the *medina* wall; an urban park; the re-development of the seafront, the urban renovation of the *medina* and more particularly of the *Mellah*. All of these actions are tightly intertwined with the visions and the co-productive track of the LA21 Programme.

Renovation of the medina wall and the Mellah

Early in the process it became clear that the specific problem of the *medina* was one of the most important challenges for the project. A workshop was organised in 1996, initiating a working group for the *medina*, the *cellule medina.* Different actions were undertaken in parallel and in different partnerships.[4]

Firstly, there was the issue of the restoration of the *medina* wall (fig. 3.22). A series of technical studies (among others by Andrea Bruno, an architect who specialises in

conservation, and M. Rosenthal, an oceanographer) were undertaken concerning the classified northern wall of the *medina* in partnership with the Municipality, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Housing, UNESCO, and others. Action plans were set up to stop the already advanced marine erosion and further encroachment on the foundations by the houses along the wall. Interventions became urgent after exceptional storms and flooding in the beginning of 1996 caused houses along the northern wall to collapse and other houses to be declared unfit for habitation. Sealing off the breaches and clearing the ruins were among the most important actions undertaken. Approximately 27 families were re-housed permanently in the *Skala* neighbourhood and others were re-housed temporarily. Together with the proposed restoration of the wall, a pilot project for the rehabilitation of the *Koweït* street in the *Mellah* (the neighbourhood along the most degraded part of the wall) was proposed in possible partnership with the public agency *Agence National de lutte contre l'Habitat Insalubre* (ANHI) (fig. 3.23).

Aside from the more urgent restoration of the northern part of the *medina* wall, other parts were also to be included in an overall restoration plan. Other measures that were proposed with reference to the safeguarding of the *medina* included a detailed architectural study, the contribution to put the Essaouirian *medina* on the World Heritage List of UNESCO, the proposed transformation of the Danish con-

sulate into a cultural centre, the restoration of the Por-
tuguese church, and other undertakings.

The surroundings of the medina wall

The area in the shadow of the *medina* wall has throughout
its history been an ambiguous space (fig. 3.24). During the
eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a whole world of usu-
ally peripheral activities — petty trading at the gates, mar-
kets, vegetable gardens, and cemeteries — unfolded in the
space between the city wall and the lagoon. After the con-
struction of the industrial zone and the European residential
quarter, this interstitial space was labelled a *zone neutre* in
French colonial urbanism. It functioned as a device for sep-
aration (as illustrated by the construction of army barracks
between *Bab Sbaa* and the European residential quarter).[5]

After the end of the protectorate, the surroundings of the
medina wall became an interruption and a gap between dif-
ferent worlds and, above all, a highly fragmented space.
Re-qualification took place piece by piece. Between *Bab
Doukkala* and the new municipality, until then used as veg-
etable gardens (see fig. 3.10), the space was carelessly and
randomly allotted and occupied by artisans' workshops with
their backs to the wall. *Bab Doukkala* started functioning
as a market and a terminus for mule cars (fig. 3.25). The
construction of *Hôtel des Iles* (on the former military site)
turned the interstitial space into a backyard (fig. 3.26). An-
other section was randomly taken over for parking. In short,
the surroundings of the *medina* wall, which regulate the
relationship between the *medina* and the city *extra muros*,
were reduced to an unclear juxtaposition of fragments with
different spheres and functions: partially functioning as
internal periphery, partially as ceremonial space, partially
consumed by buildings, and partially reduced to a non de-
script *terrain vague*. The indifferent and lax attitude towards
this space might well have to do with its colonial origins. One
might suppose the shift from 'neutral zone' to non-space
has something to do with amnesia with respect to the colo-
nial era (fig. 3.27).

At the moment the LA21 Programme took off in
Essaouira, different projects for a further (indifferent) utili-
sation of this space were on the table of the municipality:
a housing project by ERAC on *Bab Doukkala* that would cover
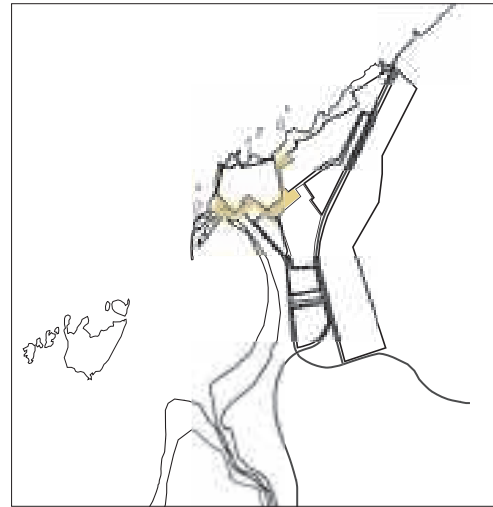the whole space, an extension of the *Hôtel des Iles* on its

fig. 3.24 Strategic location of the surroundings of the *medina*
wall in the city.

fig. 3.25 The market at *Bab Doukkala*.

fig. 3.26 View of the existing situation of the surroundings of
the *medina* wall along *Bab Sbaa* and *Hôtel des Iles*.

fig. 3.27 Existing situation of the area surrounding the *medina* wall.

1   *Bab Doukkala*

2   open vegetable market

3   cinema, (work)-shops, housing

4   municipality

5   governor's house

6   office

7   library

8   public health office

9   *Bab Marrakech*

10   school

11   *Hôtel des Iles*

12   mosque

13   *Bab Sbaa*

fig. 3.28 The strategic urban project of the *medina* wall surroundings.

PROPOSAL

1   balcony

2   marketplace

3   covered vegetable market housing

4   activity street

5   revaluation of existing functions: trade market, workshops, theatre

6   extension of municipality

7   terrace

8   municipality square

9   paved recreation field

10   extension of *Hôtel des Iles*, congress centre

11   public garden

12   parking space

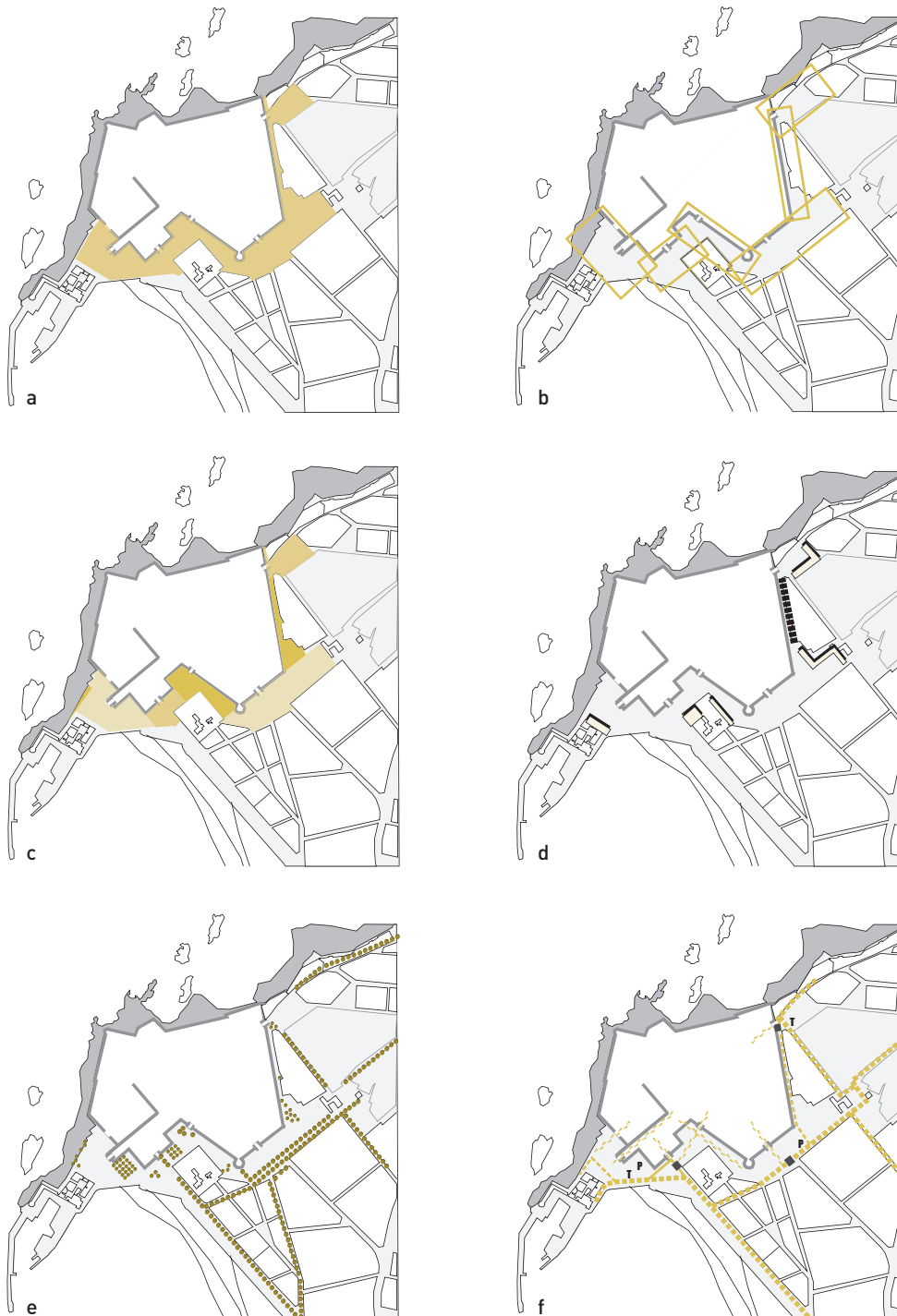13   maritime museum, covered fish market

14   green balcony

fig. 3.29a Unification of the surroundings as one continuous space. **b.** The open spaces along the *medina* wall as a chain of open spaces. **c.** Differentiation in character (and function) of the sequence of open spaces. **d.** Selective introduction of buildings fronting the interstitial space. **e.** The planting of pockets of trees as hinges between the different open spaces, the planting of a few lines of trees that re-scale the open space to more adequate proportions and re-profile the over-dimensioned infrastructure in this zone. **f.** The accommodation of parking facilities under the trees at the different gates to the *medina* and for different modes of transport (mule cars at *Bab Doukkala*, tourist parking along the bay, car parking at *Bab Marrakech*).

rear, and a restructuring and extension of a fish factory in the area between port and *medina*. This state of affairs compelled participants of the LA21 Programme to develop a project that restored this interstitial space as a continuous open space that could function as the necessary decompression zone for the *medina*, compensating for the lack of open space in the densely inhabited *medina* (fig. 3.28). By accentuating the contrast between the open space and the dense and crowded *medina*, the specific qualities of both areas are articulated. As a continuous chain of spaces with different atmospheres, it provides the city with a wide variety of public spaces: meeting places, places with a more ceremonial aspect, places with an intense user's value (such as playgrounds) and decompression spaces that function as thresholds to the *medina*. In this sense, the continuous chain of different public spaces contributes to the city's image of hospitality and exchange.

The unity in diversity of the interstitial space between the *medina* and the *extra muros* city that the urban project envisages allows for a different set of relationships to exist with the monumental wall of the *medina*: the wall in all its splendid grandeur as in front of *Bab Marrakech* (an invitation to contemplation), but also the wall as part of the scenery of the various practices of daily life (shopping in a market or children playing football in the welcome shadow of the wall between the *Hôtel des Iles* and the wall). The treatment of the space facilitates the appropriation of the wall's monumental heritage into the practices of daily life, as well as the contemplative adoration of its historical and monumental significance. In this way, the project not only tries to contribute, but also to polish and refine the multiple significance of the city's heritage (fig. 3.29).

Moreover, the urban project for the surroundings of the *medina* wall aims to clarify the urban structure of Essaouira. It tries to mediate by articulating and accentuating the interruption and inverting its meaning. In that sense, the project would transcend the separation, inherited from the colonial era, and transform the *zone neutre* into a mediating space, a scene that realises the communicative relationship between the *medina* and the city *extra muros*. It would organise a fruitful dialogue between two different urban tissues. In short, it mediates between differences and, by doing so, helps to fulfil the very essence of the city: coping with dif-

ference. The basic operation in this respect is the conversion of 'backsides' along this space into frontages. At the same time, this selective addition of a high-quality built fabric contributes both to the facilities and the economic structure of the city (extension of the *Hôtel des Iles* with a congress centre and a covered vegetable market at *Bab Doukkala*).

The project considers the surroundings of the *medina* wall as a global and continuous space, articulated by different, specific places (fig. 3.30). This implies the general strategy (as reviewed above) was articulated by specific approaches in its different sequences. These specific approaches took into account the variety of real interests on the ground. The project for *Bab Doukkala*, for example, was an alternative proposal for the housing project of ERAC (that had already acquired legal rights on the land) [Benchelabi, H. 1997f; Benchelabi, H. 1998a]. This proposal projected a comparable building volume to the project of *ERAC*, while creating a formal frontage (with commercial activities on the ground floor) for the remaining public space, which was thereby safeguarded as an open public space. The solution for the problem thus lay in increasing the density of the proposed fabric, which had the added advantage of accentuating the newly created frontage. This frontage, with its commercial activities incorporated, is indeed not only important for the public space and for the continuity of commercial trajectories, but also as a formal answer to the *medina* wall it faces. It organises the dialogue between the two faces of the two major components of the city: the *medina* and the city *extra muros*. A similar situation — an existing plan for the site behind the *Hôtel des Iles*, which threatened to completely consume the space between hotel and historic wall — compelled the development of an alternative project. Following the same general principles as outlined above, it lead to a proposal for the layout of this space as public gardens and for the further extension of the hotel. Within this extension operation, a frontage with commercial activities could be introduced. However, this alternative was not followed and a conventional (and contested) project is being executed instead.

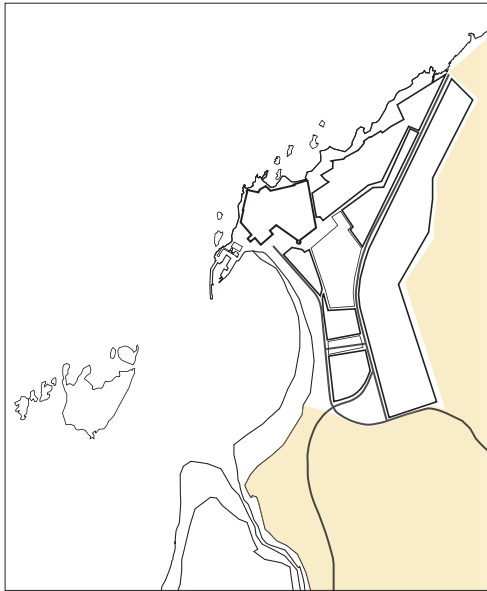**fig. 3.30** Impression of the surroundings of the *medina* wall project.

fig. 3.31 The location of the urban park area at the interface of city and dunes.

fig. 3.32 View on the dunes and the urban constructions along the east border of Essaouira.

fig. 3.33 Informal dumping and pollution in the dune belt.

The Urban Park

Again, Essaouira is an island, floating in an ocean of water and dune forests.[6] And as we have discussed, three primary terms of reference originally defined the scenic setting: the ocean, the city on a rocky peninsula and the dunes. In the same way that the beach functions as a membrane between ocean and city, the vast lagoon functions as an interface between the *medina* and the dune landscape (fig. 3.31). The expansion of the city complicated and disturbed this harmonious relationship. As a consequence of the continuous advancement of the *lotissements*, the lagoon has been reduced to a relic. Large parts of the fragile dunes have been destroyed and the dune landscape jeopardised (fig. 3.32). This situation compelled the authors of the SDAU to define a strict border for the city and to introduce a *ceinture verte* around the city, an inaccessible buffer zone between the city and the dunes with its prime objective being the strict protection of the dune forest. The municipality opposed the views of the future SDAU, claiming that it needed the land for future extensions for public housing and construction of workshops for starting enterprises. During the discussions carried out within the frame of the LA21 Programme these opposing views were reconciled in a challenging project for an urban park.

The alternative option of an urban park was put forward partly because the original defensive stance of the authors of the SDAU seemed unrealistic, taking into account the current realities of the actual border (used as a dumping ground) (fig. 3.33), and partly because it was thought the partial appropriation of the dunes would create significant user value that would enhance their protection. Additionally, the alternative option was undertaken partly because the compact city of Essaouira does not have a park and could be provided with a necessary facility it currently lacked and partly because a solution for the location of the new needs of the city could be found through the densification of the existing city (among other possibilities, by creating an important urban front along the park) (fig. 3.34).

The prime motivation for the location of the urban park at the edge of the expansions was to reinstate a harmonious relationship between city and landscape (fig. 3.35). A review of the project for the park will illustrate how the project can give concrete form to the visions and concepts discussed

EXISTING SITUATION

① *Skala I, II, III, IV*

② Education

③ *Lagune I, II , III, IV*

④ *Azlef*

⑤ Lagoons

⑥ Dune forest

⑦ Surroundings of *medina* wall

⑧ Bay and seafront

⑨ Boulevard *El Akaaba*

fig. 3.34 The existing situation of the urban park area.

NEW PROPOSAL

▮ FRONTAGE

⌐ RESIDENTIAL PARK AND PARKWAY

▨ URBAN PARK NETWORK OF PATHS

DUNE FOREST

CAMPUS

━ TRANSVERSE CONNECTIONS

① housing and workshops

② productive gardens

③ Boulevard *El Akaaba* - main artery

fig. 3.35 The strategic urban project of the urban park.
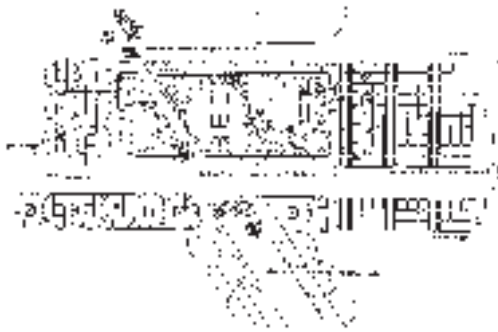
fig. 3.36 Design of a possible development of the residential park band near one of the transverse connections made for the occasion of a European Union project proposal by K. Gazoulit.
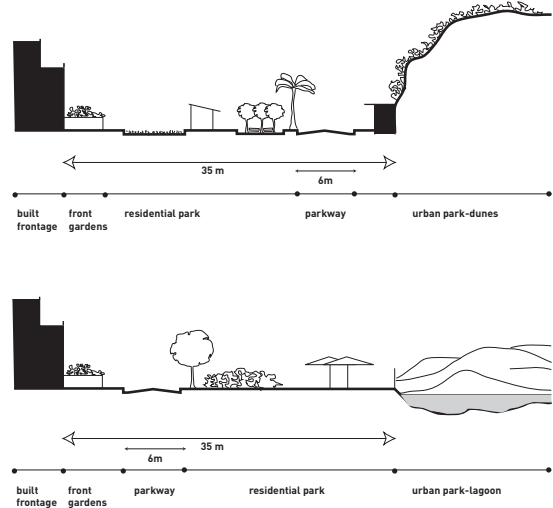
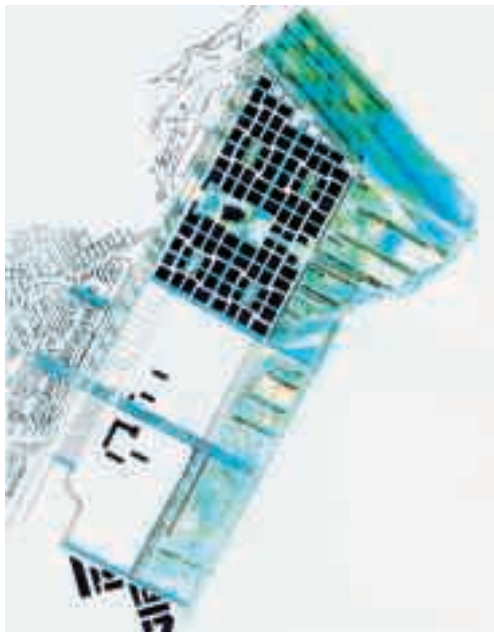**fig. 3.37** Proposed section of the parkway.

fig. 3.38 Zoom on the northern sequence showing productive gardens with lines of trees to protect the gardens from heavy winds.

fig. 3.39 Zoom on the middle sequence showing a park with lagoons, sunbathing area, and a network of paths to picnic areas with platforms attached.

earlier, namely those of the compact city, eco-city, city of heritage and city of hospitality.

The proposal of the urban park was finally agreed upon and inscribed in the SDAU and in the Urban Pact 2. Partnerships between the municipality, the *Administration des Eaux et Fôrets*, ERAC and the *amicales* were created [LA21 Local Team, UNCHS, BC 1998]. Several preliminary studies were carried out by the Belgian Consortium during 1997 and were soon followed by a commission awarded to landscape architect Kawtar Gazoulit in 1998 [Gazoulit 1998, 1999].

We shall limit ourselves to a synthetic discussion of the design concepts. In its transverse (west to east) section the project for the urban park is built up in four bands (fig. 3.36). In its transverse section the following four layers can be distinguished:

1. By delineating the urban park, the construction of a built frontage of the city that articulates the overall form of the city will emerge. By building a (final) frontage, the orientation of the housing is reversed. Instead of serving merely as a 'backside,' the dunes become a meaningful landscape, which will undoubtedly add to the quality of the housing environment. In the northern outskirts and along the northeastern edge of the city, this operation allows a substantial extension of the popular housing estate, *Skala*. Given the vicinity of the industrial zone and the fact that the already existing *lotissements* are low-income neighbourhoods, a mixed development with housing and workshops is foreseen. The northern frontage is conceived as a massive and closed wall that protects the adjacent housing estates against winds and sand. In the southern section, there is only enough room to complement the existing housing estates with one new row of houses. They are nevertheless crucial for creating a city frontage (converting the backside into a frontage or facade).

2. The large-scale encroachment of housing estates in recent years has led to problems of accessibility that the authorities wanted to resolve with the construction of a *boulevard périphérique*. In the proposal for the urban park, the plans for this stereotypical and disproportionately large-scale piece of infrastructure are altered into a parkway. The reduction of the number of lanes and the

downscaling of their dimensions to an appropriate size allows for the provision of ample green spaces and the introduction of numerous public facilities (such as neighbourhood mosques, community facilities like a youth house, playgrounds, and small-scale neighbourhood parking) (fig. 3.37). Obviously, the parkway and the urban front are strongly inter-dependent.

3. Along the parkway, the first stretch of the dunes and the remaining lagoon are transformed into the park which Essaouira has lacked. What have been provided are not neighbourhood-level facilities, but small facilities that easily fit within an urban park (pavilions, picnic spots, and belvederes). A system of paths facilitates easy access to the park and to scenic walks within it. Hence, one can say in this stretch the dunes are domesticated.

4. The last stretch of the urban park remains 'untouched' nature. Access is denied, except for a very limited number of controlled paths.

In the longitudinal section of the domesticated part of the urban park, the following four segments can be distinguished, from north to south:

1. Here the park faces the popular, low-income neighbourhood of *Skala* and its planned extensions (with workshops and other developments). The urban park is organised as an allotment garden with a variety of intensive forms of urban agriculture. The park is structured by a regular irrigation system (that makes use of the sustainable treatment of used water) and a grid of dense trees that protects the vegetable gardens against the winds (fig. 3.38).

2. The remnants of the original lagoon form the basis of a system of lakes that are complemented with planes that allow an active use of the park on the windproof and sheltered sides of the planted dunes. The vocabulary for such a popular park can be quite basic: a sunbathing area at the foot of a lake, a playground on its opposite bank, a walking path running around the lake and up the hill, plantings for the stabilisation of the dunes, dense lines of trees that break the winds, a play of colours and a variety of species that respond to different conditions (exposure to winds, heights, water, and orientation) (figs. 3.39 and 3.40).
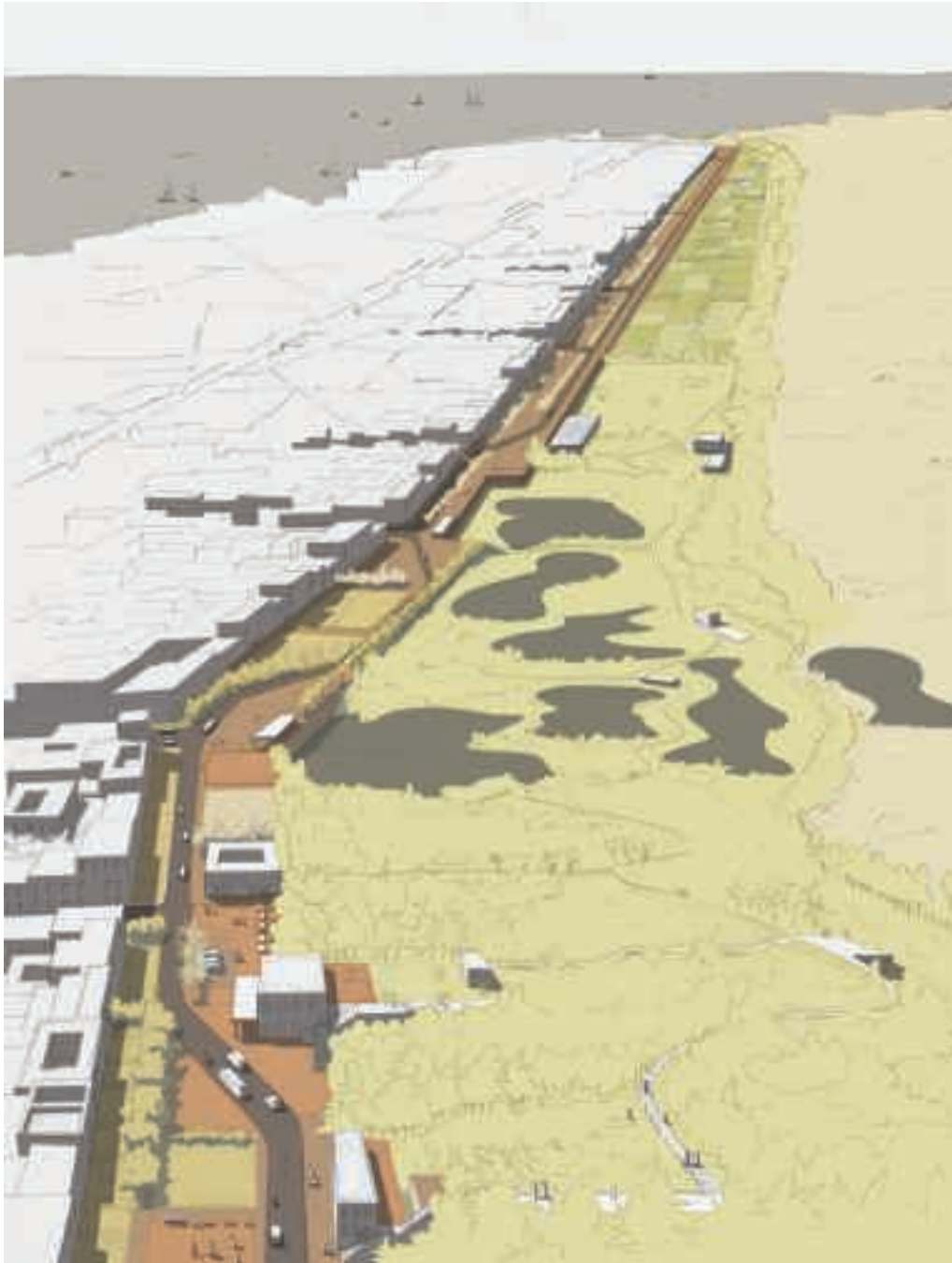
fig. 3.40 An impression of the urban park, seen from the south, showing the structure of four bands, the different sequences, nodal development along the transversal, and a network of paths, linked with a system of platforms and belvederes.

3. The sequence further south is nowadays characterised by a sequence of high and parallel dunes, which make this segment a relatively quiet and inactive part of the urban park. The accessibility of every single part is not a priority in this section, but a few scenic paths have been provided to allow for interesting walks, a panoramic view and contemplation, high above the noise and bustle of the city.

4. South of the road to Marrakech, the elongated urban park fans out to take the shape of a campus-like landscape that stretches until *Oued Ksob* and is structured by the dramatic topographical features of the site.

Since 1997, the development of the urban park has been inconsistent. It has been symbolically inaugurated and all kinds of partnerships and financial resources have been sought after. An application for E.U. funds was submitted, but denied. An application for a grant from the TotalElfFina foundation has been approved and the first phase has been started. Work on the water purification plant at the north side has continued. Otherwise, the park has slowly started to emerge through small community projects. Neighbourhood gardens have been realised by inhabitants in cooperation with Community Based Organisations (CBOs). As the funding has proven difficult to acquire, the phasing of the plan was rescheduled and the project split up into more bankable micro-projects. These give form and shape to what in the end will become the urban park of Essaouira.

INSTRUMENTS FOR CO-PRODUCTION

Apart from projects that lead towards spatial interventions, the LA21 Programme has invested heavily in actions and projects that stimulate civic engagement and the reconfiguration of urban governance modalities.[7] One of the major achievements of the LA21 Programme was the creation of a 'Centre for Urban Development and Protection of the Environment' (CDUPE) in the former *Palais de Justice*, whose role was defined in the first Urban Pact. The CDUPE started as a spatial project of a limited size, but nevertheless with a strategic impact. The well-known and centrally located building — deteriorated and closed for years — has been renovated and reopened as a visible sign of the LA21 presence. This strategic and representative location of the CDUPE on the front square of the *medina* makes it capable of creating a 'central' meeting space, as well as of being a 'neutral' ground for discussion and negotiation between different actors, all with their own specific backgrounds and agendas. It is an urban information centre that mobilises different urban development actors, serves as a laboratory for urban development strategies, strengthens local planning capacities, and coordinates action plans. The centre houses the LA21 Local Team, local associations, an international NGO, and others. Its staff has organised public exhibitions (for example, one dedicated to student projects carried out in Essaouira by different European and Moroccan schools of architecture and planning), public meetings and gatherings with civil society organisations, and invested in the creation of networks of development actors.

The CDUPE was established in anticipation of the possible creation by the central government of an *Agence Urbaine*. In 1996, a series of new *Agences Urbaines* were planned, instigated by the national consultant, that would follow the example of the *Agences Urbaines* existing in the larger cities. Essaouira was part of a selection of five secondary cities, but internal conflicts and competition between other cities froze the project at the highest level, eventually leading to its complete suspension. However, the debate and the preparatory work on the creation of the *Essaouira Agence Urbain* raised the awareness of the city's development needs, while stimulating the work of the CDUPE itself.

For several years now, the CDUPE[8] has served as the focal point in Essaouira for everything concerning sustainable development, urban projects and environmental issues (fig. 3.41). One of the major successes of the CDUPE was the revitalisation of civil society in Essaouira. This revitalisation was primarily oriented towards the creation of so-called *amicales de quartier*, or local neighbourhood associations. The first *amicale* was called into being after the *Atelier de Consultation* in 1995 and many more followed. Following that, other existing associations, originally often politicised and mainly centred on cultural questions, were stimulated to integrate urban development issues (environment, infrastructure, employment, etc.) among their action areas. Finally, working groups have been set up (*cellules*), including local civic actors to deal with a variety of city issues or problem

fig. 3.41 The *Centre de planification et protection de l'environnement* (CDUPE) is located in the former *Palais de Justice*. It embodies the presence of the LA21 Programme in the city and figures as an important place for meeting and debate.

fig. 3.42 The restoration of the *medina* gates, one of the micro-projects initiated by the CDUPE.

areas. To implement this co-productive process, the local team has worked in close cooperation with Enda-Maghreb, an international NGO specialised in community development.

The involvement of these Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) has been crucial for the implementation of various so-called demonstration projects, buttressed with the financial contribution of national or international donors. The CDUPE acted as facilitator for numerous partnerships engaged in demonstration projects. These demonstration projects, although at times ad hoc and modestly scaled, are crucial to test appropriate forms of partnerships that have the potential to go beyond established power structures, adding to endogenous dynamics and a grass-roots appropriation of the LA21 process. As CSOs have been involved progressively in the series of *ateliers de consultation*, these demonstration projects did not exhaust or fragment the amount of commitment locally available, but on the contrary helped to concretise the visions and to establish the strategic projects. In Essaouira, the following demonstration projects have been realised, among others: a campaign for raising awareness for heritage conservation (including a popular theatre with youngsters), the restoration of one of the bastions of the *medina* wall, the restoration of the *medina* gates (fig. 3.43), the renovation of public water fountains on the *Mellah*, and the creation of public green spaces in one of the *lotissements*. Although the actual results on the ground are lim-

ited, these demonstration projects have become an important instrument to encourage broader-scale civic involvement, popular participation in decision-making and integration of the more disadvantaged populations of the city (women, youngsters and inhabitants of the *Mellah*). This bottom-up approach, with greater public involvement, is considered crucial for the sustainability and local ownership of the Essaouira LA21 Programme.

In addition, local working groups have contributed to studies and formulation of projects such as the elaboration of a concept for sustainable tourism (*Essaouira, ville d'accueil et de rencontre*), studies on the renovation of the former Danish consulate (with UNESCO), the former Portuguese consulate (with the University of Madrid), the former French consulate (with the French Embassy), the architectural study of the *medina* (with the *Ecole de Belleville*, Paris), and the guide for the *medina* restoration (with the University of Rennes).

Finally, stimulated by the CDUPE, an important outcome of the international cooperation and networking has been manifested in the frame of a cooperation with national Development Agencies (France, Denmark) and municipalities abroad (e.g. La Rochelle). Since 2002, a structured city-to-city cooperation has been set up between Essaouira and Etterbeek, a municipality in the Brussels metropolitan area, with an important Moroccan population. This cooperation

focuses on several actions, including the renovation of the house in the *Mellah* for community development, assistance in craft-making and other technical training, and last but not least, an exchange of youngsters of Moroccan origin from Etterbeek during summer working camps.

The creation of the CDUPE, the *amicales de quartier*, and the city-to-city cooperatives are considered to be important instruments for co-production, giving actual shape to visions and projects or at least contributing to the creation of a broader social base for the LA21 process.

NOTES

1. The historical section is based on: Lavedan 1941, Mana 1991, Berreda 2002, Mouline 1997, Roux 2001, Azoulay et.al 1991, Bel Mekki 1996 and Belgian Consortium 1996a.

2. One parallel to the east-west axis of the Medina runs along the old *medina* wall, while the other parallel to the north-south axis of the *medina* starts in the north at *Bab Doukkala*.

3. For the list of presentations, and a summary of the contributions themselves, see LA21 Local Team, UNCHS, PGCHS (1996a) *Localising Agenda 21: Planification des actions pour un développement urbain durable. Compte rendu. Atelier de consultation 15–18 Jan. 1996*. Essaouira.

4. The following section is based on: Benchelabi, H. 1996b, 1997d; Loeckx, A., De Meulder, B., Benchelabi, H. 1997; LA21 Local Team 1996c, 1996d, 1997b, 1997c, 1997d.

5. The following section is based on: Loeckx, A., Benchelabi, H., De Meulder, B., Kulshreshtha, N. 1997b; Benchelabi, H. 1997g, 1997h, 1998a, 1998b, 1998e.

6. The following section is based on: Loeckx, A., Benchelabi, H., De Meulder, B., Kulshreshtha, N. 1997a, 1997c; Benchelabi, H. 1997f , 1998b, 1998c; CDUPE 1998a, 1998b; Gazoulit K. 1998, 1999.

7. The following section is based on: Belgian Consortium (1996b); Benchelabi, H. (1997g); LA21 Local Team, UNCHS, BC (1996b), (1998), Decorte, F. (2000), (2004).

8. In 2003, the municipal and provincial governments have recognised the centre. The creation of an Agenda 21 association, responsible for the management of the centre, ensures its position in the institutional landscape and grants it necessary autonomy [Decorte 2004].

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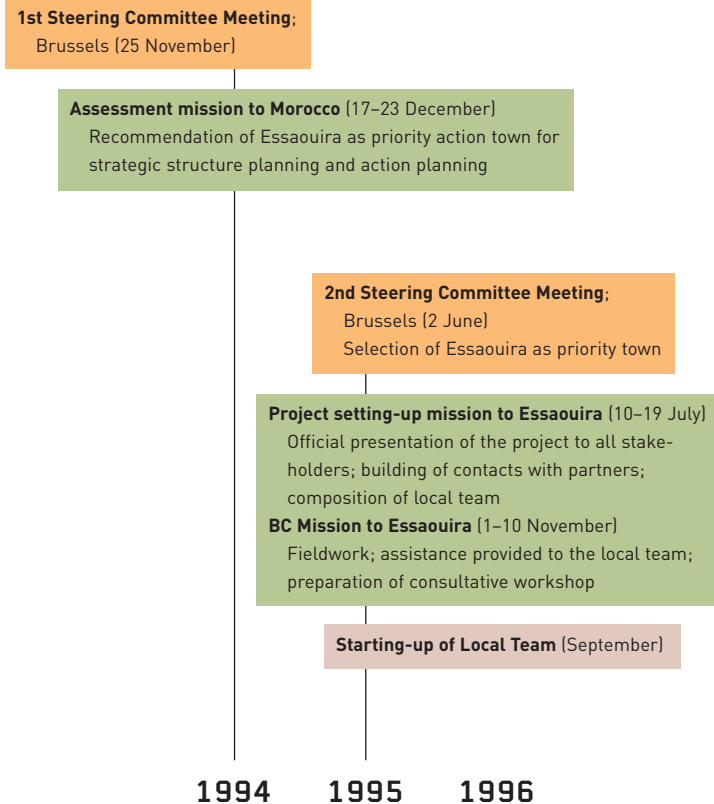
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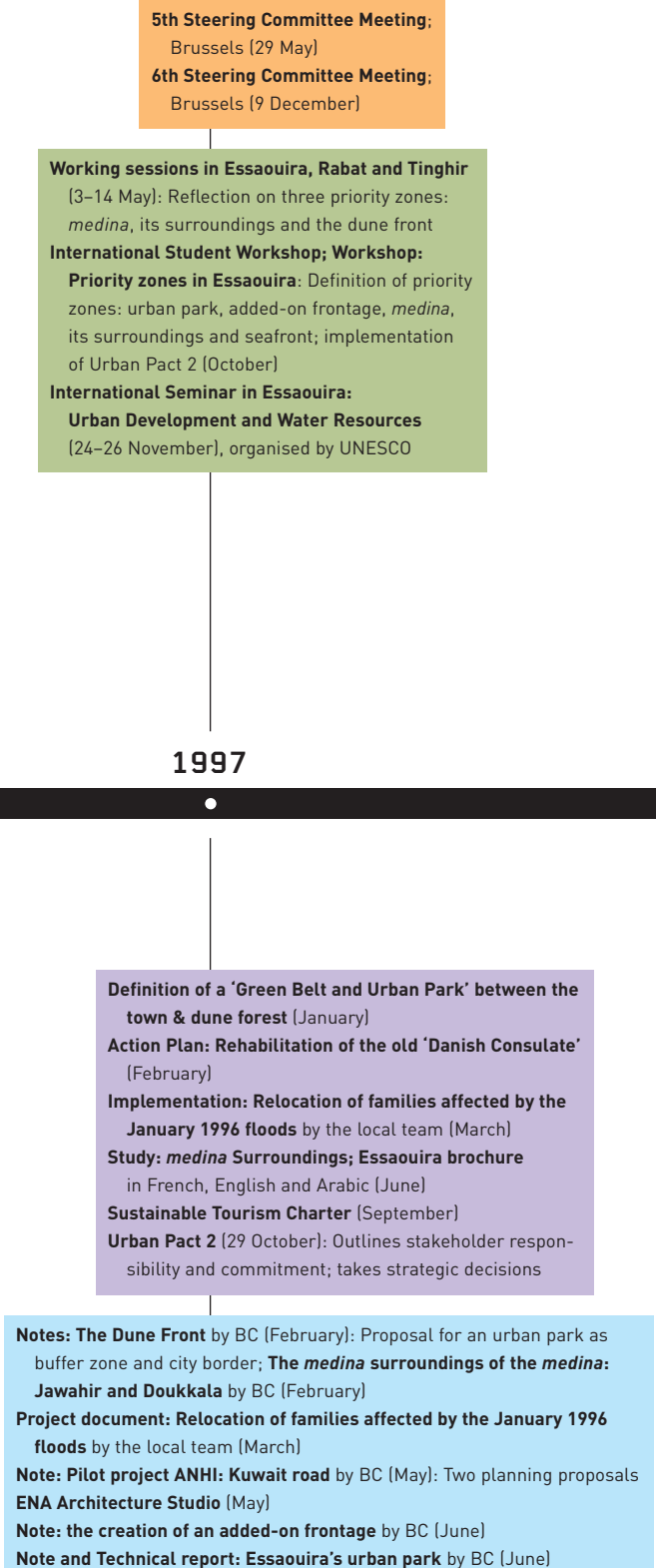
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PREPARATORY PHASE

INTENSIVE PROJECT PHASE / ALL PARTNERS

1st Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (25 November)

Assessment mission to Morocco (17–23 December)
Recommendation of Essaouira as priority action town for strategic structure planning and action planning

5th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (29 May)
6th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (9 December)

Working sessions in Essaouira, Rabat and Tinghir
(3–14 May): Reflection on three priority zones: *medina*, its surroundings and the dune front
International Student Workshop; Workshop:
Priority zones in Essaouira: Definition of priority zones: urban park, added-on frontage, *medina*, its surroundings and seafront; implementation of Urban Pact 2 (October)
International Seminar in Essaouira:
Urban Development and Water Resources
(24–26 November), organised by UNESCO

2nd Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (2 June)
Selection of Essaouira as priority town

Project setting-up mission to Essaouira (10–19 July)
Official presentation of the project to all stake-holders; building of contacts with partners; composition of local team
BC Mission to Essaouira (1–10 November)
Fieldwork; assistance provided to the local team; preparation of consultative workshop

Starting-up of Local Team (September)

1994   1995   1996   1997

● **ESSAOUIRA**

3rd Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (22 January)
4th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (2 October)

'Consultative Workshop' (15–18 January)
Presentation of projects; clarification of SSP; consensus on vision and action programme; agreement on Urban Pact
Workshop 'Rehabilitation of the *medina*' (14–16 October): Assembling of experts on conservation and rehabilitation; definition of pilot projects and priority zones; information exchange with other towns

Floods in Essaouira (January)

Urban Pact 1 (13 June)
Definition of a vision for the future development of the city and a programme of action for public authorities & civil society
Preparation of 'Schéma Directeur d'Amenagement Urbain' (SDAU) (May)
Formation of working groups: 1) *'médina'*, **2)** *'Zones prioritaires'*,
3) *'Ville de rencontre et d'accueil'* **; Repair and renovation of the seaward retaining wall** (June)
Protection of the estuary of the river *Ksob* (July)
'A vision for Essaouira' : Video programme (15 min) in English and French by UNCHS
Planting of Araucaria Trees in public areas through community mobilisation; End preparatory phase *Schéma Directeur* (October)
Creation of the *'Cellule Médina'* (November)
Rehabilitation of the old *'Palais de Justice'* **as the Centre for Urban Development and Environmental Protection** (December)

Definition of a 'Green Belt and Urban Park' between the town & dune forest (January)
Action Plan: Rehabilitation of the old 'Danish Consulate'
(February)
Implementation: Relocation of families affected by the
January 1996 floods by the local team (March)
Study: *medina* Surroundings; Essaouira brochure
in French, English and Arabic (June)
Sustainable Tourism Charter (September)
Urban Pact 2 (29 October): Outlines stakeholder respon-sibility and commitment; takes strategic decisions

Notes: The Dune Front by BC (February): Proposal for an urban park as buffer zone and city border; **The** *medina* **surroundings of the** *medina*:
Jawahir and Doukkala by BC (February)
Project document: Relocation of families affected by the January 1996
floods by the local team (March)
Note: Pilot project ANHI: Kuwait road by BC (May): Two planning proposals
ENA Architecture Studio (May)
Note: the creation of an added-on frontage by BC (June)
Note and Technical report: Essaouira's urban park by BC (June)

7th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (29 September)

Working sessions on **'Environment in Essaouira: Potentialities, Problems and Actions by Associations'** (13 June) in cooperation with ENDA
Working sessions in Essaouira (12–17 October): On urban park and the *medina* surroundings
'Evaluation, Capitalisation and Consultation' workshop (3–5 December) Evaluation of the programme; redefinition of the roles of different actors; development of action plan to implement projects

Creation of the *Centre de Développement Urbain et Protection de l'Environnement* **(CDUPE)** Including the '*Cellule Médina*' and the '*Cellule Développement Urbain et Protection de l'Environnement*' **; Project document concerning collaboration with French '*Compagnon de Devoir*' on the job-training programme in traditional restoration skills** (January)
Project '*Bastion Sud*' (April): Linked to the job-training programme
Project Proposal: Rehousing of families in *Rue Mellah* No. 64;
Project Proposal: Multifunctional Centre in the *Mellah* (March)

Technical report on *Bab Doukkala* by BC: Revision of 1998 proposals;
Progress report on Urban Pact 2 by the JPO (August)
Synthesis note on the *medina* environs by BC: With visions and proposals

1998   1999   2000

Partners Workshop (2–6 April): discussion on the roles of the CDUPE and BC and effective programme functioning; recommendations for further elaboration of key projects

Organisation of sensitisation courses on environmental and cultural heritage issues

Essaouira put on UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage list (December)
Rehabilitation of the *medina*
Rehabilitation of the Azlef viewpoint
Implementation of development project for the *Boulevard Akaba*
Greening of neighbourhoods

10th Steering Committee Meeting; Nairobi (12 May)

Official start of C2C cooperation with Etterbeek (March)
Green Belt: Implementation of the first stretch of the green belt project with funding from the TotalElfFina foundation

2001   2002   2003   2004

8th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (22 October)

Study of SSP in a medium-sized town: The case of Essouira by BC

Project 'Essaouira: *Ville propre*' (February): In collaboration with UNESCO (Rabat)

Creation of '*Comité 21 Maroc*' (15–16 May)

9th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (8 October)

Consolidation Workshop: LA21 Essaouira to be strengthened by national LA21 Programme; further discussions on C2C cooperation with Etterbeek (Belgium); **LA21 National sensitisation workshop**: Aiming to share Essaouira's experience with other cities carrying out replication projects, namely Marrakech, Meknes and Agadir (July)

First exploration of C2C cooperation with Etterbeek (18–21 May)
Project: '*Entretien et restauration du Marché aux Encheres*' (*Jouttia: brocante traditionelle*) (July-October)
Greening of neighbourhoods
Green Belt: Signing of agreement with TotalElfFina foundation for the funding of the first stretch of green area

National LA21 Programme in Morocco

11th Steering Committee Meeting;
Nairobi (4 May)

Decentralised cooperation
Implementation of various activities with the support of Etterbeek through decentralised cooperation mechanisms

■	STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS
■	WORKSHOPS AND MISSIONS
■	LOCAL TEAM ACTIVITIES
■	MAJOR OUTCOMES
■	STUDIES, RESEARCH PROJECTS AND OTHER EXTERNAL INPUT
■	IMPORTANT NATIONAL AND LOCAL EVENTS
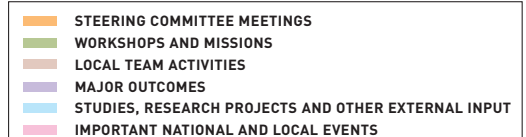
VINH

Rising from the Ashes

KELLY SHANNON, ANDRÉ LOECKX

The LA21 process in Vinh (fig. 4.1) was complicated by the present-day paradoxes of Vietnam. The country is embroiled in the process of urban transition — from a small-scale agricultural-based society to a more modernised, globally linked, urban-industrial society. Since 1986, the country has been relatively open to foreigners; its market-oriented system of *doi moi* has been likened as Vietnam's *perestroika*. However, there are a number of aspects from the dogmatic, closed socialist system that remain intact and which significantly coloured the LA21 Programme collaboration. First is the fact that the decision-making process is fundamentally top-down and hierarchical (through the Communist Party and its executive bodies of People's Committees and People's Councils). Despite the expanding range of urban actors, the intermediate and modifying levels of urban decision-making are largely absent. From the onset, the LA21 Programme in Vinh served an 'advisory role,' whereby the debates in consultative workshops were translated by the local team into new concepts for projects-in-the-pipeline and revision of the city's master plan. At the same time, however, it must be recognised that the enthusiasm, tolerance and openness towards new ideas from individuals at the provincial and local levels were truly remarkable.

Second is the particular Vietnamese confusion between a 'map' and 'plan.' Maps — graphical representations of reality — are not defined as instruments for planning, but as police and military tools; they are strictly protected in the sphere of 'state secrets' and are therefore not simply handed over, even to a UN-backed urban development project. Meanwhile, the plan — an idealised state of an imagined future reality — is the operative mechanism for urban development. Unrealisable dreams are projected upon the territory in a fashion that often has little to do with the existing typo/morphology and landscape. During the LA21 process, working without aerial photographs and proper urban and geographical maps proved extremely difficult, but also an opportunity. The analysis and reading of reality from 'below' not only served as verification, elaboration and modification of the perspective from 'above,' but also suggested strategies that might have otherwise gone unnoticed. The mapping of Vinh required reliance upon a heterogeneous spectrum of data, including the stringing together of fragmented and often contradictory histories and perceptions

fig. 4.1 The map shows Vinh, the capital of the Nghe An province (18º33'–19º25' N latitude and 103º53'–105º46' E longitude). In 2001, the city's population of 221,215 was within an urban area of 6,400 hectares [Ngo Van Yem 2002]. Vinh is located 295km south of Hanoi and 300km north of Hue.

of contemporary realities; interviewing and oral histories became essential, as did a critical scepticism of government-biased statistics.

Finally, in Vietnam, the city is seen neither as a medium for critical debate, research, planning and decision-making nor for citizen mobilisation. The most recent historical layer in Vinh, the socialist city, was a consequence of State political and economic projections, premised upon production and the definition of a proletarian state centred on collectivity. Homogeneous urbanism on a grand scale was a corollary of administrative fiat in designating land use. Workers' dwellings were organised as 'microrayons' and their architecture mirrored that of the then-USSR and the Eastern Bloc. Cities are part of the national development agenda and all decision-making is centrally controlled.
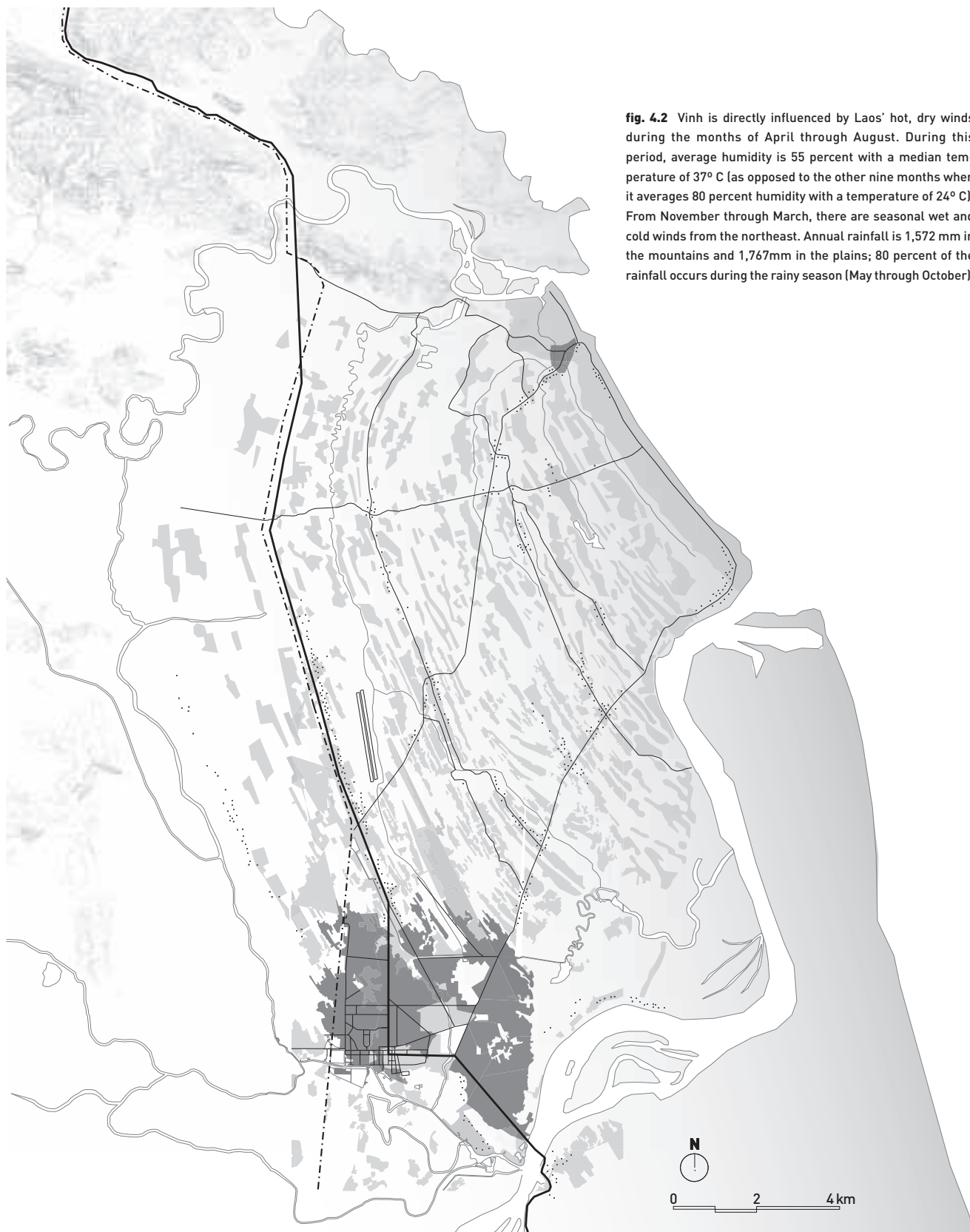
fig. 4.2 Vinh is directly influenced by Laos' hot, dry winds during the months of April through August. During this period, average humidity is 55 percent with a median temperature of 37º C (as opposed to the other nine months when it averages 80 percent humidity with a temperature of 24º C). From November through March, there are seasonal wet and cold winds from the northeast. Annual rainfall is 1,572 mm in the mountains and 1,767mm in the plains; 80 percent of the rainfall occurs during the rainy season (May through October).

N

0   2   4 km

fig. 4.3 Photograph from the French colonial era of the Vinh Doanh Citadel, built in 1831.

Despite these constraints, however, it was essential that an understanding of Vinh's historical and contemporary urban issues — including the country's complex institutional set-up and decision-making process — was made before envisioning the city's possible futures. Vinh's urban history, as revealed through its 'layered narratives,' was developed through the close collaboration of the local team and K.U.Leuven. 'Layered narratives' surveys the extent to which urban planning and city building in Vinh is inextricably tied to historical paradigms. Thereafter, the city's contemporary 'contested territories' — industrial roles, ecological constraints and urban challenges — were revealed and a number of these strategic sites and issues became the investigative focus of specific projects. 'Contested territories' in Nghe An are dually challenged by the province's recognition and harnessing of its latent potentials and the overcoming of its significant handicaps in its drive for modernisation and development. Territorial contestation deals with the tension between old and new ideologies and realities, as well as between local, national and global agendas.

LAYERED NARRATIVES

Rebellious Foundations
The twin cities Vinh Doanh and Ben Thuy (which translates as 'water supply') — later agglomerated and named Vinh

(fig. 4.2) — were founded on the left bank of the Lam River in the flatland of the Cua Hoi estuary (where the river reaches the South China Sea), adjacent to the ancient 'Mandarin Way' and only ten kilometres from the sea. The province is in a geographic area that has inclement conditions for agriculture and is constantly threatened by severe weather and prone to flooding.

For centuries, Vinh was the southern outpost of the country. From the eleventh to fourteenth centuries, the province remained marginal in the political and economic spheres of the nation. In fact, it was governed by special administrative rules in the same manner as Vietnamese mountain divisions inhabited by ethnic minorities. However, from the fifteenth century onward, Nghe-Tinh ceased to be a border area and became an important province economically, politically and with regard to national defence. In 1805, earth ramparts were erected in Vinh Doanh. In 1831, the Citadel was rebuilt in the Vauban style and brick walls replaced those of earth (fig. 4.3). The Citadel's perimeter was 2,520m and 4m high. The ramparts were surmounted by a one metre high fence. The whole Citadel had three gates (south, northwest and northeast) and was surrounded by a deep moat. The historical city was an administrative and military centre and the Citadel was its icon. The representation of the city's status with a foreign model (Vauban Citadel construction) is extraordinary.

fig. 4.4 *Gouverneur générale d'Indochine*'s visit (1931) to Vinh in front of a Citadel gate.

fig. 4.5 The urban area around the Vinh Doanh Citadel in 1936. The concentration of colonial-era settlements was in the southeast quadrant, but planned extension is visible north and west of the Citadel.

fig. 4.6 The Ben Thuy factory along the Lam River.

French Colonialism

During their colonial exploits, the French attempted to 'tame' the Vietnamese and the environment in order to firmly implant their economic interests and related personnel; commercial exploitation was pursued under the veil and justification of *la mission civilisatrice*. Vinh was within the protectorate of Tonkin (Bac Bo), the northern portion of the country, which was under French control by 1883. However, fierce resistance to colonial domination was initiated from the earliest stages of French presence and in the final two decades of the nineteenth century, Nghe An became one of the centres of the anti-French resistance movement [Duiker 2000:15].

Nonetheless, in 1885 the French occupied the city and thereafter set out to establish Vinh as an important provincial capital of north-central Vietnam (fig. 4.4). A young and vigorous commercial and manufacturing sector gradually emerged. The colonial city primarily grew towards the east, in the direction of the Lam River. In 1898, a plan was issued for a new industrial and commercial suburb of Vinh. South and east of the Citadel, the city was expanded by an orthogonally gridded street pattern. The perimeters of the settlement area outside the Citadel were formed by the Vinh River to the south and the railroad tracks to the east (fig. 4.5).

By 1914, Ben Thuy was established as a manufacturing base on the west bank of the Lam River and north of Guyet Mountain. A system of canals, parallel to the river, structured the productive quarter which consisted of a thermo-power station, three sawmills, a large match factory (fig. 4.6) and a river port (fig. 4.7). Along the northwest road (in fact, the Route Mandarin renamed Route Colonial No. 1) connecting Ben Thuy to the Vinh Doang Citadel and its peripheral settlement to the south was a linear development of public amenities: the market, cemetery and a series of pagodas.

In 1917, Troung Thi, an area equidistant from Vinh Doanh and Ben Thuy, was settled as a railway repair works area. In 1927, the governor general of Indo-China incorporated the three autonomous areas into the city of Vinh. The spatial fusion of the areas was completed by an extension of gridded blocks and boulevards eastwards from the area south of the Citadel (parallel with the Mandarin Route towards the Lam River). National and international infrastructure projects solidified Vinh's geographical importance in the early

twentieth century. In the 1920s, the Vinh-Hanoi component of le *TransIndochinois* railroad was completed and the opening of Highway 8 (to Laos) directly linked Vinh to its western neighbour (100 kilometres to the frontier). In 1936, the population of Vinh was 18,000 [To Lan :166]. The French also developed a seaside resort in the nearby village of Cua Lo. French villas affronted ten kilometres of a white sandy beach area, nestled between pines and sand dunes. The colonial city initiated Vietnam's transition from an agricultural backwater towards a more internationally linked society and radically altered Vinh's built and unbuilt landscapes. The city was conceived of as a complete city — structured by a generous grid of wide, tree-lined streets and replete with a productive hinterland, linked by modern infrastructure and a nearby beach resort (fig. 4.8).

Vietnamese Nationalism
and the Price of War

Unfortunately, the rich urban structure and patrimony of the historic and colonial city were to be erased in subsequent periods. Revolutionary mass organisations and the worker-peasant alliance of the nationalistic Nghe-Tinh Soviet Movement were consolidated during the First Indochina War. Nghe An was the centre of the fourth military zone, a source of manpower and supplies, and the local peasantry zealously took part in the province's resistance. In villages lying close to urban centres and communication lines, the Viet Minh carried out the 'scorched earth' policy ('empty gardens and hollow houses'), leaving nothing that could be used by the enemy in the event of occupation; in early 1948, the self-defence forces of Vinh destroyed all dwellings, public buildings and communication lines. What was not destroyed by the Vietnamese was subsequently razed by the French, with serial bombing of communication lines and coastal regions from 1948 to 1952. National Highway No.1 was severely damaged, as were the dykes, sluices and dams along the Lam River. By 1954, Vinh's railway was dismantled.

Immediately following the 1954 French defeat at Dien Bien Phu and the Geneva Accords, Vinh began a programme of rebuilding; it was designated as one of 13 northern cities to be developed as a diverse industrial centre and became a model for the socialist transformation of industry and commerce. The city was rebuilt with Soviet and Chinese assis-

fig. 4.7 During colonial times, the Ben Thuy Lam river port was full of small trading boats.
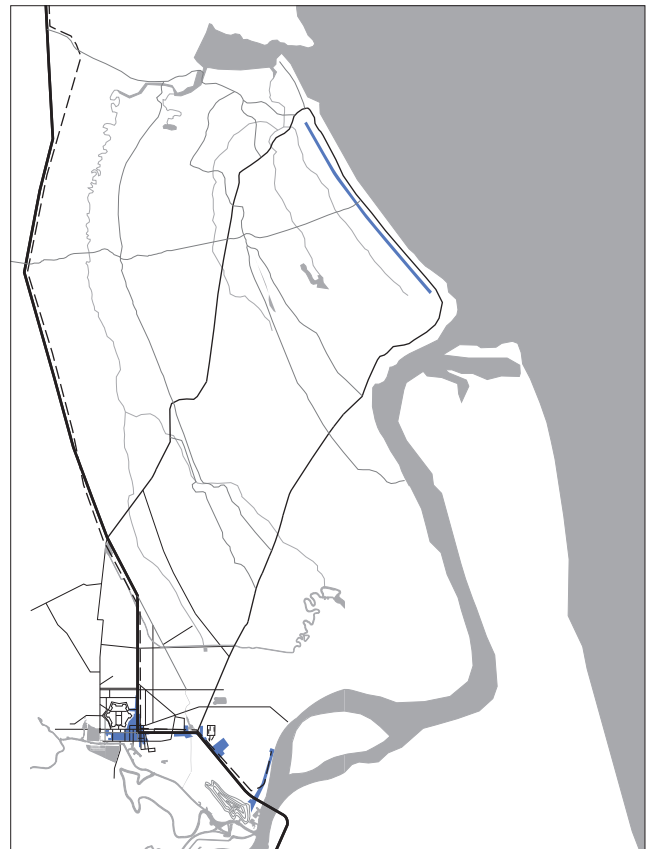
fig. 4.8 Vinh and its surroundings during the French colonial period. Development in Vinh was concentrated in three areas (near the Citadel, at Ben Thuy port and an area approximately halfway between the two, where a railway repair area was located). A seaside resort was developed in Cua Lo, 18 kilometres from Vinh.

fig. 4.9 One of Vinh's streets where few structures remained after the Second Indochina War.
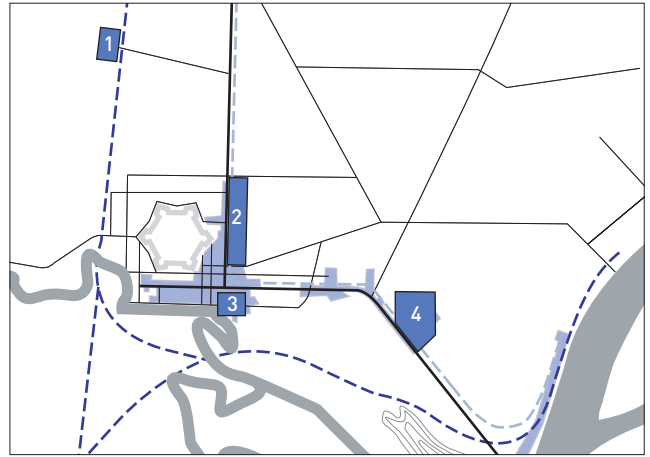

fig. 4.10 The shape and centre of gravity of the socialist city (dark blue) differed substantially from the colonial city (light blue). A decentralised urbanism was initiated by key services and large-scale state projects: (1) Vinh Train Station; (2) Quang Trung Housing Estate; (3) Vinh Central Market and (4) Vinh University.

tance, however in 1957 it suffered another setback when it was destroyed by a huge fire [Kamm 1996:239].

At the same time, Nghe An became the frontline of the socialist North and the immediate rear base of the Viet Cong fighting in the South. Vinh's strategic military importance would, once again, be the root cause of its further destruction; the city was the head of the so-called Ho Chi Minh Trail. As David Lamb has written: "To the Northern Communists, Vinh was the 'throat that fed the stomach,' the main supply point for the Ho Chi Minh Trail, whose network of paths and roads carried Hanoi's soldiers and equipment to the southern battlefields" [Lamb 2002:46].

Through this thin, rugged and sparsely inhabited stretch of central Vietnam and southern Laos, thousands of Viet Cong soldiers and countless tonnes of war material passed, all under the imminent threat of American air strikes devoted to interdicting the flow of human traffic through the region. By the mid-1960s, Vinh's population was estimated at 50,000 to 60,000 [Ngo Van Yem 2000]. However, inhabitants routinely fled to the countryside in order to avoid bombings by the American military. Not only was the Ho Chi Minh Trail a target, but also the Ben Thuy river port and the Cua Lo seaport. Vinh and its immediate surroundings were among the first United States air raid targets after the Gulf of Tonkin incident of August 1964. All the new buildings, the electric power station and the railway station were obliter-

ated. By 1972 (another period of bombing escalation in Vinh), Vinh was entirely razed and smaller district towns were repeatedly bombed (fig. 4.9). Lamb writes: "By the time they [the Americans] had finished [bombing], all that still stood in the once-proud city were a provincial guesthouse and two college dormitories. Vinh had entered history as the only Vietnamese city totally destroyed by the United States. Except for a detachment of anti-aircraft gunners, its population in 1972 was zero" [Lamb 2002:46].

Vinh's rich, yet tragic urban history, the result of a stratified development process, has been a pawn in real and ideological warfare. Yet, it has, time and time again, regenerated itself. Paralleling its toilsome history, Vinh's urbanisation has resulted from projects produced as the 'next step' in a continuous line with the past, acceding to historical interruptions and breakdowns. The city possesses an inherent ability to resurrect itself in the wake of extreme circumstances. Devastating events of the past century have deeply scarred Vinh and its urban history has been brought back to ground zero a number of times. The cycle of destruction and renewal questions the traditional relevance of historical urban layers. The influence of warfare on the city's urbanisation has been continuous and has had both direct and more subtle effects. Vinh has suffered more destruction than any other Vietnamese city and indiscriminate *tabula rasa* urbanism — building anew upon a notorious

fig. 4.11 The rebuilt Mandarin Route (*Route Colonial*), now National Highway 1A, where the large road profile is accentuated by the setting back of buildings.

fig. 4.12 The new estate was — and remains — a source of pride in Vinh, evidenced in the photograph of a woman and her child with the western front of Quang Trung Street and the housing as a backdrop.

clean slate — has been the planning norm in the city. Perhaps this tradition partially explains the subsequent and also present era of urban 'dreaming,' the belief that a new utopia of unlimited progress and prosperity can heal past war wounds.

Rebuilding:
East Berlin's Twin

The city's large-scale effort of rebuilding began in 1974, slightly before the North's final victory but after the Paris Peace Agreement (1973) had removed the threat of renewed American bombing. Early efforts focused on the re-establishment of national infrastructure; Vinh's major roads and bridges were repaired. As well, Nghe An's hydraulic network was advanced. Modernisation, urbanisation and industrialisation proceeded, but with great difficulty.

Vietnam embarked upon rebuilding with the idea of the 'socialist city.' Urban form in Vinh, like other cities in the North, followed the socialist pattern of residential, commercial and industrial development. The new planning effectively decentralised services and Vinh's urban territory was greatly expanded (fig. 4.10). The Citadel, completely destroyed except for fragments of two gates, was reduced to a mere mark on the landscape (although still drawn prominently on plans). The old Mandarin Route was rebuilt as a grand boulevard (renamed Quang Trung Boulevard and part

of National Highway No. 1) from which buildings along its path were significantly set back — simultaneously monumentalising the spine and dispersing the urbanism (fig. 4.11). As throughout the country, housing tended to be the most urgent need and numerous projects were quickly erected throughout the country. A number of medium-rise apartment complexes — modelled on the *microrayon* and the 'city of socialist man' — were gifts, icons demonstrating brotherly links between Vietnam and Soviet bloc countries.

In 1974, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) not only financed the 'Quang Trung Housing Estate,' but also provided technical expertise and design in the rebuilding of Vinh. The East Germans transplanted their mass construction of concrete five-story walk-up tenements to the extreme heat of Vinh's summers and ravages of autumn's typhoons. The 'centre' of the city was shifted eastwards with the building of the 22-block estate, which was constructed quickly with low-quality materials and poor technical detailing. Nonetheless, it was originally designed as an attractive living area following a rational plan of clear infrastructure, various public facilities, playing yards, green and open public spaces. The no-nonsense architecture of Quang Trung was the best available housing in Vinh and primarily housed deserving civil servants. As a first housing initiative after re-unification, the estate was the 'pride' of Vinh City and Nghe An Province and retains its symbolic significance (fig. 4.12).

fig. 4.13 The 'social realist' architecture of the Vinh Market.

The Quang Trung housing estate simultaneously exemplifies the problems of the East German ideas imposed without modification to fit local circumstances and testifies to the power of local customs and lifestyles in appropriating foreign impositions.

The Vinh train station was reconstructed north and west of the centre and Vinh University was built on the site near the colonial-era railroad repair centre. Adjacent to the southern edge of the city is the Vinh Market, built by the GDR in 1975 (fig. 4.13). For all of Nghe An province (and, as well, for a large part of Ha Tinh province), it is the central location to exchange goods. Its 'social realist' aspirations are representative of many such public buildings throughout Vinh. Similarly, its failure to relate to the specificity of its site (in this case a rear façade, which is bordered by the active Vinh River) is typical of the era's urbanism. Not coincidentally, throughout the Cold War, Vinh was officially twinned with East Berlin. The legacy of the socialist city is the monumental-scale urbanity — a presupposed 'mastering' of reality (yet unresponsive to local reality) combined with an international model of industry and celebration of the collective realm. It would be a pity to erase the power and scale of this layer of Vinh's urban history in the rehabilitation of areas and structures. In particular, Quang Trung Boulevard and the Vinh Market poignantly reveal expressions of the public realm that are worth safeguarding.

CONTESTED TERRITORIES

Identity Crisis

As in its history, the region retains an important position in terms of security and national defence. Yet, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, Nghe An Province and Vinh City are hoping to build their reputations on other issues. Both the rural countryside and urban centres are facing monumental changes. Nghe An is eager to shed its reputation as Vietnam's poorest province and is competing for foreign investment that it sees as a means of diversifying away from rice growing, at which it is not very good due to poor soil and worse weather. New crops (including tea, coffee, sugar cane, peanuts, sesame and rubber) are being cultivated and it is engaging in the country's fastest-growing industry of shrimp

and squid processing for export. There is also a concentrated effort to exploit the province's mineral resources: tin, marble, limestone (for making cement), bauxite, coal, gold and precious stones (including ruby and rock crystal). As well, Nghe An's 82 kilometres of coastline give it hopes of competing for investment in national tourism. In the urban realm, Vinh itself must now compete for investment in the country's network of secondary cities. Although the province and city's identities have been in a considerable state of flux, the time has come to establish marketable distinctiveness that can draw capital.

Although Vinh is the only 'city' in the province, Cua Lo has the official status as a 'town.' Cua Lo, a small fishing village 18 kilometres northeast of Vinh, has recently transformed into an important port in north-central Vietnam, capitalising on its proximity of trans-national road access to Laos and northeast Thailand. Its present 5,000-ton ship capacity is being up-graded and enlarged to 10,000 tons. South of the port lies Cua Lo beach with 10 kilometres of white sandy beach, pine forests and sand dunes. Although the Cua Lo French colonial seaside resort was destroyed in the First Indochina War, a bustling weekend and summer vacation spot has re-emerged. In 1999, Cua Lo attracted 350,000 tourists [Thuy Huong 1999:43], mostly Vietnamese from the North of the country. However, the province's tourism ambitions do not merely revolve around the coast. Kim Lien is an existing spot of national pilgrimage — whereas it was the birthplace of Ho Chi Minh — and Nui Guyet, the solitary mountain of Vinh, is destined to become a 'themed' park, an architectural showpiece displaying typical houses of Nghe An's ethnic minorities, complementing a picturesque cluttering of amusement park and recreation facilities at the foot of the mountain. The medium to small-scale industrial activity that is currently located at the foot of the mountain and at the mouth of Vinh River is to be removed, as are housing areas north of the mountain.

Vinh has neither had the fortune of a glorious urban patrimony nor of an overwhelmingly beautiful natural setting. On the contrary, the city has struggled on all fronts. Vinh's identity must be almost nearly invented anew. To a certain degree, in this respect, Vinh is representative of a prototypical urbanity of north Vietnam, as well as a number of new cities that are emerging from existing villages. The

fig. 4.14 Vinh's *nouveaux riches* urbanisation is creating a Vietnamese sprawl.

fig. 4.15 'Generic' office buildings are proposed along larger boulevards.

nouveaux riches of Vinh and Cua Lo have made a strong mark on the urban periphery (fig. 4.14), where they continue to build larger and taller gated villas in the 'European style' which, according to William Logan, combine every architectural influence known in Vietnam by way of a true postmodern spirit. In the city and across the countryside, fanciful façades and frivolous rooflines are materialising to serve little purpose other than signalling the economic status of the owners [Logan 2000:233]. The sprawling urbanity of Vinh has brought eccentric splashes of colour to the otherwise grey city and green countryside. However, vibrant and kitsch urban periphery development remains counterbalanced by the major core of the city, wherein the only decoration in its dusty, bustling streets or open places, which cannot qualify as squares, remain the garish commercial posters or shop signs. Under *doi moi*, these have come greatly to outnumber the political messages, slogans and icons that were once the main urban touches of colour.

The mini-Singapore model that city officials so proudly emulate in the vision for Vinh is completely alien to the existing typo/morphology (fig. 4.15). The present wave of modernisation is leaving in its wake either a series of structures that are not easily appropriated into local lifestyles or (more often than not) a series of unbuilt projects and underdeveloped areas of expensive infrastructure — unrealizable dreams. Vinh's contemporary urbanisation simultaneously represents an unequivocal belief in planning and the messy reality of spontaneous, unplanned growth. In fact, the global images of post-modernity that are appearing vis-à-vis new boulevards, buildings, parks and entirely new housing districts are more disconnected from Vinh's existing hybrid urban reality than are the 'generic' spontaneous developments mushrooming in existing residential areas.

Unfortunately, Vinh has not benefited as much as other cities in the realm of qualitative urban development. It has, however, suffered the same negative repercussions of *doi moi* as have other urban areas throughout the country. The transformation from a socialist planned economy to a socialist market economy has altered the value of land — use value has shifted to exchange value. Since *doi moi* in 1986, urban development in Vietnam has fallen under intense pressure. New aegis of a still unstable real-estate market differentiation results in land speculation, perennial short-

ages of public goods and services, sharp disparities between rich and poor in access to urban space and services, increasing conflict over urban space and a deteriorating urban environment. Public land is under threat of encroachment by property developers (a number of which are government-run). Politically, economically, culturally and spatially the rupture in traditions continues as so-called globalisation pervades the fundamental restructuring of society.

There is a dangerous 'blind face' in contemporary Vietnamese planning whereby it is neither local nor global. There is no meaningful consideration of the local and an underestimation and political incapacity to convincingly deal with the global. New power groups (entrepreneurs and investors) are intersecting and crossing the old ones (Party officials) and shaping the form of the city, yet the process is unstructured. There remain a host of other contradictions as well. The incongruence of Vietnam's contemporary master planning with local and global realities stems from the transitional status whereby centralist, technocratic planning is attempting to dovetail with new ideologies, dreams and economic configurations. This unstable condition could become a useful ambivalence: during the coming years, there is a great opportunity for the country's planning *will* to limit and concentrate its capacity of central control towards the (infra)structural and strategic for planning to enlarge the public realm.

Envisioning Possible Futures

The first seminars of the LA21 process in Vinh were recognisably caught within the uncertainties of Vietnam's transitional period which did not allow the project to be given a formal role within the city's urban planning process. Nonetheless, the LA21 Programme triggered funding from other outside donors for urgent actions. Seminars took the role of brainstorming sessions and the new ideas brought forth by foreign experts were politely listened to and welcomed while simultaneously kept at arm's length from the existing planning complexities. Certainly the barrier of language and reliance upon interpretation hindered the exchange of concepts and ideas. Despite these difficulties, a series of implicit agreements emerged stemming from the fundamental belief that Vinh could use 'something more' and that a renewed focus on urban development was essen-

tial. There was recognition that perhaps planning mechanisms could be improved, but at the same time the LA21 Programme suggestions on this front remained marginal.

A breakthrough that the project did make, however, was the inclusion of a larger than usual set of stakeholders — including mass organisations (City Fatherland Front, Association of Women, Farmer's Association, Cooperative Alliance, Youth Union) — around the table when discussing a series of visions (possible futures) of sustainable urban development, which were subsequently agreed upon and formed the foundation for the first 'urban pact.' Extensive discussions with a local team (consisting of members from the People's Committee and the city's planning and architecture department) and local stakeholders led to the development of visions for Vinh's long-term future. As one of ten secondary cities in Vietnam, the development of Vinh is of national importance. In an era of increasing openness, economic competition between cities within Vietnam is only natural. Within the framework of the LA21 process, Vinh developed a series of visions which in principle sought to strengthen the inherent 'genius loci' and develop a unique identity, capitalising on the socio-cultural, geographical and historical potential of Vinh, its immediate surroundings and Nghe An province. The visions were summarised as follows:

- a nodal city as a provincial capital and the centre of north-central Vietnam;
- a city of mobility, with excellent road, rail, sea and air connections to neighbouring urban cores (Quan Banh, Cua Lo and Cua Hoi) to the rest of the country (Hanoi, Hue and Danang) and to the outside world (Laos and Thailand);
- a green city, whereby the urban green has recreational, productive, protective and structuring functions;
- a river city along the Lam and Vinh Rivers, with productive, transportation and recreational opportunities;
- an industrious city with focus on agro-processing, urban agriculture, fishing, handicrafts and textiles;
- a young city with excellent education, health and sports facilities [Shannon 1999].

Vinh lies in a very important position, at both the national and international level, in terms of communication and transport. The city is located on important, historical north-south

Hanoi

Cua Lo

Tourist zone

Laos

Cua Hoi

Airport

Quan Bahn

Railway station

Ben Thuy

Hue

fig. 4.16 The vision of Vinh as a city of mobility seeks to reassert the city's strategic location. Rail, road, water-based transport and the existing airport can work as an integrated infrastructure network and strengthen Vinh's nodal position.

fig. 4.17 Productive lowland within the inner-city Le Loi block creates an urban countryside and rural metropolis.

fig. 4.18 Slight differences in elevation are revealed where high land areas are surrounded by a liquid landscape of lower-lying land.

(infrastructure bundles of highway and railway) and east-west trade routes (rivers and valley roads) between the major cities of Vietnam and its neighbouring countries. Indeed, its strategic position gave importance to Vinh and was the root cause of its destruction during wartime. Today, its position could stimulate investment for development. Vinh's nodal position — strongly linked to the satellite urban cores of Quan Banh (industrial), Cau Lo (port and tourism) and Cua Hoi (seafood processing) and regional areas of Danang, Hue and Hanoi — makes it also a city of mobility (fig. 4.16). The intersection of National Highway 1A and Highway 8 (the one of two east-west roads in Vinh providing access to the sea for land-locked Laos) marks Vinh as a strategically located city. The fact that the city does have other infrastructure systems in place, including a well-used railroad station and a less-used (but with the potential to grow) airport, means that the existing infrastructure merely needs to be up-graded. The Ben Thuy river port is complemented by the nearby seaport in Cua Lo, linking Vinh to important trade routes in Southeast Asia.

Vinh as a green city would be differentiated from the existing and meaningless land-use categories, whereby green is often formulated as 'green belts' and formal parks. The en-visioned green city is more closely linked to the city's existing landscape and topography and could be materialised at numerous scales. The LA21 Programme also meant to protect and strengthen the overwhelming impression of Vinh as a green, richly vegetated city (fig. 4.17). At the scale of the larger landscape territory, a system of alternating strips of topographical differentiation would result from a careful reading of the existing landscape, with its arcing distribution of higher lands (1.5 to 1.7m above the fields) in an otherwise wet, lowland paddy plain (fig. 4.18). The peculiar character of the land forms is the result of water run-off from the higher mountains of the province's northwest to the broad Lam River (north and east of Vinh). In a possible new configuration of low and high land, the existing land formation would be maintained while the relative size of both the figure (high land patches) and the ground (low land mosaic) increased. A potent dialectic would be (re)produced between low and high land, wet and dry regions, productive and consumptive land, and absorptive and non-permeable surfaces. In order to combat the ad-hoc formation of the built environment, the figure/ground of the city would be revealed as a pattern of parallel, arching strips, with a density gradient whereby the more dense figures structure the
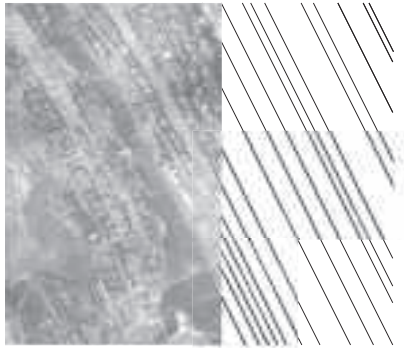
fig. 4.19 At the city/region scale, the green city vision simultaneously builds upon Vinh's inherent 'green' image and develops a system of low-land/high-land that allows the city to operate as a sponge — managing seasonal flooding.
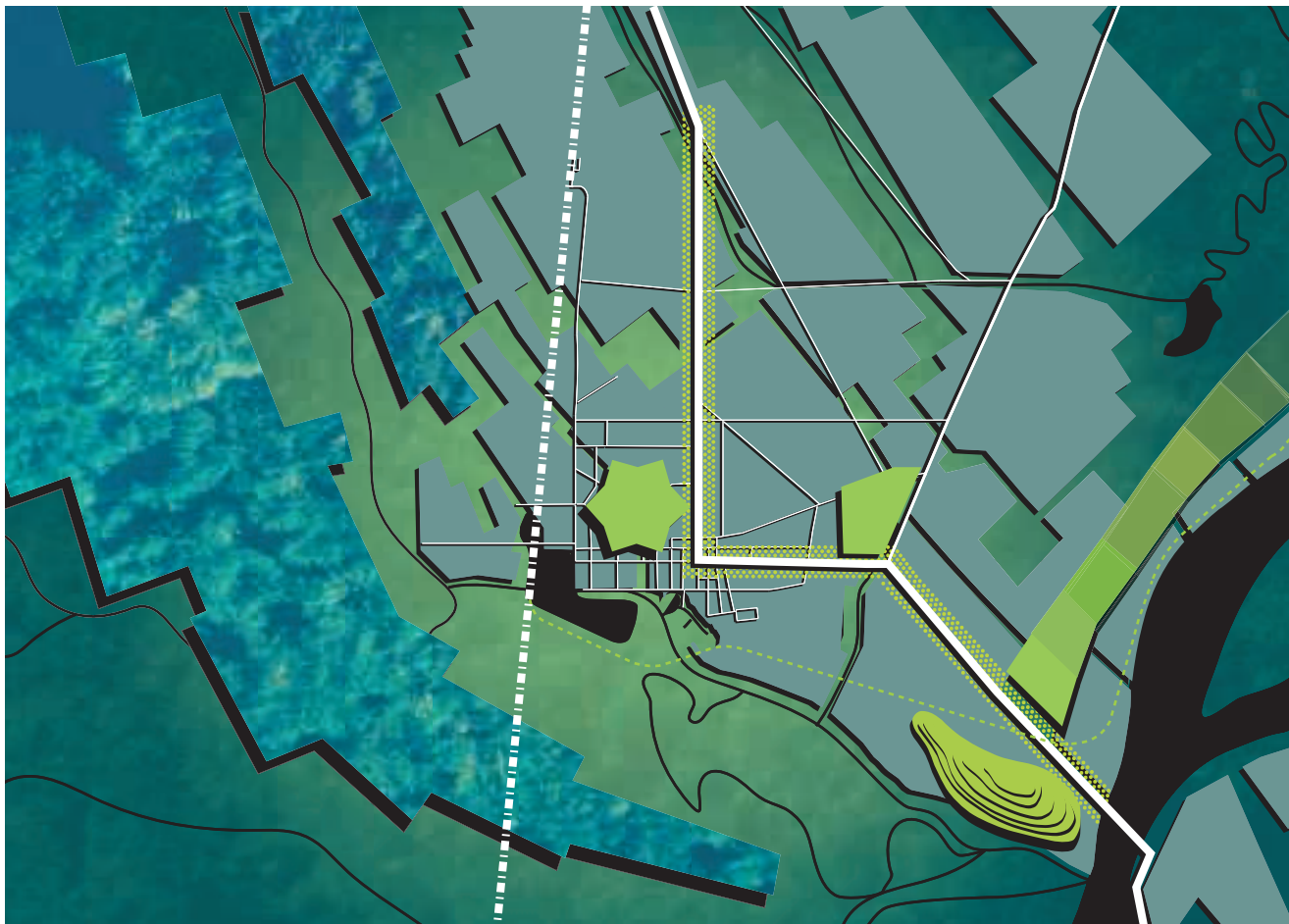
fig. 4.20 In Vinh's center, the green city vision is developed to create a series of interlocking public parks. The western city edge is defined as a productive/protective park by a forest that shields the city from the 'Laos wind'.

core, gradually becoming inferior to the ground, and finally reappear as a stronger force as the city reaches the coast and incorporates the port of Cua Lo (fig. 4.19). Such a system of alternating low land and high land strips would allow seasonal floods (during the two monsoon seasons) of the Lam and Vinh Rivers to penetrate the territory, yet not destroy urbanity in its wake. The landscape would be returned to its natural state wherein it literally functioned as a sponge — a permeable land mass able to absorb and shed excess water. New high land islands would result from consolidating and rationalising the existing process of fill in the low lands — urbanisation patterns would be guided to follow a coherent landscape and infrastructure logic.

At a similar city region scale, a productive/protective forest at the western edge of the city's core would simultaneously provide a micro-climate to relieve the 'Laos wind,' work as a growth boundary and create income (with bamboo and fruit tree cultivation). Additionally, in Vinh's immediate urban area, de-building in strategic areas would allow open space to work as a continuous system of park and garden spaces (fig. 4.20), in addition to water absorption areas. In particular, the Citadel could become a void and be reprogrammed by recreational uses. A corridor of open spaces would link Vinh's Central Park to the southern low lands of the Vinh River; a public promenade, independent of the road system, would link a protective/productive forest to the Lam
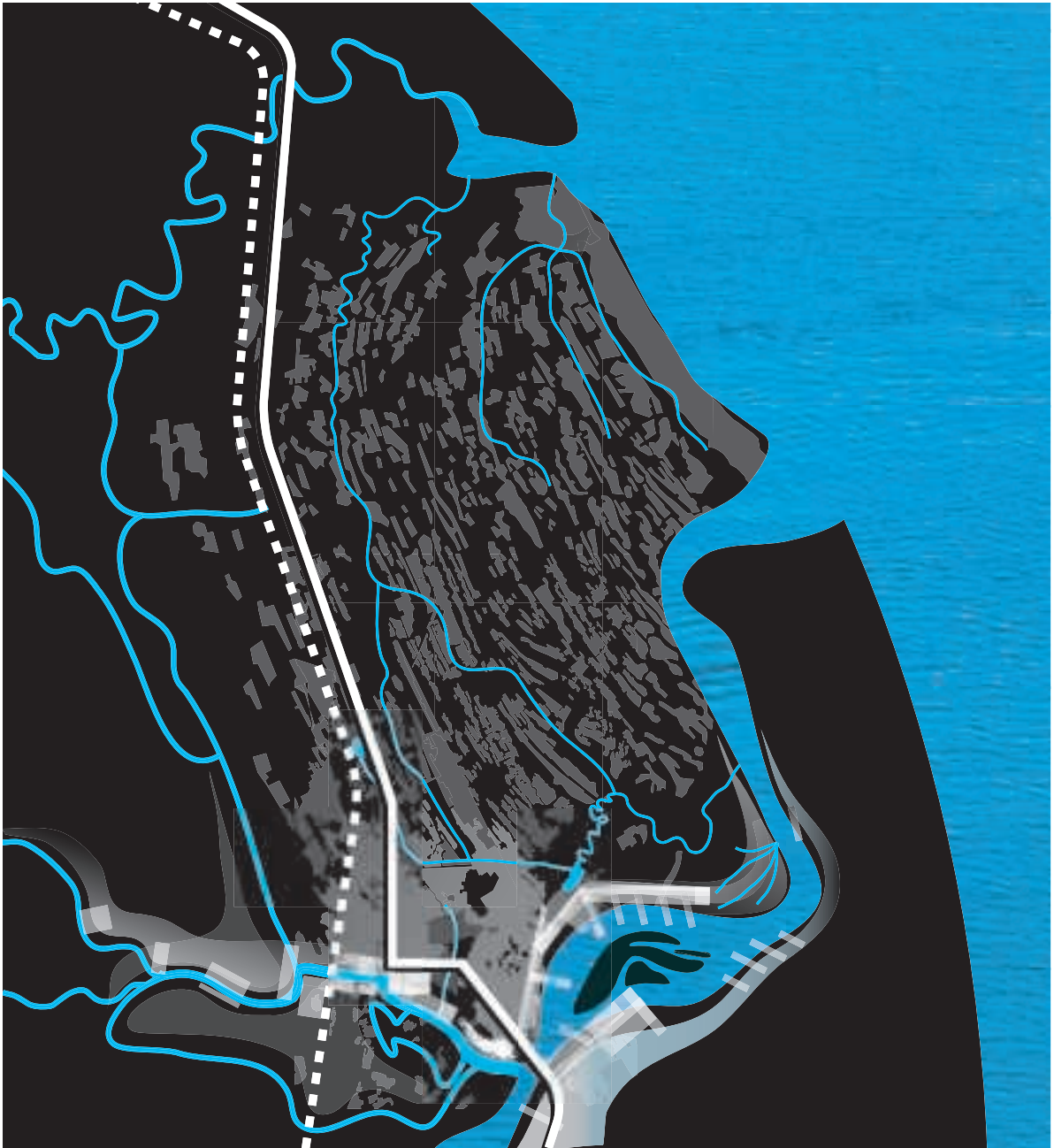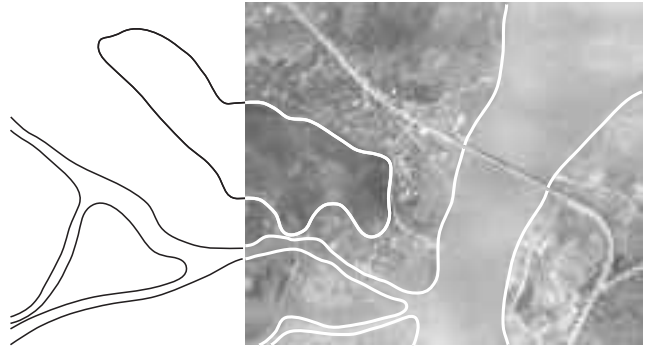
fig. 4.21 The vision of Vinh as a city river is to contribute economically, socially and environmentally to future growth. Water-based transport as well as new sites for development and recreation can be feasibily organised on both the Vinh and Lam rivers.

Riverfront through the recreational Citadel area, the Vinh Central Park and Guyet Mountain.

Despite the omni-presence of water in Vietnam, a surprisingly large number of urban centres do not explicitly develop the potential of their waterfronts and networks of streams and channels. In Vinh, there exists an enormous untapped potential to develop and link activities along its Lam River, Vinh River and its series of inland wetlands. In the LA21 Programme, Vinh is envisioned to become a lively river city (fig. 4.21), enhancing not only the economic base of the city with new transport and production facilities, but also enriching the recreational and touristic offerings of the city.

A more contentious vision concerned Vinh's industrial future. Although the city was envisioned as hosting a diversity of economic sectors, central, provincial and city policies continue to emphasise heavy industrial development as witnessed by the insistent promotion of new industrial zones (IZs) and export-processing zones (EPZs). For years, Nghe An provincial authorities have cooperated in pooling their limited capital to invest in basic infrastructure in the hope of luring foreign investment. Farmland on the urban periphery is being converted into manufacturing bases. The Northern Vinh Industrial Zone, established in 1998, is planned to cover 143.17 hectares. Construction began in 1999 on the first 30 hectares, located in the southern part of the planned area closest to Vinh. Merely 50 percent of this first phase's area has been rented to labour-intensive companies for export garments, instant noodles, livestock feed processing, export wood processing, granite tile production and electrical equipment production. A network of 30-metre roads has emerged in the rice fields, creating an odd juxtaposition between over-scaled infrastructure lying in wait for future speculation and productive fields of green paddies. Despite this, as recently as December 2001, an official decree from Hanoi announced the planning for construction of a 50-hectare Cua Lo Industrial Zone.

During the LA21 process, it was discussed that only a limited quantity of new industrial development can be absorbed into the nationally (and globally) linked system which, in turn, is shifting from industrial to service (including tourism) and information-based economies. Indeed, within Vinh a number of noxious inner-city industries are to be relocated, including motor repair works and chemical industries (presently in the northeast, near the railway station), textiles and leather processing (near Ben Thuy) and a series of enterprises at the mouth of the Vinh River (at the base of Guyet Mountain). In order to cater to the growing service sector, Vinh intends to build upon the existing University of Vinh with new schools of law and medicine and develop a new provincial training centre in the northeast zone of the city. Medical facilities are to be significantly enlarged and a large sports zone is also planned. Vinh's importance as a regional service centre for north-central Vietnam is to be secured. The socio-economic master plan of Nghe An claims that Vinh presently serves 7 million inhabitants and that by 2020 this figure will more than double to 15 million inhabitants.

In theory, visions for the city reached consensual agreement and it is from this agreed upon platform that priority action areas and strategic urban projects were further defined. Through discussion and reflection, it was recognised that Vinh's potential richness is anchored in its possibility of embracing an array of visions and not merely relying upon a singular, all-encompassing perspective. Vision-building was important for the LA21 Programme and framed the development of subsequent strategic urban projects and as well structured debate on the master plan revision.

Revising Vinh's Master Plan
Officially, urban and rural planning in Vietnam remains centrally vested in the country's strong, vertically controlled state. The National Institute of Urban and Rural Planning (NIURP), within the Ministry of Construction in Hanoi, retains the exclusive right to dictate land use and guide urban development. Formal contemporary urbanisation relies heavily on administrative fiat in designating urban areas and development zones. The NIURP has developed a series of master plans to the year 2020. In principle, they focus upon four processes: the densification of existing urban areas, the expansion of urban areas at their peripheries, the establishment of new urban areas (including satellite cities and new towns), and the urbanisation of rural settlement areas. The rational-technical master plan, carried out by experts, is deeply embedded into the political and institutional culture of Vietnamese administration. However, worldwide experiences have clearly demonstrated that there

are a number of inherent weaknesses in the master planning process, reflected in the international 'crisis' of the planning discipline. More often than not, master plans cover a 20-year time frame without offering the necessary flexibility and thus are outdated long before implemented. At the same time, there is not yet any new, accepted planning paradigm capable to replace master planning, even though there are obviously innovative theories and practices.

Particular to contexts such as Vietnam is that planning in traditional regimes is an old paradigm that no longer performs and a new one is not yet established. As well, most of the recently determined building and planning regulations are easily ignored or circumvented, especially since the profits to be made far outweigh any fines that may be levied for non-compliance. Laws governing land use are, by Western standards, almost non-existent. On paper, the ambitious plans appear statistically, not necessarily spatially, as balanced systems, embracing a mix of use, built and unbuilt spaces. However, there is no means of monitoring compliance and, often enough, for example, the honest dreams for collective, open park space are thwarted by personal dreams of an upcoming local elite who build their own palatial homes on such designated sites. As well, there is no process for granting variances and no means for public involvement in the planning process.

Vinh's spatial growth has been dictated by master plans which are updated every five years. Since the GDR's rebuilding of the city after the Second Indochina War, Vinh has been filling in agricultural land and spaces left by the construction of large infrastructure and state splendours. Socio-economic figures are directly translated to square meters of programmed space (industry, housing, commercial and administration and open space) and 'designed' as land-use. Throughout most of Vietnam there has been a concerted effort by planners to curb peripheral growth of city centres, in lieu of satellite city development.

Vinh is planned to substantially grow, both in terms of its population and area. Vinh's present population of 221,215 is within 6,400 hectares. By 2020, the city is expected to have 450,000 inhabitants and expand to 8,594 hectares. The city is to grow towards Cua Lo (to the northeast), and the road links between Vinh, Cua Lo and Cua Hoi are to be improved. In the villages towards the seaboard, the gravitational pull of the city is evident. It is obvious that Vinh is tending towards a poly-nucleated urbanism, enveloping Quan Banh, Cua Lo and Cua Hoi.

Following the logic of the master plan, Vinh is not only to see massive urbanisation of the periphery, but also the non-urban areas within the city are to be significantly densified. The numerous pockets of urban agriculture are to vanish as the network of the city roads is expanded and subsequent development aligns along this infrastructure. Vinh's hybrid urbanity that includes a rich heterogeneous mix of small-scale industry, urban agriculture, civic and residential uses is slated to disappear. Instead, zoning is to strictly separate functions. In terms of economic development, future zoning will segregate functions as follows:

- industrial development – northwest;
- civic development – city centre;
- green development (productive and protective landscapes of fruit trees and bamboo) – southern border [GPUD 2000].

The LA21 process played a role in the revision of the city's master plan. The visions that were consensually agreed upon by urban actors served as a framework for revision to the master plan, which was approved as the 'General Plan for Urban Development 2000–2020' by the Prime Minister in April 2000. Through LA21 process debates, the notion that Vinh should be conceived of as a centre for a larger territory was embraced; Vinh would be comprehensively planned in parallel with Cua Lo, Chua Hoi and Quan Banh. Although the tendency to concentrically expand the urban realm by separate land-use categories could not be completely overcome, the most noticeable change in the new master plan was the linking of urban development to the specificities of the landscape and protection and expansion of the public realm. Public space was conceived of as a linked network of open areas that also serve as a system of lowland reservoirs for excess water during floods (figs. 4.22 and 4.23). In the revised master plan, a green necklace — studded with ornamental lakes — envelops the 'inner city.' As well, the river was designated a strategic site for future development and the Ha Tinh province riverbank was also included in the legal document of Vinh's plan.

fig. 4.22 Vinh's masterplan until 2010, prior to the LA21 Programme. Yellow hatching represents industrial areas, red indicates commercial and administrative areas, and dark green are areas allocated as open space.
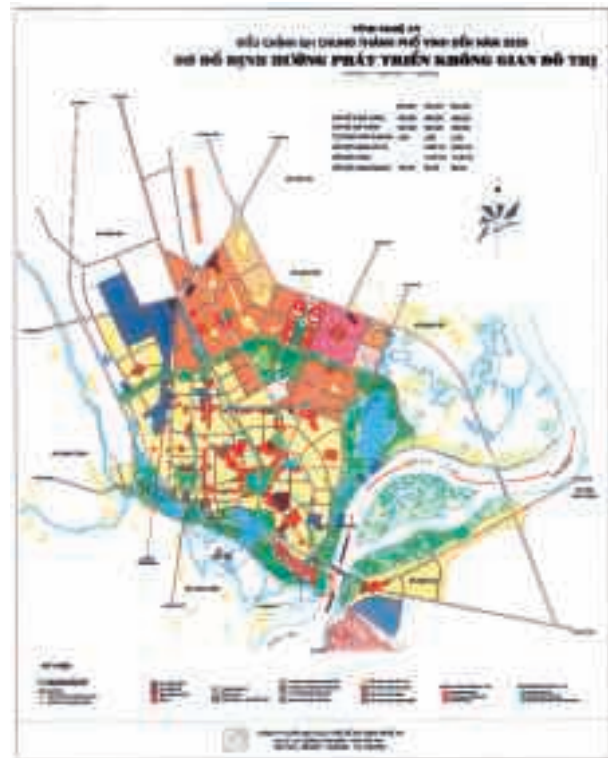

fig. 4.23 Vinh's masterplan until 2020 following the LA21 Programme. Most significantly different is the treatment of open space, which is conceived as a linked network of public spaces (also serving as lowland reservoirs for water during floods). In the northwest (dark blue) is the Bac Vinh IZ; in the northeast (red and hatched red) is a university, training and sports complex; yellow is residential use; orange is future residential use; and red (embedded in the fabric) indicates commercial and administration programmes.

STRATEGIC URBAN PROJECTS

In keeping with the LA21 Programme objectives, a series of urban projects for Vinh were identified through the intensive consultation of stakeholders and actors, identification of priorities within the legal framework of the master plan for structuring actions, and articulation of structuring elements into strategic actions and projects. The LA21 Programme's vision/project dialectic presupposes that there can be no vision without projects and no projects without vision. The urban project is conjectured as a testing ground for new approaches and new forms of cooperation. As well, it is viewed as a strategic stepping stone and catalyst for development. It must be noted here, however, that a number of the LA21 Programme activities and identified strategic urban projects could not be materialised because they were not sufficiently anchored institutionally within the existing structure of the decision-making apparatus. However, a number of workshops developed ideas for three strategic sites (Quang Trung Housing Estate, the Vinh Market and the Lam Riverfront), which were then further developed by the project's national consultant.

From Microrayon to Middle Class:
Quang Trung Housing Estate Rehabilitation

The single most dominating urban design/architectural work in Vinh remains the Quang Trung Estate, with its prominent position along National Highway 1A and its excessive size (950 metres x 170 metres, see fig. 4.24). Among city and provincial officials, it remains as the 'pride' of Vinh (fig. 4.25). However, all agree that it desperately needs major renovation and since 1997, within the framework of the LA21 Programme, there have been proposals at the local and provincial level (fig. 4.26). The working strategy of the LA21 Programme addressed the physical, managerial and financial components of the rehabilitation of Quang Trung. For the physical restructuring of the site, the whole Quang Trung district and its surrounding areas, as well as the larger future strategies of Vinh City, were considered. Case studies in Eastern Europe served as relevant approaches to the rehabilitation of housing estates. More specifically, the Hellersdorf Estate, in former East Berlin, provided examples of multi-faceted strategies for renovation.

fig. 4.24 Quang Trung's location is central in Vinh.

The rehabilitation is envisioned to include (over phases) four strategies:

• demolition of those blocks in an irreparable state;
• renovation of existing housing blocks with enough remaining quality;
• restructuring of open spaces;
• densification by new construction.

In addition, the following assumptions were made for the determination of the strategy: the present inhabitants (most of whom are very poor) should remain in the estate after rehabilitation; the density of the site needed to be raised, not lowered; and Quang Trung Street is an important spine of the city and, as such, should be optimally developed to provide an urban street facade with a redefined section/ profile and the provision of commercial/office spaces at least on the ground floor. Physical and/or visual links within Quang Trung, as well as to the immediate surroundings, should be redefined and strengthened. The monumental urban scale, collective realm and historical and symbolic value of the estate's modernity should be celebrated, not erased.

The strategy (fig. 4.27) involved the demolition of five housing blocks (fig. 4.28a). The refurbishment of all the remaining buildings would increase unit sizes from eight to

fig. 4.25 The sheer size of the estate and its location along National Highway 1A contribute to its importance at the urban scale.

twelve square metres per person in order to comply with new housing policies established at the national level. This is possible by a modest three-metre addition at the southern (back) side of each block (fig. 4.28b). Kitchen and bathroom facilities of all apartments would be modernised, as would the electrical and water systems. Corridors would be shortened, thereby creating a special condition for the end units. A north-south green spine would be established as the organising element of the open spaces upon which numerous outdoor recreational fields, productive urban agriculture areas and informal market spaces are to be hierarchically linked (fig. 4.28c). East-west transversal connections across the site would be strengthened for bicycle, motorcycle and light vehicular use (fig. 4.28d). Densification of the site would occur at the north and eastern edges of the site (fig. 4.28e) in addition to the development of new typologies parallel to National Highway 1A (fig. 4.28f). These units would combine office and commercial use on the ground floor. The rehabilitation of Quang Trung would qualitatively improve the housing and open space environment of a strategic urban-scale site (fig. 4.29).

Phasing of the project would, of course, be necessary in order to least disturb the present inhabitants and to finance the rehabilitation. New construction was proposed to begin on vacant land, which could be sold by the State to private investors; the capital acquired in this transaction could be directly reinvested in the rehabilitation process. Thereafter, demolition of old blocks could begin, whereupon previous inhabitants are moved to on-site new housing. It is also important to note that works on buildings and open space should be developed in parallel, thereby comprehensively (instead of piecemeal) upgrading the entire area. The more difficult areas of such rehabilitation projects concern the financial and managerial aspects. The scale of investment necessary requires a mixture of resources, including bank loans, external investors (NGOs, private initiatives, etc.) and the selling of land within the estate. A percentage of the refurbished dwellings could be sold to inhabitants (20 percent has been proposed) and, for those remaining in the rental sector, rents will need to significantly increase. Public/private partnerships are necessary not only to successfully rehabilitate Quang Trung, but also to manage and maintain the estate.

In 2000, the debate reached the floor of the national Ministry of Construction (MOC) in Hanoi. According to the MOC, the Prime Minister would like to set the rehabilitation of Vinh's housing estate as a national example. In the rehabilitation plans under development by the MOC, most of the principles developed through the LA21 process were compromised. The estate would almost exclusively be 'market'

community house
fenced area
sports field
popular construction
informal commercial activity
mobile booth
urban agriculture

1 housing
2 education
3 hotel
4 cinema
5 exhibition centre

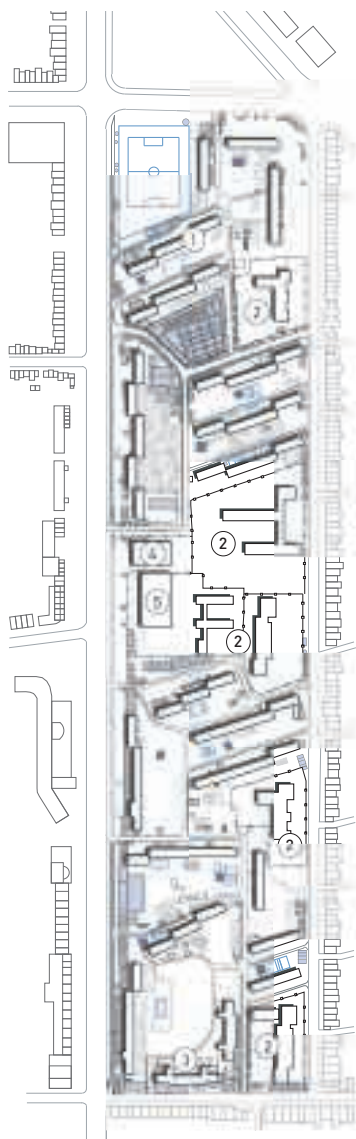**fig. 4.26** The existing situation of the Quang Trung Estate.

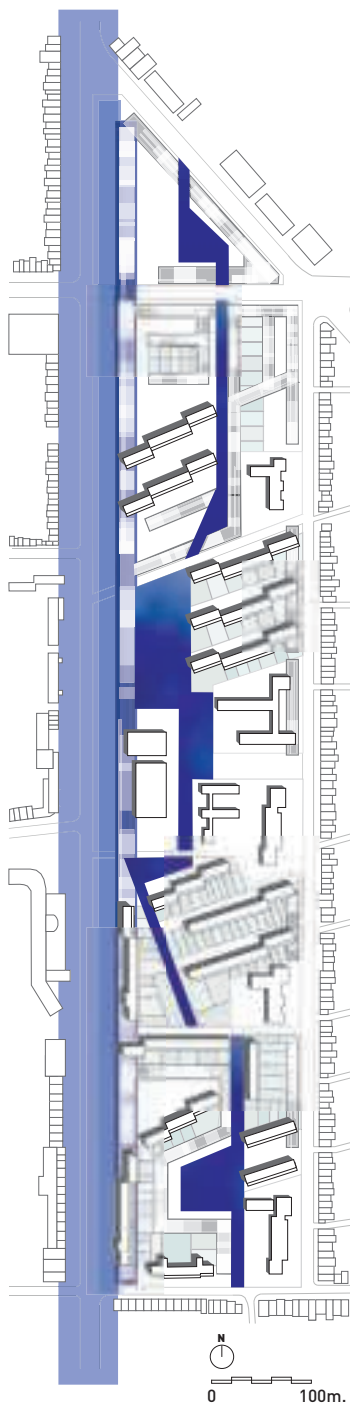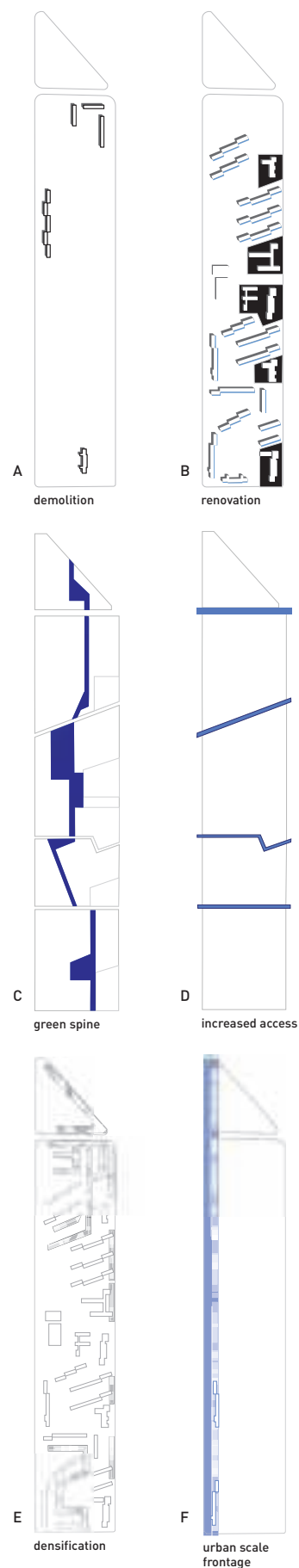**fig. 4.27** The strategic urban project of the Quang Trung Estate.

A demolition

B renovation

C green spine

D increased access

E densification

F urban scale frontage

fig. 4.28a The demolition plan. **b.** The three-metre addition to the existing housing blocks (blue) and the area of the schools (black). **c.** A system of public, semi-public and semi-private spaces are hierarchically organised along a north-south green spine. **d.** East-west access through the estate is increased. **e.** Densification within the estate occupies existing vacant land. **f.** Urban-scale frontage includes redefinition of the profile of National Highway No.1 and mixed-use along the street (combining apartments with commercial/office use at the ground floor).
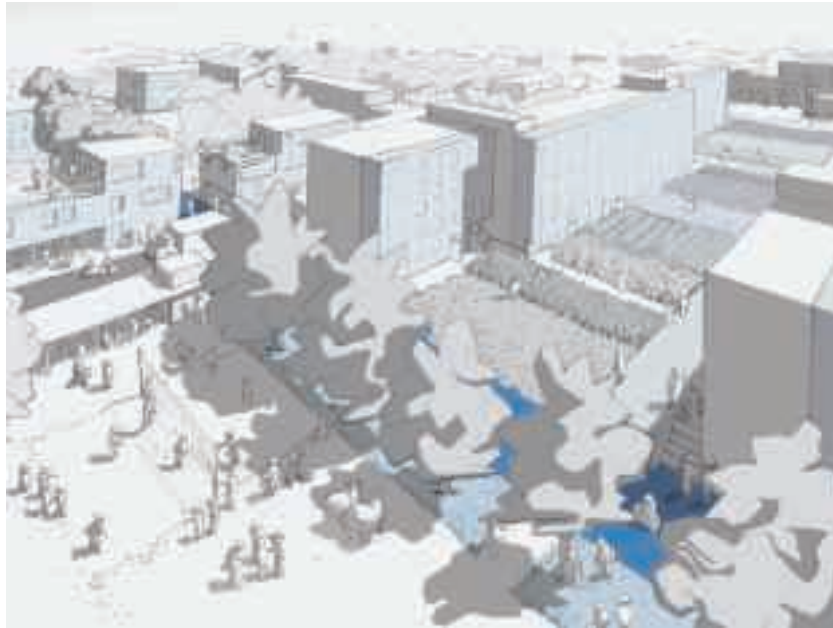
fig. 4.29 A possible future for the Quang Trung Estate.

housing and only a small number would remain for rent. The present inhabitants would be given first opportunity to buy their apartment, at market value, but would not be given any special consideration (excluding compensation, as required by law). Otherwise, present inhabitants would be relocated at a peripheral urban site in a new 'low-cost' housing project [Shannon 2001a:6–7].

The MOC project, presented in Hanoi in March 2001, featured an extravagant 'façade of the twenty-first century' (animated by a number of new staircases serving only two apartments per floor), a site plan of decreased density and larger open spaces, and apartments enlarged by six meters along the northern front façades. Examples were drawn from Japan and Finland. There was no attempt to redesign the urban profile of National Highway 1A.

The local and provincial plans for the rehabilitation of Quang Trung have been superseded. The MOC project takes precedence and it appears only too typical of urbanism in the hands of some central administrators and their docile 'surface designers.' 'Imagineered' (to borrow terminology from Disney) cities and the theme-parking of urban areas driven by grandiose dreams are still in vogue in some powerful offices. In Hanoi, a considerable number of politicians and planners back their visions with piles of overly optimistic statistics, heavily overestimating the power of their decrees. The fantastical thinking that Vinh can transform itself overnight into an orderly, individualistic-driven market system is irresponsible and results in irrelevant urban visions. Seductive imagery is not the solution for one of the city's most important urban sites. This heritage is no doubt a lingering remainder from the 1950s and 1960s of a centralised modern planning approach divorced from the economic and political paradigms of which it was part. When this tradition is now applied to a context in transition and operating in a completely different power and market universe, there are obvious contradictions. The result is 'planning in a vacuum,' which unfortunately grasps neither the threats nor opportunities of both localism and globalism.

Nonetheless, the exercise of the rehabilitation strategies for Quang Trung was a successful consensus-building and training process. Workshops of city-wide and issue-specific consultations led to a number of localised actions. City officials remain engaged in the debate at the national level.
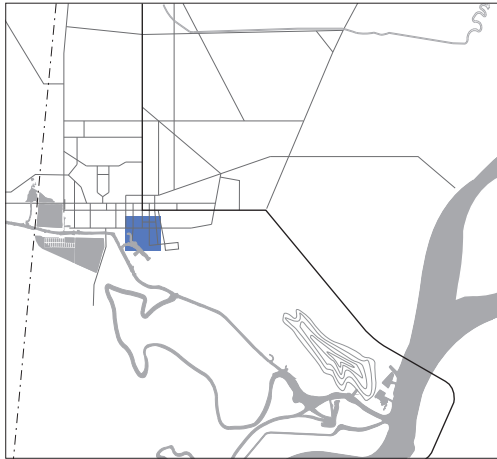
fig. 4.30 Vinh's market is on the city's central axis (National Highway 1A) and just north of the Vinh River.

fig. 4.31 Vinh's market front is congested by traffic and informal trading.

Vinh Market Reconfiguration

The Vinh Market is a 'hot spot' in the city's urban economy (fig. 4.30). It is an important place where the formal economy meets the informal economy (fig. 4.31). The Vinh Market is the social place *par excellence* in the city. Spatially, it fulfills a double function: it ends the axis of Quang Trung Boulevard and it is one of the few points where the road and river system *almost* meet. Unfortunately, the Vinh Riverfront has little usable space remaining on its banks and the area has become a popular place for the disposal of solid waste. The newly built bus station area has resulted in a redevelopment of the 'back' of the market area, however the uniqueness of this site where water and road meet is still not fully appreciated and is threatened by a more ordinary road-based urbanism (fig. 4.32).

In addition to merely expanding the floor area of the market, reconfiguration of the open space and increasing accessibility (especially for emergency vehicles) were primary concerns of the reconfiguration proposal (fig. 4.33). The formal square in front of the social-realist architecture of the existing main hall was reconfigured and the circulation routes were clarified (fig. 4.34). New market halls were proposed to both the west and south of the existing main hall. The 'back' side of the market was proposed to have a completely new function and appearance. In one possible scenario, a large public platform would mediate the land-to-water threshold and provide facilities for informal market activity and a water-based public transport system (fig. 4.35). Activating the urban portion of the Vinh River would also strengthen the city's relation to its rural western hamlets strung along the banks of the waterway.

Unfortunately, since the proposal was made, the south side of the market has been reclaimed by provincial government property developers, privatising a strategic public site. The market now can extend only to the west and the potential for restructuring relationship between the city and the Vinh River has been reduced. The area remains a strategic design issue that has been made more difficult by recent developments; it may be viewed as an example of 'unhappy localism' (in contrast to, but with similar effects as 'unhappy centralism').

Lam Riverfront Development

Although the river area was one of the three locations where the city originated (the Nui Guyet settlement, Ben Thuy, and the Citadel), today both the Lam and the Vinh Rivers do not play a major role in the planning and life of the city (fig. 4.36). In fact, the city has effectively turned its back on its rivers and has developed slowly and unsystematically. The Lam Riverfront is a complex site (due to the topographical relation of a sunken swath of land parallel to the river
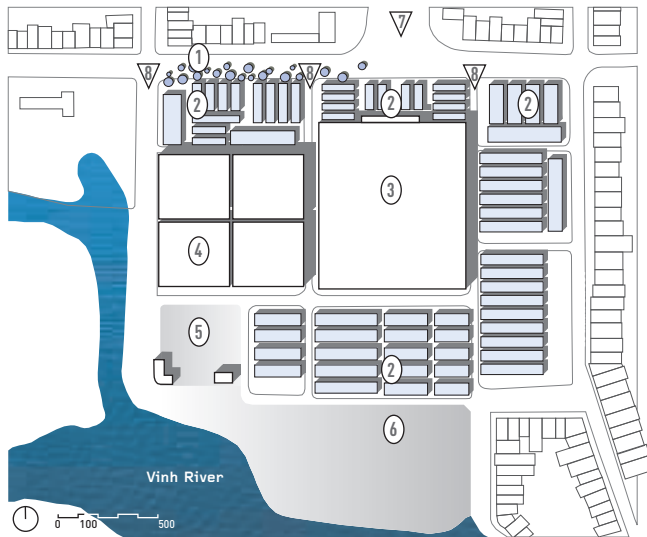
1. Informal market   2. Temporary market structures   3. Main market hall   4. West market halls
5. Open market (Under-utilised due to lack of access)   6. Solid waste disposal
7. Main access from Cao Trung Street   8. Secondary access

fig. 4.32 The existing situation of the Vinh Market.

1. Main market hall   2. Outdoor market space with facilities for removable booths
3. West market halls   4. East market halls   5. South market halls   6. Cao Thang square
7. Riverfront promenade and informal market activity   8. Parking area   9. Bus stop

fig. 4.33 The strategic urban project of the Vinh Market.
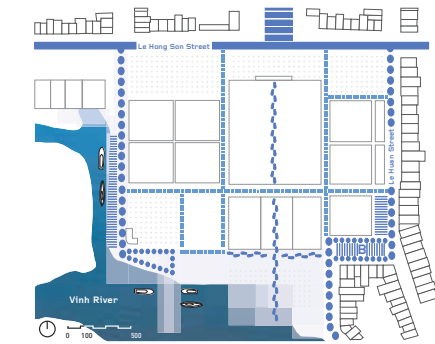
VEHICULAR

 Le Hong Son Street is maintained as a major vehicular road

 Le Huan Street and a parallel street further to the west are regulated as service alleys, only to be used by authorized vehicles

 A tertiary system of streets completes the vehicular network; these streets are strictly for emergency use (fire and ambulance)

B A bus stop area is planned along Le Huan Street

PEDESTRIAN

 A major access is established within the main market hall. It has a cross-axis in the proposed southern market extension.

BOAT

 An area along the western edge of the site is formally defined as a boat loading/unloading area.

fig. 4.34 The clarified circulation system of the market area.

fig. 4.35 A possible future for the Vinh Market.

fig. 4.36 The area of the Lam Riverfront.

fig. 4.37 An existing dyke, parallel to the river, can be converted into new road infrastructure and divide the waterfront from a sunken swath of land.

and the mountain) that has been occupied by a series of ad-hoc functions (fig. 4.37). The existing system of roads along both the Lam and Vinh Rivers is incomplete and unclear. The mere existence of the Lam River raises expectations of urban development to acknowledge the powerful natural presence of water and an identity as a 'river city.' The area is underutilised in its potential as a public space and tourist area. The diversity of program functions of Ben Thuy Harbour, including military and civic areas, in addition to industrial usage, creates a fragmented spatial experience of the riverfront (fig. 4.38).

There are four principles for the proposed development of the Lam Riverfront (fig. 4.39). The first follows from the LA21 Programme's visions for the city, whereby Vinh should establish itself as a 'river city' that connects into the existing rail and road system and addresses both sides of the river, including the right-bank which is administratively in the province of Ha Tinh. Second, the topographical specificity of the riverfront could be effectively exploited. The sunken wetland that would be difficult to intensively develop as built fabric can serve as a major recreational area for the city. Third, zoning of the riverfront in the north-south direction (following the river's course) could ensure a diversity of programmes (from north to south, intended programmes could include a river harbour expansion, a congress centre and hotels, business and commercial development and a high-

standard tourist area with a small marina); in the east-west direction (parallel to the riverfront), an alternation of built (buildings raised on *pilotis*) and unbuilt spaces could allow for the sunken land to act as a reserve basin for seasonal flooding and otherwise act as a recreational strip behind the mixed-use development (fig. 4.40). Fourth, the existing small-scaled, informal economic activities could be incorporated into the more capital-intensive development. In fact, activities such as ship-building and handicrafts are already tourist attractions for national and international visitors to Vinh. Obviously, any new riverfront development would have to employ public-private partnerships (fig. 4.41).

The Search for Complementarities
The Vietnamese institutional planning framework remains defined through three, centrally controlled instruments: socio-economic planning (reflecting political ambitions, primary public investments and desirable policies), sectoral planning (defining production targets for state-owned enterprises) and physical planning (comprising of master plans and detail plans). With the advent of market-led development, these legal instruments as presently operating appear unable to manage the rapidly transforming urban environment. Yet Vietnam's unwavering belief in planning and its centralist, well-equipped power structure could be advantageous to generate strategically important (infra)structural

fig. 4.38 The existing situation of the Lam Riverfront.

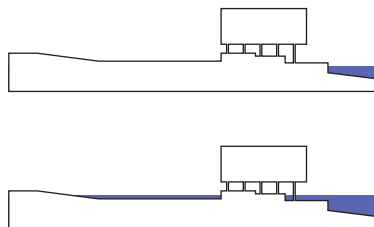fig. 4.39 The strategic urban project of the Lam Riverfront.

fig. 4.40 A section of the riverfront development on *pilotis*, which allows for water to be absorbed in the sunken swath during the monsoon season.
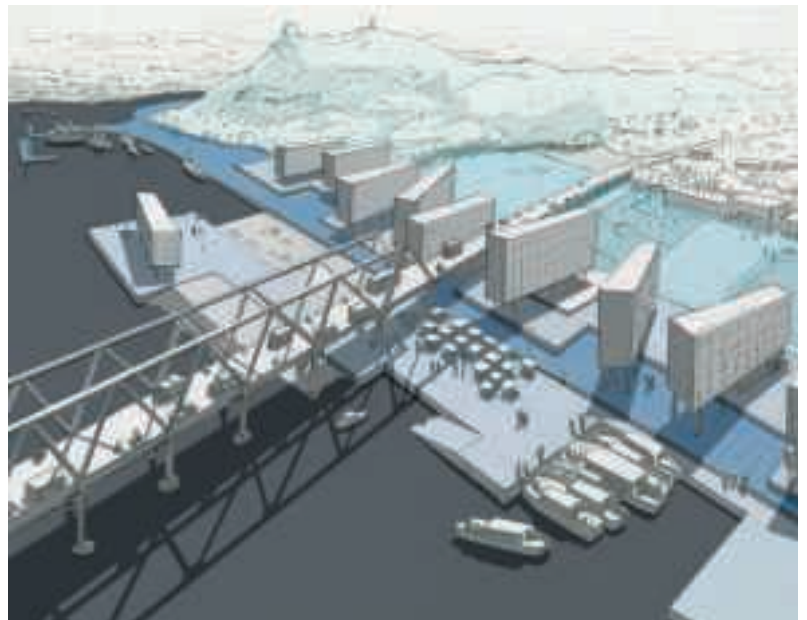

fig. 4.41 A possible future for the Lam Riverfront.

interventions with strong development potentials as well as a continued commitment to expanding the public, collective realm. The challenge is to find a complementarity between the control of the centrally vested State and localised urban debates. The process advocated through the LA21 Programme, specifically the dialectic between urban visions and strategic urban projects, can contribute to this search for complementarities.

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PREPARATORY PHASE

3rd Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (22 January)
4th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (2 October)
Selection of Vinh as priority town

**Detailed Assessment mission to Vinh
and Can Tho City** (28 July–8 August)

1st Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (25 November)

2nd Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (2 June)

Assessment mission to Vietnam (6–13 June)
Suggestion of six cities for consideration
by the project

5th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (29 May)
6th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (9 December)

Start Local Team (May)

Workshop: 'Vinh City Housing Stock (24–26 September)
Evaluation of Vinh's public housing,
focusing on Quang Trung Estate

**Feasibility Study on rehabilitation and up-grading of Quang Trung's
housing block B6** by Road Construction and Public Works Company
(1997–99)

Action Plan: Housing Quang Trung (October)
Solid Waste Assessment (December)

INTENSIVE PROJECT PHASE / ALL PARTNERS

7th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (29 September)

**Workshop: 'Strategic Urban Development for Vinh City
from the Present to 2010'** (23–26 March)
Focus on strategies for housing management and revitalisation for Vinh
and Quang Trung in particular. Presentation of solid waste assessment in Vinh

Arrival of first JPO (February)
Local Team Group Training on Planning Review (March)
Arrival first JPO (17 June)

Action Plan: Solid Waste Management (January)

**Research project: Mass Housing
Rehabilitation, Examples in Europe**
by PGCHS (December)

8th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (22 October)

Workshop 'Imagining Future Identity of Vinh City' (18–20 January)
Future visions, concepts and projects for Vinh City
and discussion of Urban Pact 1
Training course on private solid waste management for 18 wards (April)
Strategies for solid waste collection and closer follow-up
and monitoring of 4 wards
Technical workshop (4–7 May)
Urban scale planning in Quang Trung, revisions of Master Plan

Urban Pact 1 (20 January)
Agreement on visions for Vinh, revision of strategies for
Vinh's master plan to 2020, housing measures for Quang
Trung Revitalisation and solid waste management measures
Vinh Brochure in English and Vietnamese by Local Team,
UN-HABITAT and PGCHS (August)
Completion of Master Plan revision (June)
**Completion of tentative strategy for the rehabilitation of
Quang Trung Housing Estate** (August)
**Project document "Strategies for private solid waste collec-
tion – four pilot projects"** (November)

**Floods in Vietnam, seriously affecting Vinh City: damage to
houses and crops, spread of waste** (November–December)

Draft video by BC (February)
**Urban design studies of the Lam Riverfront
and Vinh Market** by national advisors (May)
**Paper: 'Towards a more sustainable urban development
for Vinh City, Vietnam'** by LA21 Programme (October)

VINH

1994   1995   1996   1997   1998   1999

Vinh final report by BC (February)
Quang Trung and Lam Riverfront and Vinh Market design strategies

9th Steering Committee Meeting;
Brussels (8 October)

Community Development Workshop (March)
The workshop allowed to launch community-participation and information and to benefit from the sharing of experiences from other Vietnamese secondary cities
Institutionalisation workshop (September)
Adoption of the Urban Pact 3

Partners' workshop (3 March)
Re-initiation of project after one year discontinuity; meetings with donors discussing Quang Trung Project
BC Mission to Hanoi and Vinh
(14 September–25 October)
Preparation of tasks new JPO, review of documentation Quang Trung Housing Estate, discussion of Vinh Market expansion

Launching of a comprehensive Solid Waste Management project
Danida launched a six-year project on Improved Solid Waste Management for Vinh City and Cua Lo town. One component of the Danida initiative focused on the needs of the community, scaling up and replicating the solid waste activities initiated by LA21.
Urban Pact 3 (September)
Video programme on Vinh City by Pitten, A.

Arrival of second JPO (25 October)

10th Steering Committee Meeting;
Nairobi (12 May)

2000   **2001**

2002   **2003**   **2004**

11th Steering Committee Meeting;
Nairobi (4 May)

Project document 'Revitalization of the Quang Trung Housing Estate, Towards a better living environment for a vulnerable community' (February)
by Local Team, UN-Habitat and PGCHS
Rehabilitation strategy based on a multi-stakeholder consultative process foreseeing significant positive social, economic and environmental impact
Completion of the solid waste demonstration project
The demonstration project was fully implemented in four wards (Hung Binh, Ha Huy Tap, Le Mao and Doi Cung)
Urban Pact 2
Agreement on continued focus on planning, housing, and solid waste measures

Quang Trung community development activity
Community development and participation activities leading to sustainable self-improvement mechanisms for better living conditions in the QT Estate; a very interesting collaboration between local government and grassroots organisations is established and lead already to institutionalisation of the community involvement component in the implementation of the socio-economic action plan for Vinh City 2003.
Urban Management training course (July)
Training course organised with the Hanoi University of Architecture to strengthen urban planning and management functions at ward level

PGCHS Design Studio (January–March)
Three assignments focusing on Vinh's 'Socialist Housing Renewal', 'Productive Landscapes' and 'The Edge of a City'
Vinh City video by BC

■	STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS
■	WORKSHOPS AND MISSIONS
■	LOCAL TEAM ACTIVITIES
■	MAJOR OUTCOMES
■	STUDIES, RESEARCH PROJECTS AND OTHER EXTERNAL INPUT
■	IMPORTANT NATIONAL AND LOCAL EVENTS

Qualifying Urban Space

ANDRÉ LOECKX, KELLY SHANNON

The LA21 Programme in the four cities has sought not only to build local capacity in urban design and management, but also to critically contribute to the broader knowledge base of urbanism. It has attempted to conceptually marry a host of discourses that are often not partners in the urban debate — including contemporary urban theory, critical development theory and the agendas and priorities of various governmental and non-governmental organisations. Work in the cities with local partners was augmented by theoretical reflection — throughout the process was a continual weaving back-and-forth between realities and rhetorics, an oscillation between cases and abstract concepts, between visions and projects. The cities, practices and fieldwork supported tendencies and paradigmatic frames in the larger field of urbanism.

Contemporary discourse of the built environment is awash with 'globalisation' and its far-reaching effects. In the contemporary dot.com era of space and time decentralisation, there reside well-founded fears that the late modern world is being irrevocably 'flattened out' by the abstract processes of distribution, tourism and information. The global reorganisation of capitalism has brought with it hyper-mobile economic, spatial and cultural change and produced new urban spatio-temporal experiences. In the early 1980s, command points of the organisation of the world's economy were located in cities such as New York, London and Tokyo. However, they now literally span the globe and include places from Manila to Delhi, Lagos to Shanghai, São Paulo to Osaka, Mexico City to Singapore [Sassen 2001]. Although much attention goes to the so-called 'global cities,' second tier cities (and increasingly rural areas) are also affected as economic systems are decentralised and work as interdependent networks. Across geographies and cultures, people lead markedly similar lifestyles in urban fields — replete with synonymous brands and logos (fig. 5.1). Yet, cities concentrate a multitude of inhabitants and a particular blend of culture and economies within an identifiable geographic setting and an urban frame formed by a particular history. So, despite claims and pressures of a globalising and homogenising world, urban spaces remain grounded — localised — by physical, social and cultural confines. Cities fundamentally remain territories of intense social and spatial claims, as formal logics of urban systems and the codified use of space

fig. 5.1 Communist political propaganda and capitalist corporate advertising exist cheek-by-jowl along Vietnam's National Highway No. 1.

uniquely distinguishes sites across the globe. As local conditions, caught in the tides of globalisation, cities remain the scale and frame *par excellence* for processes of localisation.

'LOCALISING'

The Localising Agenda 21 Programme. From the outset, the LA21 Programme sought to redefine the term 'localising' and clarify its potential spatial implications. Since the 1992 Rio Summit, the term

localising has been (ab)used in order to pay lip service to all the politically correct mantras of the moment. The Rio Declaration and Agenda 21, the 800-page 'bible of sustainable development,' recognised that current urban development, coupled with scarcity of resources, often accelerates environmental degradation — in turn, leading to a loss of quality of urban living conditions, especially for the urban poor. Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 shifted a large part of the communal goal and global problems to local governments in recognition of the fact that many of the problems and solutions regarding sustainable development reside in local activities and local political will.

Yet, the spatial implications of the 'local' have largely been left out of the development discourse. If local scarcity of resources is seen as a common reality, local space is not identified as a resource in itself, except in its most basic form: available land. Nonetheless, in related fields, such as social and urban geography, the local is viewed as the inexorable site of the production of cultural meanings and localising can lead to the creation of social movements of reaction [Harvey 1998] or resistance [Castells 1989]. Geography views sites as locations where things happen, but not as agents that *make* things happen.

However, cities need to be understood as a dynamic crossroads of local, national and trans-national place-making processes (fig. 5.2). National and trans-national practices are constituted by their interrelations with and roundedness within particular localities at particular moments in time. This stance sounds plausible, but refers to a complex and unstable reality since the co-presence and intersection of trans-national and local processes results in places having multiple and conflicting identities; spaces — and exceptionally urban spaces — are formed by contestation, difference and social negotiation among differently situated (and often antagonistic) urban actors, some of whose networks are locally bound and others who span regions [Smith 2001]. Even in modest urban settings, global/localising processes intertwine histories and overlap territories that cut across landscapes and produce disorderly, unexpected and irretrievably contingent urban contexts. Maybe the accumulative and layered, residual nature of urban space — agglomerating histories, accidents, successes, failures, coherences and fragmentations — explains its absence in development discourses that prefer good-sounding, politically correct and mobilising paradigms.

fig. 5.2 The global high-tech reality and local destitute poverty are juxtaposed in an informal housing area in a southern neighbourhood of Nakuru.

The global/local duality is a false dichotomy whereas all global impositions are unavoidably culturally coded by the politics and realities of everyday life. The deeper nature of cities, revealed through inhabitants' use, is one where aggressive global patterns — ever more aggressive — co-exist with cultural strata. Although global capital will no doubt continue to expand and tighten its grip on the economy, the world is not becoming culturally homogenised [Appadurai 1996]. In some contexts, localism remains the means of survival, while in others regional specificity and multiplicity of local contexts continuously consolidate their role and confirm that the global/local bi-polarity is not sim-

ply an opposition but component parts of a single process in the stabilisation of a new era.

Within the LA21 Programme, localising has not been interpreted as the one-way translation of 'universal principles' into local conditions, but, on the contrary, the importance on the role of 'the locus' — the inhabited space — has been stressed as an inherent component, a critical instance, a modifying agent, within the paradigm of sustainable development. The locus need not be interpreted in the conservative sense with its limited sense of tradition and a never-changing reality which tends to advocate the mere protection of the existing *genius loci*. On the contrary, it need be viewed more in Elia Zenghelis' contemporary interpretation of uncovering and strengthening existing logics of reality and finding the capacity of sites in a critical process that distinguishes junk from resource, misery from scarcity/austerity and narrow-mindedness from perspective [Zenghelis 1993]. The locus is not a romanticised idea; contrary, it is a place full of richness, poverty and contestation. For example, the proposal for the Nakuru bus park area mediated the claims by informal economic activities to open space. A rationalisation of circulation routes not only created an order for the *matatus'* occupation of the site, but also defined strict zones for market merchants and traders to appropriate.

'SUSTAINABILITY'

The most oft-quoted definition of sustainable development is that of the so-called Brudtland Commission (World Commission on Environment and Development) — formed in 1983 and which made its report, 'Our Common Future', in 1988. It states, "Humanity has the ability to make development sustainable — to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet its own needs. The concept of sustainable development does imply limits — not absolute limits but limitations imposed by the present state of technology and social organisation on environmental resources and by the ability of the biosphere to absorb the effects of human activities. But technology and social organisation can both be managed and improved to make way for a new era of economic growth. The Commission believes that widespread poverty is no longer inevitable. Poverty is not only an evil in itself, but sustainable development requires meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to fulfil their aspirations for a better life. A world in which poverty is endemic will always be prone to ecological and other catastrophes" [Brundtland 1987:8]. However, the definition has been criticised by many for its deliberate ambiguity of language and lack of conceptual clarity. Gilbert Rist has gone so far as to say that it is mere 'diplomacy by terminology' [Rist 1997:186]. Sustainability has entered practice through legislation more than by way of concrete conceptual grounding.

The 1996 Habitat II Conference in Istanbul highlighted the role of urbanisation in sustainable development. Subsequent Habitat agendas established explicit links between key city issues such as poverty, social exclusion, gender equality, governance and the management of human settlements. Again, urban space itself remained absent as a resource (or a loss) and as a support (or a burden) for urban development. Globally, UN-HABITAT has a large number of programmes working to marry

sustainability, modernisation and urbanisation. Indeed, it is mandated to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. As such, debate revolving around urban spaces becomes inevitable.

However, in most UN and development literature, the sustainability of urban space is primarily addressed by way of two biases. One is an emphasis upon the concept of *land itself* as a neutral entity — an unqualified surface to build upon, whose qualities have been appropriated in socially disproportionate shares — that needs to be redistributed (as a vital minimal provision for the poor). The other is an overtly *environmental* inclination (whereby universal ecological processes and concerns drive the essential principles of future territorial evolution). In campaigns that stress land redistribution, the object of debate is primarily idle land; the existing (occupied and speculative) land market is rarely criticised and not part of a discourse that avoids open conflicts with the free market economy. Meanwhile, the environmental bias predominately focuses on the reduction of pollution and clean-up of brownfield sites. In both biases, the qualified, man-made land and landscape (embracing built and unbuilt territories) is largely excluded as an active agent of sustainable spatial quality and environmental soundness. The development discourse finally discovered the link of development and the environment but has yet to realise the potential of space and its management as a primary resource regarding sustainability. As well, the monitoring and evaluation of cities by the UN and other development agencies does not penetrate deeply into the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges of existing spatial structures. Instead, they tend to primarily advocate the environmental, social and governance aspects of development. To a large extent, spatial issues are sidelined and left to be mere consequences of more pressing concerns. Logically speaking, however, sustainability needs to constantly address spatial issues of location, access, density, carrying capacity and ecological footprints. The neglect of the spatial dimension of urban development (whereby 'space' stands for the urban built environment, man-made landscape and built patrimony) entails the loss of an extremely valuable and not easily renewable resource, spoiled by lack of awareness.

Despite the Habitat Agenda's stated focus on sustainable urban form and design, the LA21 Programme in the four cities is one of the few campaigns that *explicitly* address spatial issues. In its interpretation of the enigmatic term sustainability, the LA21 Programme has stressed the capacity to *sustain future development* (as opposed to the Brundtland's definition of the capacity to sustain what has been realised) and the capacity to *prepare opportunities* for future generations (as opposed to the Brundtland's definition to preserve opportunities for future generations). More fundamental, however, is the LA21 Programme's *qualification of space*. Space is never neutral, but complex in its structuring and layering natural and man-made settings, both historical narratives and contemporary contested aspects. In addition to the inherent 'locus' of landscape and topographical space, the urban space of cities consists of complex, multi-layered spatial translations of different eras and ideologies — an accumulation of patrimony. The urban fabric consists of places of contrast and contradictions where multiple users and interests strive to act in the city and pursue their particular interests. In the contemporary urban sphere, mega- and minor-players, multi-nationals, non-governmental organisations and citizens all compete on the same playing field (albeit with different

power). It is the task and power of design to unravel, clarify and negotiate contradictions of the overly complex conditions of the contemporary urban realm.

In such a qualified space, sustainability obviously means something other than sustaining a better status quo, polishing the sharp edges of inequality, and equally redistributing and cleaning land, but rather it means sustaining urbanity and structuring growth. Sustainability involves actions that not only protect the next generation, but also ones that actively create new urban dynamics. It must work related to appropriate 'lifetimes' of interventions — from the ephemeral to the most durable — in the built and non-built environment. It, obviously, needs to address the rational use of resources. The existing spatial structure of both man-made and natural environments is such that resources need to first be recognised as invaluable qualities and subsequently protected and strengthened. Urban coherence can be won or lost through the structuring of the built and unbuilt environment. Resources can easily be spoiled and opportunities of adding value can be lost by not qualifying space by disrupting coherence, inappropriate building, misunderstanding location, hindering access, neglecting diversity, mistaking orientation, and not taking advantage of proximity. For example, the seafront of Essaouira is an incredible resource (fig. 5.3), for both the identity of the city as well as the growing tourist industry. However, the coast is in danger of becoming a heterotopia of gated enti-

ties, as prime sites are developed in a piecemeal and immediate fashion by private investors who ignore the necessary complementarity between the private domain and the public realm. During the LA21 process, a series of fundamental agreements were brought into the debate to attempt to maintain the spatial coherence of the seafront promenade and contribute to the public sphere of the city. The cultural and societal costs of restoring damage caused by inappropriate construction on valuable fabrics and unique landscape reserves are irrecoverable; *post-factum* costs are exuberant. It must be understood that qualification of open space is not something objective, but defined in relation to different — often conflicting — interests.

fig. 5.3 Essaouira's seafront coherence is threatened to disappear as piecemeal, ad-hoc development of the coast progresses.

Sustainability can thus not be disassociated from the economic, social, environmental or *spatial*. Indeed, the LA21 Programme has worked with all four criteria in order to deem both visions and urban projects as strategic and therefore sustainable. From the economic imperative, sustainability relates to creating new opportunities for income generation — including the interaction between formal and informal economies, especially in regards to the use of resources and spatial opportunities afforded. The social perspective fundamentally aims to enlarge and reinforce the public realm and guide development to follow existing logics and daily-use tendencies; it implicitly targets the working and living conditions of the urban poor. The environmental aspect seeks to achieve a balance between the consumptive and productive use of space and to improve the balance between the man-made and the natural environment. The spatial configurations of visions and strategic urban

fig. 5.4 Essaouira: Surroundings of the *medina* wall, see chapter 3.

fig. 5.5 Nakuru: Bus park, see chapter 2.

fig. 5.6 Vinh: Market project, see chapter 4.

projects in Essaouira, Nakuru and Vinh are translations of these economic, social and environmental components which simultaneously clarify and strengthen the basic structure of the city.

For example, the surroundings of the *medina* wall in Essaouira (fig. 5.4), throughout its urban history, created a continuous chain of differently programmed spaces — from playing fields, to ceremonial spaces, to informal markets, to formal spaces and shopping facades — and thereby addressed social and economic aspects. So, the strategic project of the surroundings first of all conceived of the area as a cohesive, public open space, clarifying the structure of the compact city and marking a transition zone to the *lotissements*. As a space of decompression, whereby space is not merely consumed and over-built, the project for the surroundings of the *medina* wall also addressed a serious environmental concern. The Nakuru bus park area project (fig. 5.5) proposed to reorganise open spaces and infrastructure, stressing the flexibility of the use of space (for formal and informal economic activities), creation of new public space (formally linking the railway station and *matatu* park), and decongesting a polluted node in the city (improving the environmental ambiance). In Vinh, a proposal for the reorganisation of the market (fig. 5.6) not only tried to change the perception and use of the area's buildings and open spaces, but also that of the Vinh River. The backside of the market (site of illegal solid waste disposal) was proposed to turn into a front, cleaning and activating the river's edge as a place for informal trading and a stop for a new water-based transport network.

CONTESTED TERRITORIES AND NEGOTIATION

Throughout history, built space has been as much a site of contestation as of negotiation and mediation. From stone walls and fences demarcating agricultural property, to property lines and building envelopes in urban contexts, to territorial claims of waterways, space has remained represen-

tative of real/virtual power and money and therefore an object of contestation. Contested territories are numerous and promise to increase as economies become more integrated into the global system. The real estate mantra of 'location, location, location' accentuates the importance of financial qualifications of space and often undermines the societal and cultural value of territories. The city and its immediate periphery remain a battleground of property rights and structures. Protection and expansion of the public realm is often relinquished due to short-term economic and/or political ambitions. At the same time, the history of urban morphologies and building types is full of examples of mediating spaces. Fabrics mediate between the public and the private. Suburbs mediate between the city centre and the countryside. Public space mediates between particular interests and the common benefit.

The LA21 process has identified the contested territories in the supported cities and stressed that these very sites are ideal vehicles for negotiation — between private investment and the public realm, between the international donor community and local governments, between global pressures and civil society. Space has the advantage that it crosses multiple sectors and disciplines (inclusive of architecture, landscape and urbanism) and therefore remains the most suitable 'ground' for negotiation. The LA21 Programme has borrowed from Hilde Heynen and Loeckx [Heynen and Loeckx 1998] the identification of built space as embodying three different roles, all of which are essential to understand its capacity as a vehicle for negotiation. First is space as a *receptacle* — a medium that represents and manifests social and cultural values and changes. Second is space as an *instrument* — a spatial tool for the regulation of behaviour and creation of new territory and as an instigator of cultural change. Finally is space as a *stage* — likened to the theatrical interpretation as a place that is simultaneously active and passive, active in the sense that physical forms condition the possibilities of spatial behaviour and passive in that it is a static background for the play of everyday life and its inherent dynamics.

Through the initiatives of the LA21 Programme, contested territories have allowed physical sites to be reinterpreted as space as receptacle, instrument and stage. Visions, strategic projects and actions come from the turning of contestation into a debate. At the same time, an underlying goal was to actively promote the enlargement of a legitimate and spatially materialised public realm and to strengthen existing (man-made and natural) spatial structures. For example, in Nakuru, negotiation between the city and the Kenya Wildlife Service (which manages the lake and Nature Park) occurred for the first time over discussion of the strategic urban project of the park edge. The LA21 Programme's proposed restructuring of the park-to-city interface and the specific redesign of the placement of the fence between the two (fig. 5.7) was simultaneously able to expand the city's social space and protect the park from damage to its fragile ecology. The proposed transitional space between urbanity and nature — the linear urban park — would turn the park into a front yard of the city (thus discouraging its use

fig. 5.7 Nakuru: Park edge project, see chapter 2.

as a backyard garbage dump) and provide a host of recreational and social spaces for the city's resi-
dents. In Essaouira, negotiations between LA21 Programme partners and ERAC, the semi-public
agency *Etablissement Régional d'Aménagement et de Construction*, resulted in a strategic urban proj-
ect for a key area of the *medina* surroundings, *Bab Doukkala*. ERAC had originally intended to claim
the open space site as an area for housing. However, following the development of the city's visions,
the site was reconfigured to also act as a vibrant open, public space activated by small shops in an
arcade, a formal frontage towards the *medina* wall and housing (lifted above the ground-floor shops).

'DESIGNERLY' RESEARCH TRIALOGUES

Finally, it must be stressed that the re-qualification of space requires new design tools in order to
maximise its potential. Through the LA21 Programme, a series of operative methods to understand
existing spatial structures of contexts to eventually strategically intervene have been developed. It has
built upon the vast knowledge base in descriptive urbanism to effectively describe reality, employ-
ing methods such as reading the city as a complex text, with multiple, layered narratives; graphically
analysing cities to discover the syntax and vocabulary of the urban text; creating morphological syn-
theses of cities (as did Bruno Fortier and Christian Devillers); establishing taxonomies of urban fab-
rics and naming new urban patterns (as does William Jan Neutelings and Stefano Boeri); and under-
standing the logic and ecologies of landscapes (as do R.T. Foreman and Henri Bava).

'Designerly' research is understood not as problem-solving, but as questioning — reformulating
problems and forming insights. Conceptual design is equated with provisional synthesis of several
factors and at multiple scales; it is also able to overcome antitheses that are insolvable in theory.
The staging of scenarios differs from that of making forecasts and precise testing of desirable situ-
ations for which certainties are required. Design has come into the LA21 process in a three-fold
manner. First, it has read spaces from above (the reading of eco-systems, watersheds, geographi-
cal/topographical formations, etc.) and below (the understanding of space from a haptic and ex-
perienced sense). Second, design is a tool for negotiation (on the basis of sites of contestation as
described above), whereby specific solutions on strategic sites are discussed; here design has the
luxury of being both very concrete and yet open for alternatives and modifications. Third, design
offers a synthesising frame for pacts and agreements. Unlike mere 'talk,' the implicit power of
images marks them as uniquely placed to convince various stakeholders.

The 'three track' approach of the LA21 Programme in Essaouira, Nakuru and Vinh has shuttled
between 'designerly' investigation, negotiation and framing of agreements in the pursuit of sustain-
ability through a critical interplay of visions and strategic urban projects and actions. In many other
projects, negotiation and communication occur through verbal exchanges and agreements. In the
LA21 Programme, the more typical binary way of thinking (exemplified by the verbal process) was
complemented by a spatial way of thinking (embodied in the design process) — the latter which pro-
vides room for change and difference. As well, within a coherent frame, the design process itself

often revealed visions and possible interpretations of the future development of territories that would have otherwise gone undiscovered. For example, in Vinh the vision of the green city (fig. 5.8) which works as a sponge could only be deduced through the visual recognition of arcing land masses or islands of higher land in the low flood plain. The reading of the existing landscape from 'above' (from aerial photographs) was then nuanced in possible scenarios of interlocking urban parks by fieldwork experience from 'below.'

In conclusion, the LA21 process of vision-building, strategic and structural planning (see chapter six) and the formulation of strategic urban projects (see chapter seven) stems from an understanding of the locus — the existing logics of cities and their landscapes (including their historical layers and ad-hoc daily appropriations). The shift away

fig. 5.8 Vinh: Green City – city region scale, see chapter 4.

from master-planning is grounded in the 'strategic' — that which can be successfully planned and evolve through a clear set of policies — and the 'structural' — that which strengthens the coherence of existing urban morphology, acts as a support for future urban development, provides the 'missing link' or serves as a trigger to spatial development and/or generates complementarity or synergy between separated or fragmented actions or actors. Strategic and structural planning reduces the overall scope of what can be planned while, at the same time, requires more precise planning and interventions. Fundamental to this type of planning is the differentiation of time-frames — from immediate actions to long-term perspectives, from ephemeral to lasting spatial interventions. The process constantly weaves back-and-forth between the abstract and the concrete, as well as between various scale levels. The different scales and levels of interventions must also be sustainable in relation to appropriate scales and levels of decision-making. Strategic and structural planning demands 'designerly' investigation, negotiation and the framing of agreements with perpetual critical testing and revising.

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Strategic Structure Planning

JEF VAN DEN BROECK

The LA21 Programme advocated a planning approach that was able to deal with the specific contexts in the different countries and cities. Strategic structure planning sought an approach based on realism and aimed to achieve tangible results and a visible impact by the realisation of concrete actions that fit into a long-term perspective for sustainable development: a strategic step-by-step approach within a dynamic, coherent and integrating framework. It is an approach built upon local human, social, economic and spatial resources, and upon a belief in cooperation between the people involved as being the motor for their capacity-building; it strengthens empowerment and qualitative development.

MASTER-PLANNING
NOT SUITABLE FOR NEW REALITIES

For a long time, planning has been based on so-called 'master planning' approaches that have proved to be rather static, land-use-oriented and largely unrealistic in their assessment of limited resources and rapid change. Of course, one should take into account the context in which this planning approach was developed in the beginning of the twentieth century. At the time, the role and power of governments and their resources were substantial and social, technical, scientific and spatial change was slower than today. Then, 'plans' could be prepared and even at times implemented in a rather technocratic way. Today's circumstances have completely changed.

This traditional planning approach, still very common in developing countries, starts with an often very comprehensive survey followed by an analysis and interpretation of the data and results in a 'master plan,' a kind of blueprint to guide the city's development of a city [Geddes 1915]. In the LA21 Programme cities, a master plan or a development plan usually already existed, even if it was not necessarily followed. This planning tradition is characterised by a belief in the possibility of collecting all the necessary data in order to have the knowledge needed to predict the 'logical' future and to design a plan with a programme for its implementation. When starting the project in Nakuru, for instance, it was striking that during the first workshop, most of the participants demanded an exhaustive and comprehensive data collection phase as a necessary first step in the process. Simultaneously, the participants spoke of the many urgent problems and opportunities that should and could be tackled immediately without much supplementary fundamental research and within the available means. They were seemingly afraid of 'action' based upon available knowledge and of learning by doing. They also seemed fearful of handling inevitable uncertainty and, consequently, avoided concrete decision-making and action.

In the traditional planning approach, factors such as time (change and uncertainty) restrict the means for realisation. Likewise, the values, interests and power of people and groups are often not taken into account. Another and strange — due to contradictory logics embedded in the approach — characteristic is the gap between the 'master plan' (expressing an optimal land use, developed by an urban planner) and the previous studies carried out by different experts. Indeed, an analysis of

master plans shows that often they are based upon information, considerations, visions and concepts which cannot be found in the surveys, but which prevail in theories about the 'ideal city' (reflecting an 'ideal social order' as in the CIAM and Garden City concepts). This 'gap' may also be attributed to the largely sectoral-based research dealing primarily with housing, infrastructure, industry, services, and social equipment which tends to cater solely to the functional and technical aspects and less systematically to the spatial conditions of the location. Spatial characteristics — structure and fabric — and spatial qualities and exploratory design do not appear in master planning.

SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES
DURING THE PAST DECADES: A SUMMARY

In the 1960s and 1970s, different 'modern' planning theories and traditions were developed and implemented; a brief summary review reveals that while they add some strength to the practice of planning, they have certain weaknesses:

- The *rational*, *comprehensive model* is based upon a belief in the existence of common interest in planning as a continuous and voluntary process, as a means to create a better future by using a 'systems approach' [Hall 1979], and a clear methodology with sequential phases related to each other: long-term goal setting, goal- and action-oriented research, forecasting and development of alternatives and finally action, monitoring and feedback combined with decision-making in different phases of the process. Already in the 1960s, this approach was criticised by different authors, faulted for the fact that the model did not fit with the irrationality of reality [Hall 1979]. Also practitioners using the model pointed out the obvious weaknesses of the approach [Van den Broeck 1987].

- *Disjointed incrementalism* or the 'science of muddling through' [Lindblom 1959:79–88] can also be seen as a reaction to 'ideal rational' planning and as a form of 'non-belief' in the long-term dimension of planning. Lindblom states that "the synoptic ideal is not adapted to man's limited intellectual capacities, the inadequacy of information, the costliness of analysis, not adapted to failure nor to the relationship between fact and value in policy making." His alternative, which he terms 'disjointed incrementalism,' is based upon a step-by-step approach using the existing situation as the standard and problem-solving as the proper approach.

- *Advocacy*, *trans-active*, *radical planning*, and other models for social learning and communicative action, all generated in the United States, deal with addressing basic human values (equity, justice, sustainability) and interests, especially of the poor and the weak. These models, with their specific methods and tools, today retain a certain importance as they are often used by non-profit organisations (community work, action groups) and NGOs (Greenpeace, Amnesty International, etc.). In many UN programmes and practices, too, the tools of these traditions of 'social learning' form the cornerstone of the techniques employed for 'identifying problems and priorities, setting

goals, exercising legal rights, determining service standards, mobilising resources and implementing policies, programmes and projects.' However, the basic aim of these traditions is not to influence daily policy but to change social and environmental conditions in the long term, mainly by social learning through 'action' and by creating 'movements' dealing with a clear objective.

In the 1980s, one could witness a retreat from planning fuelled not only by the neo-conservative and liberal disdain for planning, but also by post-modernist scepticism, both of which tended to view progress as something which, if it happens, cannot be planned [Healy 1997]. Instead, the focus was on the realisation of projects and not any more on 'plan making,' often only used as legal frames for development. A distinction can be made between two movements.

A first movement starts from the changing role of the public sector. The lack of public finances implies that more and more, the private sector, developers and investors bring with them market-led methods and techniques to influence urban development. What is interesting and very positive is the fact that this approach deals with opportunities and assets instead of merely with problems. It is a development-led approach instead of classic regulatory land-use planning. However, within this approach, the question remains if public interests and values are taken into account; in reality, most of the time they are not. If we look at the prevalent practices, urban and social improvement is often not an objective and neither is the need for a coherent urban policy. The main driving force remains profit-making. For politicians, this approach is seductive, not only politically and financially, but also because it delivers fast results.

According to several authors with architectural and urban planning backgrounds, the total mastering of urban development is simply not possible or even desirable. They advocate another kind of project-oriented approach based upon a detailed reading of the city, the potentialities of strategic and structuring places, and their characteristics and qualities. They maintain that the scale of regions and cities is too general and too abstract for 'action planning.' Such an approach aims at the development of a package of urban interrelated interventions — urban projects — and measures on different scales and levels. Although the implementation, quality and spatial orientation of this approach should be a characteristic of every planning effort, it is somewhat 'elitist' in nature and cannot solve the more fundamental issues faced by cities. It is an attractive model for politicians, architects and investors because it is in fact a project- and market-led approach founded upon feasibility, opportunity and quick realisation of projects. Promoters of this approach hope that such interventions will have a renewing and structural impact on city development and in many cases they do. Barcelona is possibly the best case illustrating this approach, using the 'pulsar' effect of the Olympics and of the political changes in Spain in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

This model, however, as well as other traditions, cannot respond adequately to the growing complexity and the increasing concern of rapid and apparently random development [Breheny 1994], [Kreukels 1980], the problems of poverty, fragmentation, the dramatic increase in interest in environmental issues (at all levels from the global to the local), the growing strength of the environmental movement, a re-emphasis on the need for long-term thinking and framing [Newman and

Thornley 1996], [Zonneveld and Faludi 1997], and the desire to return to a more realistic and effective method.

In the present context, all these approaches seem unfit and inadequate for tackling the global and local challenges that countries, regions and cities are facing today. Hence, in many countries, the need existed for a different type of planning that aims to intervene more directly, coherently and selectively in social reality and development [Albrechts 1999a].

The planning law of 1996 passed in Kenya is a direct consequence of this new understanding. By introducing a more dynamic planning system and planning tools (dynamic structure plans and action plans), it tries to address new challenges. The discussions held with the governor of Essaouira and the local adviser of the Programme proves they were fully aware of the limitations of the planning systems and approaches in Morocco. In Vinh, the centralist and hierarchical organisation of planning based upon master planning cannot give proper and qualitative responses to the rapid changes taking place in Vietnamese society.

Nevertheless, we should be modest enough to acknowledge that the impact of (spatial) planning will always be fairly limited. In reality, the influence of sectoral planning — certainly of the 'stronger' sectors such as infrastructure — is more substantial. Therefore, one should attempt to achieve a closer, more intensive cooperation between spatial and sectoral planning. Spatial planning, as an integrative discipline, can contribute towards improving people's lives and to achieving long-term sustainable development in a more energy- and resource-efficient manner.

STRATEGIC STRUCTURE PLANNING: WORKING TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Origin

Etymologically, strategic planning finds its origins in the military notion of 'strategy' or 'the activity of leading or organising an army as a general in order to win a fight and a war' [Needham 2000] or 'the art of using a fight within the scope of a war.' Within these definitions, two elements are important: one emphasises the achievement of a goal or objective while another stresses the use of an appropriate 'way' to reach that goal on the other; in other words, 'how to get from here to there.'

Often, the notion of 'strategic planning' is only used in relation to the first aspect. Many definitions emphasise only the 'long-term perspective' as a frame for development and neither the 'how' to realise it nor the measures and actions to do so. This is somehow understandable within the planning discipline given the hierarchical organisation of planning in many countries. Indeed, the elaboration of long-term perspectives is often the designated responsibility of the higher authority, while actual implementation is left for the lower tiers of authority. The LA21 Programme has kept the two components together as both visioning and realisation are considered to be essential aspects of planning.

Definition and characteristics

A review of planning literature and practice related to different fields such as the social sciences, policy analysis, business management — the origin of modern strategic and spatial planning — is both appropriate in the present context and relevant to the LA21 Programme.

Within this context, 'strategic planning' can be defined as a 'social process aimed at designing and realising an intended spatial development of a given area. Within this process, four sub-processes can be distinguished: one leading to the design of a dynamic and sustainable long-term perspective, a second dealing with daily policy, trouble-shooting and process-supporting actions, a third dealing with a decision-making process involving all possible actors, and last but not least, a process to empower people to better their living conditions and to participate in society' [Van den Broeck 1995]. This definition invariably borrows from different authors dealing with strategic planning (e.g. Patsy Healy, John M. Bryson, Barry Needham, and Andreas Faludi).

Louis Albrechts [1999] sums up the different characteristics of strategic planning based upon a review of the existing literature:

- it is focused on a limited number of strategic key issues
- it takes a critical view of the environment in terms of determining strengths and weaknesses in the context of opportunities and threats
- it studies the external trends and forces
- it identifies and gathers major stakeholders (public and private)
- it allows for a broad (multi-level governance) and diverse involvement during the planning process
- it designs plan-making structures and develops content, image and decision-making frameworks for influencing and managing spatial change
- it is concerned with new ideas and the processes that can propagate them, thus generating ways of understanding, ways of building agreements and ways of organising and mobilising for the purpose of exerting influence in different areas
- both in the long- and short-term, it is focused on decisions, actions, results and monitoring, feedback and revision

Needham [2000] sums up the arguments both for and against the establishment of a strategic plan. He states that if the desire is to take concrete action, to change things, and to find 'good' solutions, then one should proceed to formulate a strategic plan. Additionally, one should do so if one wants to win support from people, to motivate them to act, to save money and to be both efficient and effective. His main argument against the creation of such a plan concerns the weakness of the responsible authority, the institutional structure and organisation, the absence of an active private sector and the lack of capacity of the planning services. Bryson too states that failure to formulate a strategic plan is primarily due to the lack of support and the necessary political will on the part of policy-makers. In all the cities of the LA21 Programme there was a serious lack of capacity. In Nakuru, for instance, the need for a planning unit was accepted from the beginning, but it seemed to be impos-

sible to find and keep capable officers. In Essaouira, the situation was even worse. At the highest municipal level, the political will was absent and it was in fact the province that took the lead in the Programme. In Vinh, Vietnam, "still many fundamental issues are decided and directed top-down. The public administration has not been reformed comprehensively and it is still characterised by natures of an administration system led by the centrally planned mechanism. It is a slow process and it cannot keep pace with the overall renovation process. The Party's policies and Government's commitments on decentralisation and 'grassroots democracy' are available 'in principle,' but the central commitment is not strong enough to interpret them into actual results. And in terms of economic and social guidance, the response of the Government is based on quantity, rather than on liveability or quality" [Belpaire 2003:151]. In the Programme, capacity building was an important issue but due to the circumstances, lack of will or absence of qualified people, the effects are restricted.

PRINCIPLES OF SSP

Recognition of space as an integrating framework

By and large, sectoral issues are taken as the entry-point for planning processes. This is understandable as the need for basic services — water, sewerage, housing, road infrastructure, business and industrial areas — remains a primary concern for most people. It is an issue that people are willing to talk about, which is why 'participatory' processes often start with discussions about sectoral needs and their related priorities. It is also understandable as most governments are organised in a hierarchical, sectoral way with ministries and their departments dealing with the development of sectoral programmes and their realisation. In the minds of many people, even spatial planners, a spatial plan is the (co-ordinated) sum of all these needs translated into land use, very often representing a grey compromise between various interests. Even most research is oriented towards the deduction and programming of sectoral needs.

However, while spatial planning has to deal with the spatial needs of society and their programmatic realisation, the pursuit of spatial quality involves much more and should remain the main objective of planners. Indeed, housing, infrastructure, and business areas are located somewhere in a space with its own identity, name, specific characteristics, fabric and form. Space is the framework for social, cultural, economic and ecological artefacts and activities, wherein their *relationships* will be materialised. For example, the relationship between park, crater and city in Nakuru or between port, *medina* and dunes in Essaouira or between

fig. 6.1 Nakuru: park edge project, see chapter 2.

the rivers, sea, and productive paddy fields in Vinh is impor-
tant. In our minds, 'space' should be the entry-point, the
focus, for spatial planning because of its integrative rela-
tional potentialities (see chapter five). This implies the struc-
ture of space, seen as the expression of relationships, and
the design of space as their form are key mediums for spa-
tial quality and for sustainable development [Esho 2003; Van
den Broeck 1995]. This is the reason for calling this particu-
lar approach not only strategic, but also 'structure' planning.

The 'intended structure,' based on a detailed reading of
the city to pinpoint the key issues and a vision for its future
development, expresses the way the various parts and
components of the city should be related to each other. For
instance, how can the area between the national park in
Nakuru function as an interface, a communicative space,
between the park and the city instead of merely being a
backyard along a fence. And how can this area not only
function as a physical barrier but also a psychological one
(fig. 6.1). Similarly, in Essaouira the challenge was to create
an urban park that simultaneously protected the dunes and
created a new front for the city (fig. 6.2). In Vinh, a symbio-
sis between the liquid landscapes was sought, addressing
issues of productivity, flooding and urban sprawl (fig. 6.3).

fig. 6.2 Essaouira: urban park project,
see chapter 3.

**Focus on selectivity and
specificity against comprehensiveness**
We have already mentioned the need for a more action-ori-
ented and realistic approach starting with an acceptance of
the scarcity of means and resources (time, money, human
resources), but also with an acknowledgement of the exist-
ing strengths and opportunities, urgency of issues, struc-
ture of power in the area and possibility for cooperation
between actors. This means that when starting a process,
the field should be 'surveyed,' but surveyed here means only
identifying key issues with all important actors for a partic-
ular area. Key issues can be defined as 'coming between
people and their sleep.' It is an issue for which different
feasible solutions can be found and implemented [Bryson
1995]. All aspects influencing feasibility have to be taken

fig. 6.3 Vinh: Green City vision, see chapter 4.

into account: financial means but also the existence of social support or the potential for gaining it. A key issue is strategic and structural and can function as a catalyst for solving other issues. A key issue is also specific because it should reflect reality in order to get people interested and involved. Sometimes, this can be problematic because people are not always interested in non-sectoral spatial issues. Techniques to define key issues include the reading of the city, the well-known Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis (SWOT), and Values, Visions, Interests and Power Structures analysis (VVIP), all of which can be part of the survey to better identify realistic possibilities for planning and intervention.

In line with international developments and the acceptance of a less comprehensive and more realistic development-led approach based on strategic planning, a difference between three types of activities for planning institutions on each policy level can be recognised:

- The development and design of a very selective generic policy which is a framework supporting the 'regulatory' practices and which also contains a programme for action
- The development and design of specific policies for specific strategic areas
- The development of strategic projects (see chapter seven) which are within the generic framework considered as necessary to achieve a sustainable and qualitative spatial development

From this perspective, the present 'Strategic Structure Plan' for Nakuru remains too comprehensive and lacks selectivity, specificity and a direct relationship with resources and budget. Analysing the plan, it is obvious the 'priorities' mentioned will surpass the resources of the city even within the most optimistic scenario. Another important principle of strategic planning is its 'participatory or more collaborative' character (see chapter nine).

A METHODOLOGY: THE THREE-TRACK PROCESS

The LA21 Programme adopted the three-track process based on a Strategic Structure Planning (SSP) approach as its main operative tool. Analysing the cities, it can be observed that the principles of the methodology — initially a three-track process — are the same in the different cities but the process structure is very different. Indeed, the way a process structure is designed depends upon the specific circumstances and the context, which was totally different in each of the participating cities: the social, political and legal context, the historical, spatial, judicial and planning context, the key issues, the assets, and the actors.

The methodology implemented was based on the above-mentioned definition and principles and on previous experiences by members of the Consortium in different cities and circumstances (Jef Van den Broeck, Filiep Decorte, Bruno De Meulder, André Loeckx, Kelly Shannon, Han Verschure, etc.) and on the study of other cases in different countries [Healy et. al. 1997; Bryson 1995].

A three-track process: a continuous process of envisioning

The rationale for the division into three working tracks lies in the different objectives and character of the planning activities as well as in the different and complementary skills to be used in the process. The three tracks, which can be seen as sub-processes (fig. 6.4), are as follows:
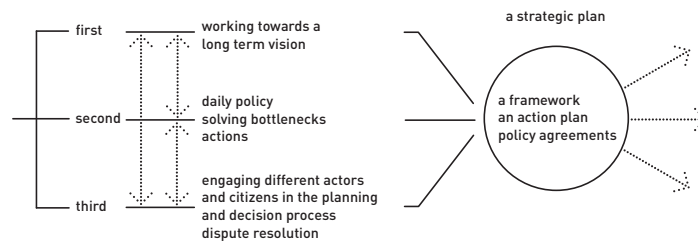
fig. 6.4 The three-track process

- A working track leading to a long-term framework with a vision of the intended development of the city, spatial concepts, a long-term programme, and a short-term action plan
- A second track to 'manage' everyday life, resolve conflicts, score 'goals' and create trust by solving problems, making use of opportunities through the implementation of actions and projects of an urgent and strategic nature in the short-term
- A third track for engaging different actors in the co-production, planning and decision-making

The proposed process should certainly not be viewed as a linear process. The different cases and experiences, collected from all over the world during the last decades, prove there is no prefabricated process model — no cookbook — for the design of a proper strategy and process structure that can be implemented in every situation and certainly not in complex cases such as bigger cities. Objectives, circumstances, means, actors, and spatial context determine the strategy and the process structure adopted.

It was clear that the new planning law in Kenya [1996] had to be the framework for starting the process in Nakuru and for defining its objectives. The law introduced new planning instruments: a 'structure plan' combined with 'action plans' of varying nature which would act as tools to implement the structure plan. Another interesting aspect of the law expressed the need for a participatory and decentralised approach giving more responsibility to local authorities. Within this context it was only natural to avail of this opportunity — the need for a legal structure plan — accepted by all parties concerned, as the entry-point for the process. It created the opportunity to develop a new type of plan with a new content for use as a model for other cities. At the same time, it ensured cooperation of all the different levels of planning. Of course, the other objective of the approach — the need for visible actions — was not forgotten. A final argument for focusing on the elaboration of a structure plan was the need for a long-term sustainable vision to tackle the very rapid and fragmented development
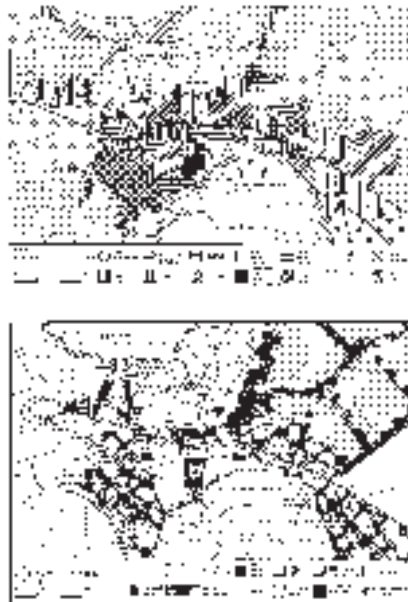
fig. 6.5 Nakuru: existing spatial structure of strategic structure plan and intended spatial structure of strategic structure plan, see chapter 2.

fig. 6.6 The Quang Trung pilot project rehabilitated half of the centrally located B3 block, see chapter 4.

of the city (fig. 6.5).

The circumstances in Essaouira were totally different: some of the most urgent problems there included the deterioration of the *medina* and *mellah*, the pressure exerted on the valuable environs of the existing compact city by (official) developers capitalising on the need for housing and the attractiveness of the city for tourists, the lack of interest in the conservation of natural assets, and commercial pressures resulting from the value of the forestry industry, an important generator of local employment. The political context, as acknowledged by the governor of the province, made direct intervention necessary. One could say there was a 'turning point' in the development of the city where a choice could be made for either a qualitative development or a speculative one, both alternatives having their own local and national supporters. A favourable circumstance was the ongoing revision of the master plan (SDAU, *Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme*) by the central government. Despite being a rather passive document, it nonetheless sustained the discourses on the future of the city and created a legal context for intended concepts — such as the urban park — and for sustainable interventions (restoration of the wall) in the city.

Although in Vietnam a principle of 'democratic centralism' is governing public organisation and functions, efforts at decentralisation have gained strength, particularly since 1996. Nonetheless, master plans continue to be drawn up at the central government level by the Ministry of Construction.

Starting at the local level with a fundamental rethinking of a vision for Vinh City was not possible, but identifying gaps between the master plan and 'reality-on-the-ground' was a good starting point for discussions. So were the important renovation needs related to the Quang Trung housing estate and issues such as solid waste removal. The immediacy of renovation for Quang Trung was turned into an opportunity for elaborating entire urban project proposals for the whole strategically located urban area (fig. 6.6). This also allowed for a broader consultation with resident representatives, local and provincial authorities and specialised ministries.

Some authors advocate taking different successive steps in a management process [Teisman 2000]. Bryson and Alston, in their interesting manual "Creating and implementing your strategic plan," define the steps for a strategic change cycle, but emphasise that in practice a process will be 'typically iterative' [Bryson 1995; Bryson Alston 2001; Van den Broeck 1994]. A process will not always 'begin at the so-called logical beginning' as illustrated in the cases of Nakuru, Essaouira and Vinh.

Conceptually, a process is always a kind of trial and error, a combination of a deductive and an inductive approach, of long-term envisioning and short-term action, resolving conflicts and problem-solving, goal-setting and developing solutions, often within a rather chaotic but constantly structured relationship. Indeed, the behaviour of people and organisations is unpredictable [Innes et al 2000] in a way that a clear and linear process is simply neither feasible nor possible.

There is another important aspect in relation to process design and management. In this kind of unpredictable and fitful process, the focus often shifts from the content — a good project — to the process. Often, process design and management is seen as an activity independent of the content. Possibly this point of view is a result of the way policy analysts and planners perceive reality. For them, the focus of this planning tradition is the 'search for ways of making public administration more efficient and effective' [Healy 1997b]. In the LA21 process, sustainable development and, specifically, spatial quality were the ultimate objectives of each process, which of course should be as efficient and effective as possible. The content will and should always influence the design of a process, the object and the succession of its various phases and the nature of the result. Often, it is apparent in a decision-making process that the objective is limited to reaching a consensus between actors, which often results in grey, undefined solutions.

In any case, through an analysis of various processes, we can define some essential building blocks always present in any LA21 process but not necessarily in a linear way. However, these are always associated with the elements of the three tracks:
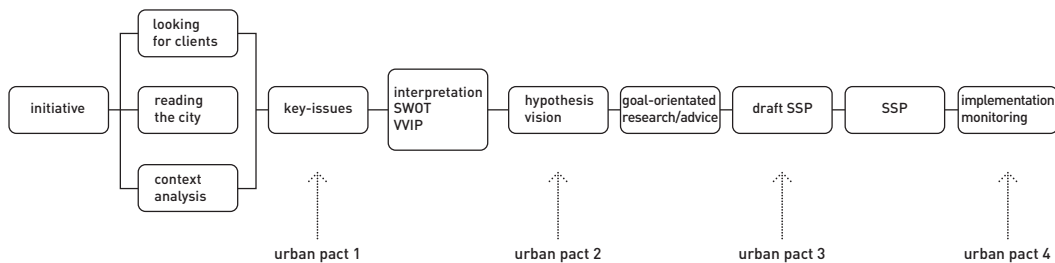
fig. 6.7 Possible components of the first-track process.

- Initiation of the process by an interested actor aiming to bring an issue or issues on the agenda; in the LA21 Programme, the main initiators were key local actors involved (the town clerk in Nakuru, the Provincial Governor in Essaouira, etc.) who saw the potential offered by the possible support of UN-HABITAT and the Belgian Consortium to initiate a process of change.

- A starting phase where the initiator mobilises key actors and tries to define key common issues based on a spatial, social, economic and political analysis of the city and resulting in an agreement about the objectives, the project design, the financing of the process, and possibly also the realisation of some actions in order to 'score' as soon as possible. At times it was useful to formulate a general development perspective as a hypothesis based upon existing available knowledge as a means to generate fundamental discussions about the intended future of the city and to specify the objectives of the process (fig. 6.7).

Soon after the first workshops were held in Nakuru and Essaouira, visions and related spatial concepts were developed (chapters two and three) as a hypothesis taking into account existing knowledge and the visions of the different actors.

- A planning and decision-making phase, exploring the different key issues, the dynamics and trends, weaknesses, strengths and opportunities, the basic values and visions of the populations, the interests of stakeholders and the structure of power in the area with a desired outcome of possible alliances. During this phase, solutions are designed in an interactive, collaborative way with 'mature actions' intended to be realised for the benefit of different stakeholders. Last, but not least, this phase resulted in the elaboration of the strategic plan according to financial and human resources.
- A final commitment-building phase, facilitating implementation, monitoring, evaluation and further continuation of the process and Programme. Here, the programme of actions and the intention of different stakeholders to participate in realising them was concretised in a binding commitment on a limited package of short-term actions. Referred to in the LA21 Programme as a 'Commitment Package,' they were further translated into policy agreements or 'Urban Pacts,' or what could be considered as written contracts between the different actors. The 'Pact,' as it is often called, is a statement of community involvement setting out a shared commitment for implementation. It gives a guarantee of the results because responsibilities are consensual and means are fixed in the different budgets of the stakeholders, public and private [Van den Broeck 1995].

Key components of a strategic structure plan
What will be the result, the product of such a process? Certainly not a 'blueprint master plan nor a land-use plan,' but an action plan with the following components:

- A dynamic and indicative framework including a vision, spatial concepts and policy goals for the development of the city as well as a long-term programme. This programme is not an action plan, but serves to make the relatively abstract vision, concepts and goals more concrete. Visioning or framing is "a way of selecting, organising, interpreting and making sense of a complex reality so as to provide guideposts for knowing, analysing, persuading and acting. It is a perspective from which an amorphous, ill-defined problematic situation can be made sense of and acted upon"

[Zonneveld and Faludi 1997:7]. Frameworks make long-term planning possible and serve to motivate and encourage people who definitely need a perspective. Visions and concepts create an image of a dynamic future and give meaning to isolated issues and measures and projects.

- A binding commitment package of short-term interrelated actions and measures. Obviously this part is the most tangible for people and, in principle, the subject of hard discussion and negotiation. In the LA21 Programme the content of the package was directly related to the availability of resources and, as such, to the budget of the city.
- A set of policy agreements or arrangements (called an Urban Pact) linking and binding the actors. A policy agreement is perceived as a result agreement, a binding contract between committing actors (then partners) stipulating responsibilities and project financing.

Critical reflection: adding a fourth track

Analysing the processes in the Programme cities and from experiences in other cities, it can be concluded that it is certainly possible to involve the various actors intensively in planning processes. The settings created to guide the project in the different cities together with the tools employed for better cooperation and collaboration, such as 'workshopping,' always yielded interesting results, both quantitatively (in terms of the number of participants) and qualitatively (in terms of the visions and solutions generated). However when one looks at the kind of actors involved in these processes, it becomes apparent that for various reasons, specific groups, not just the weaker ones, and the broader public are missing from the 'arena.' Therefore, there is a need to add a 'fourth track' to the approach to achieve a more permanent process involving these citizens in order to build mutual understanding and trust, empower them, and raise their social and intellectual capacity [Forester 1989; Innes 1995; Friedman 1992; Healy 1997; Albrechts 2002; Van den Broeck 1996] (fig. 6.8). However, it is difficult to involve these groups directly into planning processes which have a limited time-

fig. 6.8 The fourth track and its process components.
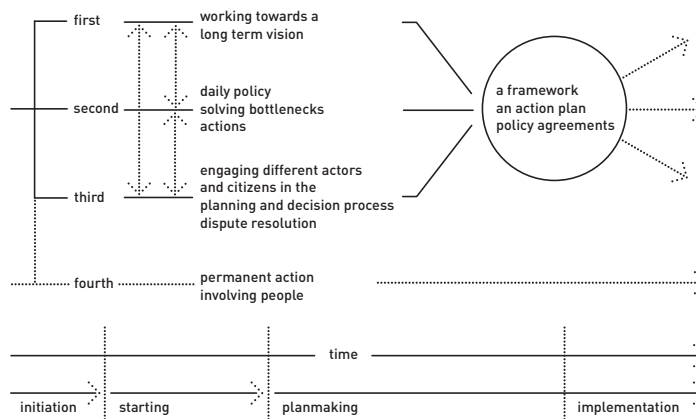
frame. The associations and *amicales* in Essaouira are examples of such groups and possibly even the ZDC (Zonal Development Committees in Nakuru). Their activities are very diverse but have an important influence on the engagement of people. All over the world, an awareness of this situation is growing and already several structural initiatives have been taken beyond the mere experimental level in order to include people into the planning and decision-making process, perhaps not directly, but certainly in a more effective and inclusive manner. The activities along the fourth track can be of a very different nature, but often have the character of 'events' dealing with local issues and local spaces and places. Of course these activities are not expected to change the prevailing power dynamics and structures in cities, but these can possibly influence them (see chapter ten).

CONCLUSION

Planners and designers like to believe in the notion that 'plans' can change reality. From a historical point of view and from experience, one should be aware that people constitute the crucial factor in planning. The LA21 process stressed that given the present circumstances, and taking into account the local context, cooperation between all actors, both public and private, and including the population at large are essential for decision-making, action and change. Commitment packages and policy agreements are tools for the co-production of policy and its implementation, as its eventual acceptance requires discussion and negotiation about 'what to do and how to do it.' In practice, reaching an agreement is not as straightforward as it would seem, as was apparent from experiences in the different cities. For instance, in Nakuru the 'Structure Plan' was accepted, but without a short-term action plan or any agreements on its implementation. A possible strategy for dealing with this reality could be to delay the full acceptance of the action plan and to start with some of the actors and the implementation of those elements of the Programme for which both an agreement and resources exist. Also, in other cases, politically, the decision about 'what to do now' can be extremely difficult, certainly when the choice is not related to the budget. 'Defining priorities' is often seen by planners as a necessary activity and many techniques are developed to enable this, but in our experience, this is an impossible job. For the different actors involved, their self-interests are of paramount importance and an abstract discussion cannot build a consensus. A commitment seems possible only by including (participatory: engaging and committing all actors) budgeting and the limiting of the action plans in the negotiations, as well as by a stipulation of the responsibilities for the implementation of the action plan. However, mere action plans and commitment packages are not enough. A systematic monitoring mechanism should be established to guide the implementation and the planning and decision-making process, which must remain a continuous activity. This has unfortunately not been one of the LA21 Programme's strong points.

'How to do it' is important and the quality of a process can have an important influence on the quality of the 'what,' but it remains that the 'what to do' in order to create a sustainable future remains the core task planners and designers have a fundamental responsibility to address.

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A Project
of Projects

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During the past decades, with the growing complexity of our cities, changing urban situations, dramatic shifts in development conditions and distorting transformations in society, it has become clear that the traditions of all-encompassing master planning and static land-use planning are incapable of steering sustainable development. Nevertheless, in many contexts worldwide, planning systems in place remain in line with these approaches — some stubbornly confident in their value and others merely out of tradition. In most cases though, confusion and doubt prevail on the urban planning scene. Yet traditional land-use planning prevails more by lack of alternatives than by conviction or inertia of legislation. At the same time, however, there are brave attempts to adapt new urban planning methods and tools to address the contemporary urban condition. Across the globe, experiments have followed different directions. The LA21 process in Essaouira, Nakuru and Vinh distinguished itself through its co-productive interplay of vision formulation and strategic urban projects.

TWO REGISTERS, THREE TRACKS AND A KEY

Since 'by accident' all LA21 cities at the start of the Programme were involved in a process of evaluating and revising their master plan (as requested by official procedures), the LA21 Programme began with a discussion of the on-going planning process. In all three cases, the master planning tradition was the prevailing legal planning tool and review of its weaknesses and strengths, adequacy and significance was a meaningful first step towards initiating new approaches. A common concern in all three cities was the comprehensive, inflexible character of the master plan, which disconnected the planning effort from urban reality. On the other hand, the image of the urban future underlying the master plan often was very conventional and not at all mobilising. Through the uniting of local and global expertise and knowledge, the Programme explored and tested a more strategic and innovative form of combining long-term stimulating visions with strategic urban projects. It can be stated from the outset that only in Nakuru did a comprehensive new approach prevail — and the legal mechanism for planning was changed. Nonetheless, the approach adopted in various degrees in the cities is grounded in two very different and not often combined sources. On the one hand, it was largely inspired by three decades of achievements in strategic structure planning (see chapter six). On the other hand, it was informed and complemented by a series of younger, but promising, experiences over the last 15 years with urban design projects (for example, Masboungi 2002).

Given this double origin, it is no wonder that the approach advocated by the LA21 Programme employs two registers. First, vision formulation (general concept development) serves as an appealing frame of reference that steers urban development. Visions generate a general, open and flexible development strategy and frame social commitments which strive to enlarge the civic realm, to enrich the urban culture and create new, sustainable urban space; they are premised upon attractive long-term perspectives and the structuring of the city as a whole. Visions strive to fulfil fundamental urban planning goals (sustainable development, urban coherence, qualitative density, urban culture, diversity, solidarity and democracy). The abstraction of visions (allowing for adaptation to

evolving circumstances, yet protecting non-negotiable, consensually agreed-upon principles) are made concrete through the second register, which is the development of strategic actions and projects to test and realise components of the visions. Actions can be programmes, interventions and projects of all kinds and strategic urban projects play a key role within this register. Strategic actions and projects confront visions with a specific context or the realities of urban life and development: a real site, a concrete problematic, actual programmes, limited resources, actors in flesh and blood with tangible interests and legitimate (or other) concerns. The time perspective here is short to medium-term and the scope is limited: a specific node, a crucial place, a special quarter, a problematic area, or a vexed question. Their structural position accounts for their leverage and inevitable spin-off effects. In addition, the mediating quality of such projects rests in the fact that they engage actors, often with diverging agendas, to strive towards a workable synthesis, frequently in previously contested territories. As such, these projects provide a real life 'learning-by-doing' experience in co-producing the city. Finally, the visibility of such projects is such that they do not disappear in the anonymous grey fabric of the city — their feasibility and ambition strengthens and eventually revises the long-term vision. The Spanish urbanist Joan Busquets claims these two interesting registers — visions and actions — can together be understood as a (urban) project of projects [Busquets 2000].

Between these two registers, strategic structure planning activates a third track, that of communication or debate. Debate stands for combined action. After all, the contemporary city and the urban project alike are a complex combination of a wide variety of elements, aspects and dimensions and necessarily a co-production that implies broad social support and the involvement of very different actors (including inhabitants and users). In other words, intensive communication is a condition *sine qua non*. But, in the end, debate is also a medium of harmony and of ensemble that, as in the performance of music, brings together different melody lines and instruments and guides different notes of the discursive discourse into synergy. The qualification of space (see chapter five) through design is the key to the interplay between the two registers and three tracks.

INTERPLAY(S) OF VISIONS AND ACTIONS

As is clear from the case study cities, the relation between action and vision, between the structure plan and strategic urban project, is neither hierarchical nor need be understood as a succession of linear phases. In reality, these two registers — with their different scales and time-frames — are in continuous interaction. For example, in Essaouira the proposed series of urban projects for the *medina* surroundings (fig. 7.1) — for *Bab Doukkala*, *Hôtel des Iles* and *Bab Marrakech* — would simultaneously strengthen and make tangible the visions of a compact city confined within its walls (fig. 7.2) and a city of hospitality and heritage (fig. 7.3), experienced in the multiple uses of the void surrounding the *medina* wall. Through design research on the surroundings of the *medina* wall, the abstract visions were refined, amended, polished, and revised; above all, they were substantiated. Heritage was no longer a conceptual notion, but a tangible reality which has, amongst other things,
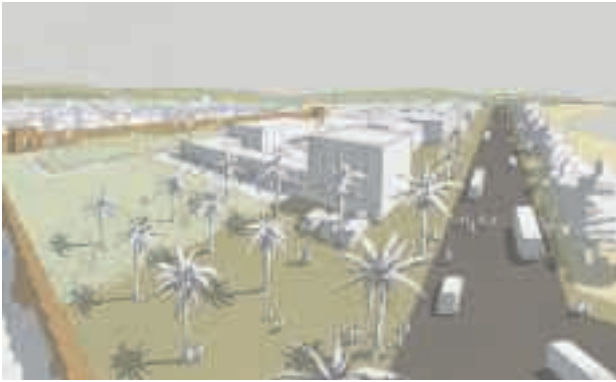
fig. 7.1 Essaouira: Surroundings of *medina* wall project, see chapter 3.

fig. 7.2 Essaouira: Compact City vision.

fig. 7.3 Essaouira: Heritage City vision.

fig. 7.4 Nakuru: Park-edge project, see chapter 2.
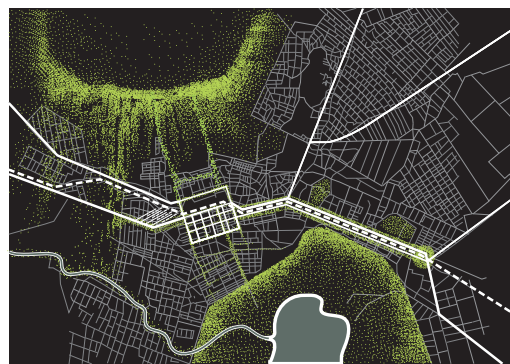

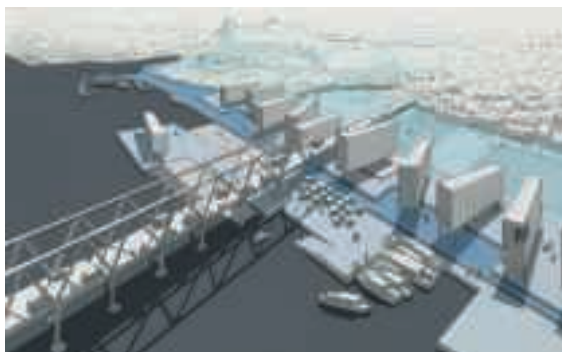**fig. 7.5** Nakuru: Eco-City vision.

fig. 7.6 Vinh: Lam Riverfront project, see chapter 4.

fig. 7.7 Vinh: River City vision.

to do with a concrete historical wall and a colonial heritage of separation. Most importantly, however, the elaboration of projects clarified and qualitatively changed the manner in which these specific and concrete elements influence urban experiences (appropriation, representation, etc.), both in the practices of daily life (children playing in the shadow of the wall, women gathering at a place) and in the more celebratory and unique moments of urban life (ceremonies or festivities). Finally, the vision substantiated by images and life experiences was able to frame design research in its attempts to mediate between particular needs — such as the request of the hotel to expand — and the collective cultural and social interests to maintain and improve the unbuilt space surrounding the wall.

In Nakuru, the concrete problematic of the dilemma between landscape and urbanity (visible in the thresholds, fence, water pollution, waste, etc.) led to the proposal of an edge park (fig. 7.4) as mediator between nature and city, between the national park and the adjacent neighbourhoods. In turn, this project contributed to and substantiated the vision of Nakuru as an eco-city (fig. 7.5). In Vinh, the proposed development of the Lam (fig. 7.6) and Vinh riverfronts expanded the vision of a river city (fig. 7.7) to embody an ecological component, whereby the city could function as a sponge (to deal with the issue of flooding) and strengthen the vision of a green city, with interconnected public open spaces.

In short, the iterative interaction of visions and actions balances conceptual exploration alternates with concrete investigation, intuition with substance, intellectual with practical research, and poetic force with rational argument. Visions and actions maintain a dialectical relation, oscillating between thesis and antithesis, crystallising in a (temporary) synthesis of both vision and actions. Visions become layered, enriched and substantiated while, at the same time, remaining open-ended, providing perspective and able to steer and direct — but not dictate — future investigations and actions. Visions progress through a series of temporary and ever-evolving syntheses as new actions are developed. Concrete strategic urban projects and actions unite and canalise different contested urban forces and make more apparent the visions. In their conception, they must also be understood as embodying a certain degree of openness, expressed in the selectivity of its strong lines that represent its essence, but, at the same time, unveil its adaptability and flexibility. As such, the interplay of vision and projects is a form of planning that stands far away from the normative and abstract master plan.

KEY ROLE OF STRATEGIC URBAN PROJECTS

In the development of the city, strategic urban projects play a key role. By definition, an action and therefore a project changes something and (re)organises discontinuities. Strategic projects have lasting effects that alleviate urban needs, deal with a problematic and are collectively experienced and evaluated. This is what projects do. They realise things — small and large — concretely. It must be noted, however, that not every project is a *strategic* urban project. Strategic urban projects are distinguished by their capacity to change the urban reality in three ways.

First is their structural impact and leverage effect. Strategic urban projects do not merely make a difference — they make a *fundamental* difference. They turn the tide, in a lasting way, of the fun-

damental characteristics of a city. In Vinh, this is evident in the project for the revitalisation of the Quang Trung Housing Estate. The project would not only substantially and directly change the living environment for its thousands of residents, but more importantly, it would re-qualify the central urban spine of the city, in turn celebrating its monumentality, collective realm and historic symbolism (fig. 7.8). The proposal for the edge park in Nakuru (fig. 7.9) and urban park in Essaouira (fig. 7.10) are other obvious examples. These projects turn the rejected backsides of their respective cities into attractive urban fronts by fundamentally altering the relationship of city and nature; these park projects organise a shift in the global perception, functioning and structure of the city. In all three cases, although these strategic projects deal with a limited and specific part of the city, they impact the whole. The leverage effect has to do with the multiplier a project possesses, a kind of projective catalyst. To stay with the same examples, in Vinh the upgrading of open space and redefinition of the corridor along National Highway No. 1 (the western edge of the Quang Trung Estate) would stimulate similar improvements in the immediate surroundings. The proposed parks of Nakuru and Essaouira would radically alter the adjacent urban fabric, stimulating upgrading, renovation and transformation through the introduction of better housing and the reversal of the orientation of whole neighbourhoods, the provision of public space and the attraction of activities. In addition, the parks' edges implicitly encourage a host of economic functions including recreational and tourism facilities and urban agriculture.

Secondly, strategic projects have the capacity to link, mediate and organise multiple actions and actor(s). Their spatial role in mediation stems from the numerous gaps and anomalies of the built environment, including missing or divided urban functions and the coexistence of contradictory or opposing elements (see chapter five). In the Vinh estate, the existing appropriation by inhabitants of the open space and do-it-yourself extensions of housing units impede not only on the public realm, but also threaten the safety of individuals (since extensions are often precariously
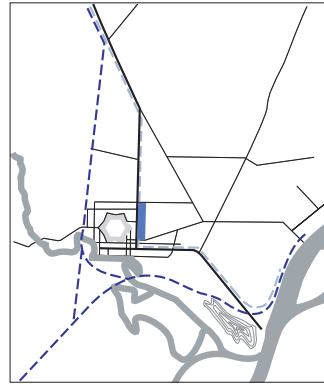
fig. 7.8 Vinh: Strategic location of Quang Trung Housing Estate, see chapter 4.

fig. 7.9 Nakuru: Park-edge project, see chapter 2.

fig. 7.10 Essaouira: urban park edge project, see chapter 3.

built). The proposal reorganises the collective space as a patchwork of activity areas structured by a central, connective spine and cohesively expands the apartment blocks — expanding individual units and creating new fronts with public spaces and better accommodated private uses at the ground floor. On the overall urban scale, the proposed parks of Nakuru and Essaouira mediate between city and nature achieving a hybrid, commonly shared third term — an urban park. Another example of the mediating quality of the strategic project on the urban scale is the accommodation of the surroundings of the *medina* in Essaouira. It introduces a highly differentiated and speculative open space in between the urban fabric of the *medina* and the city *extra muros*. It does not simply fill the gap left by urban histories — as paradigms to reconstruct cities would advocate — but, on the contrary, mediates by articulating and accentuating the interruption and simultaneously inverting its meaning. Indeed, the project transcends separation, inherited from the colonial era, and transforms the *zone neutre*, the 'non-space' of distance and defence, into a public realm that not only facilitates appropriation and exchange, but also organises a dialogue between different urban tissues. In short,

fig. 7.11 Nakuru: Bus park project, see chapter 2.

it mediates difference, the essence of urbanity. As well, strategic projects mediate by organising links and creating synergies, which consequently implies that strategic urban projects are multi-dimensional and combine spatial aspects with social, cultural and economic components addressing very different stakeholders, sectors and authorities. An example of this is the bus park project in Nakuru (fig. 7.11) in which spatial reorganisation is employed to safeguard and strengthen the synergies between the *transferium* function and the market activity of the area.

The third qualifier of a strategic urban project concerns feasibility, visibility and innovation. Strategic urban projects are feasible projects and this aspect radically differentiates them from the modern master plan. The feasibility of strategic projects is evidently linked with their medium-term perspective and the intermediate scale. However, it also necessitates their well-embeddedness within the existing policy sectors and their use of realistic estimates of development potentials and the capacity of a city. Intensive interaction during the planning process with all involved actors and stakeholders speaks for itself and is indeed a pre-condition. At the same time, creativity and innovation are necessary to transcend the grey and unconvincing compromises which often result from rounds of consultation and participation. The city produces grey by itself. Strategic urban projects are of no use if they only add to the greyness of the city. On the contrary, strategic urban projects must make a *fundamental difference* and in that sense they are usually very visible. They change the face and perception of the city. Strategic urban projects make a difference; they are indicators of future development — producers of identity. They support and strengthen the identity of the city and its inhabitants. This characteristic necessitates considerable design skills and aesthetic sensibilities, qualities that are often neglected in urban development initiatives.

THE INEVITABLE NECESSITY OF URBAN DESIGN

The strategic urban project, as has become clear, sounds almost like a mission impossible. It has to comply with an entire repertoire of difficult criteria. It has to be structural, multi-dimensional, visible, innovative and beautiful. The recent developments in the design discipline offer some necessary help. The reinvention and resurrection of urban design over the past 15 to 20 years has reinvigorated the field by reformulating the roles and methods of urban design. Experiments and projects in a wide range of contexts and situations have demonstrated the essential role of urban design — proved through the development of strategic urban projects. The fact that urban design literally contributes to shaping the city is evident — it deals with forms, the quality of urban space and built form. At the same time, there are a series of other tasks for urban design that are perhaps less visible, but by no means less important. Urban design is more inclusive than design of objects as such. Urban design is investigative and can be termed 'design by research,' which, amongst other things, includes the acquisition and use of local social knowledge by communication and participation. Urban design is also a tool for negotiation towards a workable synthesis of conflicting realities (see chapter five). Design helps in the formation of agreements and becomes, in some instances, a legal instrument (see chapter six). Thus, urban design is an essential component that steers the entire development process of strategic urban projects.

Urban design is premised upon a fundamental rethinking of the discipline of urbanism following the 'crisis' of modernist planning methods in the post-war welfare state and various self-critical reflections that occurred amongst professionals in the 1970s and 1980s. Unlike the modernist master plan, urban design, in general, and the strategic urban project, in particular, are not considered final. On the contrary, they are seen as intermediate steps, mediums that explore the potential of urban sites, allows for the achievement of qualitative consensus, and safeguards and accentuates existing spatial qualities. They are structured in a manner by which the essential principles and concepts — derived from the specific reading and opportunities of sites — are not lost throughout the long and complicated development process, while also allowing for flexibility to deal with changing circumstances.

Urban design, vision-making and strategic urban projects start as 'designerly' research (see chapter five). The process is initiated by a penetrating reading of the site, in which its history, characteristics, the structural grounding of the site in the urban morphology and the problems and opportunities of the given urban site are analysed. Designerly research explores the identity of the study area and creatively speculates upon the possibilities to reorganise or develop the site with qualitative urban spaces and urban activities. A variety of fields of knowledge are deployed in this analysis: urban history and morpho-typology, urban ecology and landscape, societal issues, such as the power game of decision-making or processes of inclusion and exclusion, architecture and urbanism, and, last but not least, local social knowledge concerning daily life in particular places. From the initial stages, architectural knowledge is present as a way to question the existing realities and spatial structures and the desired interplay between future urban space and urban functioning.

Each specific urban condition of the case study cities saddles them with constraints, but these historically produced conditions also contain the cities' potential. Both constraints and potentials have spatial dimensions and spatial impacts. They often are complex, contradictory, poverty-ridden, and full of contestation and poorly identified, if not totally neglected. As such, they are unsuitable for development initiatives. Design research helps to sort things out, to reformulate issues, to select priorities and to deal with conflicts. This knowledge provides the material for the (re)formulation of visions and the elaboration of projects. The general visions as much as the strategic projects developed through the LA21 Programme therefore inscribe themselves in the spatial identity of cities and are generated from the inherent potentials. As already mentioned, this type of research work oscillates between analysis and synthesis, between vision and action, between intuition and rationality, between the global scale of the city and the concrete scale of a building, and between an existing and desired spatial structure.

NEGOTIATION BY DESIGN

Initial 'designerly' exploration results in a temporary synthesis, a spatial development proposal that combines contradictory concepts and requirements that only design can deliver. Such a proposal contains images, plans and sketches that are sufficiently concrete to be inviting, attractive and targeted to provide insight; they are at the same time precise enough to get detailed feedback and pre-evaluate feasibility and abstract enough to absorb suggestions and comments during debate without fundamental compromise. In this explorative phase, the urban design schemes thus function as eye-openers that unfold new potentials of sites and re-qualify the interest of possible actors. They are also sufficiently rooted in local reality and based on local social knowledge recognised and appropriated by the people for whom they are intended. All of the visions and strategic urban projects developed during the LA21 process have provided tangible bases upon which to debate and negotiate. The interactive and co-productive design process employed participation in a manner that overcame some of the weaknesses in other 'participatory' planning processes. The LA21 process must not be considered design by negotiation, but *negotiation by design*.

In design by negotiation, talking replaces design, the latter offering hardly more than the weak formulation of a pale verbal compromise between divergent and non-focused opinions. Negotiation by design allows for multiple dialogues between urbanists, policy makers, inhabitants and special interest groups, investors and stakeholders. Design as a medium of reflection and negotiation is not passive, but serves as an active and evolving instrument through which suggestions are absorbed, processed and incorporated, alternatives generated, and conflicts resolved. The art of urban design fundamentally lies in the maintenance of a productive dialogue achieved through a process of continual revision of visions and projects without sacrificing their essential qualities and characteristics while also strengthening their qualities, coherence and persuasiveness. The process described above is without doubt a complex one that requires professional management and great design

skills. Weak development proposals inevitably lead to 'grey' realities. At the same time, an inspired 'masterpiece,' which allows neither margin for negotiation nor design evolution, is equally unproductive for the process. In this respect, contemporary urban design distinguishes itself radically from the modern project and allies with the descriptive tradition in urbanism [Secchi 1992; Corboz 2001; Dehaene 2002; De Meulder and Dehaene 2004] or what Manuel de Sola Morales calls 'the other modern tradition' [1989]. The creative force and skilful use of the capacity of design to mediate have to proceed hand-in-hand through this process in order to be successful.

In Essaouira, for example, in general 'verbal' opinion, nobody considered the surroundings of the *medina* as a meaningful, interesting continuous space until plans and sketches demonstrated the latent value and quality of this former *zone neutre* and revealed its capacity to develop its present use so as to become an exceptional space that could host important activities for the city (i.e. the proposed conference centre and high quality commercial facilities, and the *Hôtel des Isles* with a conference centre). In Essaouira, Nakuru and Vinh, their respective dune-forest, immense national park and waterfronts were seen, in caricature, as immense voids, 'other' worlds unrelated to the day-to-day realities of the city. The existing edges of these cities were related to their respective prime natural landscapes as mere backsides. A major achievement of the urban design schemes (visions and strategic projects) developed during the LA21 Programme was the fact that 'normal' perceptions were inverted — the backsides were recognised as potential new fronts. Even though the implementation of these projects is in an embryonic phase, an important shift in attitude and perspective by all actors has occurred.

Another interesting example of tough negotiation by design was evident in the proposed scheme for the Nakuru bus park. In this case, the heated disputes over use and occupation of the ground surface between traders and dealers on the one side and transporters (*matatu*, buses, etc.) was resolved by a clever spatial re-arrangement which allowed the two to co-exist in a rationalised manner. LA21 Programme examples of this sort are endless since space allows for multiple use: and/and solutions are possible instead of the more difficult context of either/or.

REFERENCE PLANS
AND STRATEGIC URBAN PROJECTS

Though the step-by-step, negotiating process described above is undeniably complicated, the basis of agreement is eventually expressed by way of a reference plan — a drawing. Such a plan is neither a cocktail of individual interests, nor an uninteresting grey compromise, but a precise and engaging translation of a collective and coherent development vision with structural and strategic principles. The visions developed are translated into a reference plan with 'consensus' and therefore legitimacy. In the LA21 Programme, formal ratification by the different actors involved and an appropriate proclamation of its existence was recommended. It is in this instance that the first 'Urban Pact' (see chapter six) was made.

The reference plan then becomes the basis upon which concrete interventions and real execution plans and strategic urban projects are developed. Of course, in practice the process is evidently not linear, but as already stated an iterative process which constantly shifts between various scales, concerns, and priorities. Throughout this process, the three tracks (vision, action, co-production) discussed at the beginning of this chapter, repeat themselves. The design process organises the interplay between vision, project and co-production, while management of the design process further stimulates the interaction between co-production and the reference plan.

A KEY AND A HERO

Urban design is a powerful tool. It plays a key role in the formulation and realisation of strategic urban projects. It is a crowbar for innovation and a gate to unexpected solutions. It has the capacity to serve as a medium for negotiation and consequently leads to strong, stimulating and simultaneously open-ended plans, leaving margins for evolution and adaptation; contradictions can transcend into productive paradoxes.

While urban design is the 'key' to the strategic urban project, the 'hero' is urban space itself (see chapter 5). No matter how good an urban design might be, in the end it is merely addressing the endless capacity of and possibilities existing space offers, such as making use of the resourcefulness of space and the mediating capacity of space, Strategic urban projects deal with urban space and urbanity remaining, by definition, related to an urban place. Organisation, servicing and management of city form are consequently the main tasks for urban policy and fundamental dimensions for a vast majority of strategic urban projects. They are structured in a manner by which the essential principles and concepts — derived from the specifics of the context as well as related to an interpretation of sustainability — are not lost.

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Urban Development by Co-production

JEF VAN DEN BROECK, HAN VERSCHURE, LAWRENCE ESHO

The Localising Agenda 21 Programme (fig. 8.1) aimed at "the active engagement of Civil Society Organisations, as well as the broad-based participation of all people". The importance of involving civil society in governance, particularly at the local level is generally accepted [UN-HABITAT 1996]. Moreover, the Programme was founded on the belief that "Sustainable planning, including visioning, design, action, management and monitoring is only possible, feasible and acceptable through networking." In such a framework, all actors, public and private, are treated as equal and, consequently, an attempt is made to achieve a balance between private and collective interests [Van den Broeck 2002].

This chapter explains how citizens and groups in the LA21 Programme pilot cities were involved in Programme activities, particularly in debating their respective desired futures and in associated decision-making processes. First, we use the experiences of the LA21 Programme in the cities of Nakuru, Vinh and Essaouira to briefly illustrate the specific application of the concept of 'co-production' (a concept which is broader than participation and related to the new concept of governance) and to explore the effect it has had on planning frameworks and decision-making processes in these three contexts. For this purpose, we propose that readers refer to the timelines of each city
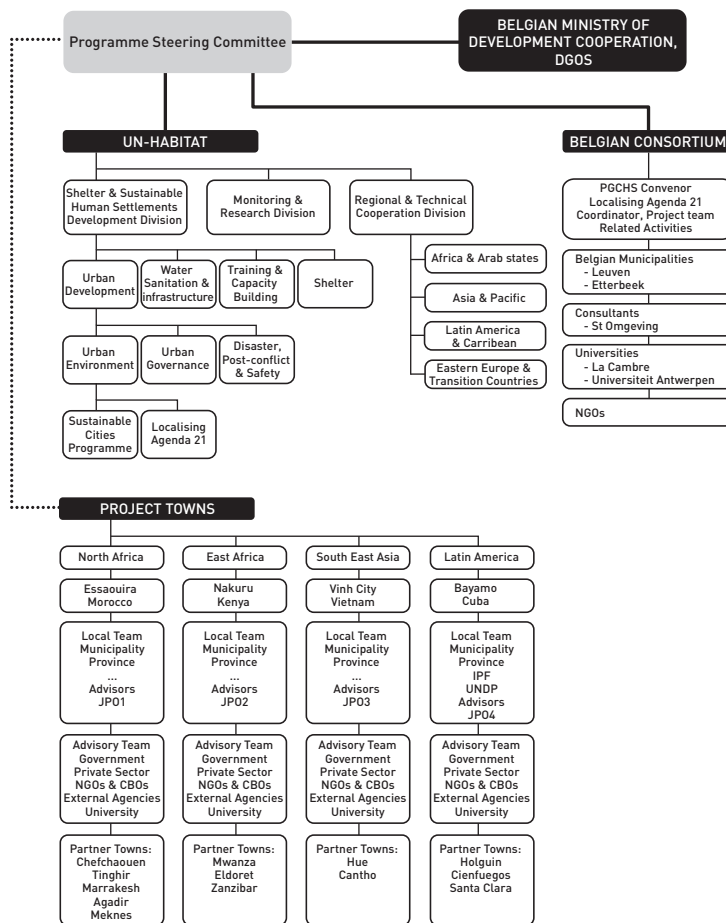
fig. 8.1 The organisational setting of the LA 21 Programme.

for a more detailed elucidation (see chapters two, three and four). We will subsequently situate the processes in international discourse on participatory planning and deal with questions such as what are the barriers to citizen and group involvement in public consultative or co-productive frameworks? More specifically, what is their level of accessibility to these? Last but not least, we make suggestions on what we consider to be the 'preferred model' for capacity-building measures that could best enhance the ability of citizens to participate.

LA21: CITY DEVELOPMENT BY CO-PRODUCTION

The discourse in the LA21 Programme concerned the relationship between formal and informal settings, the roles, tasks, autonomy and responsibilities of the actors and the accessibility of people to decision-making frameworks. Within the scope of the Programme, and in line with the 'co-production of policy' model of participation, four activities were initiated and implemented:

• The establishment of Forums
• The organising and convening of a series of Workshops
• The implementation of a selected number of Demonstrative projects and actions
• The promotion of a broad range of Citizen Initiatives

Forums

A distinction can be made between two types of forums. They may have a purely 'consultative role,' giving formal advice to the city council, or may be a direct partner of the authorities, directly engaged in the *co-production* of policy and implementation.

The first type of forum, often called advisory boards, is rather traditional, already used for a long time and integrated into many governmental structures. In its most ideal sense, such advisory settings are often seen, especially by politicians, as a way to stay informed of the electorate's major concerns. In general, their influence is rather limited because of their 'passive' role and because membership is based upon the representation of (frozen) bodies, which is neither favourable for the quality of the proposals nor for the achievement of meaningful solutions. It is therefore obvious that although qualitative advice can influence policy in a direct or indirect way, it may not change the power relations or responsibilities in society and may not encourage real, direct and broader-based involvement in a structural way. Such type of participation remains 'a consultative gesture with real decisions being determined by elites, politicians or technocrats' [Gaventa 2002].

The second type of forum can create the opportunity for a deeper and more fundamental involvement of all actors. It is based on the idea that a networked society is evolving, creating new relationships between a vast array of actors and new forms of management and decision-making [Healy, Graham 1999], [Albrechts et al 1999]. In an urban setting, this development is also bringing about a new type of responsible citizenship and, in some cases, even a new type of democratic organisation.

This is not only based upon representation, but also draws on the latent capacity of specific individuals, groups and civil society in general. Even as public means become progressively scarce, citizens are claiming a new role in the political system [Mathews 1994], clamouring for and gaining a significant voice both in debate, discussion and decision-making processes. As a result, the role of the state as 'provider' is gradually moving towards that of an 'enabler,' in the process sometimes taking on an 'entrepreneurial' style.

Within such rapidly changing societal realities, the Programme's emphasis was on cooperation, collaboration, dialogue, negotiation and commitment, otherwise considered a 'co-production' of policy and implementation. However, a number of questions arise in view of the foregoing. The first is whether the 'network city' is an attainable goal or simply another utopia? Secondly, it is imperative to determine which barriers militate against the involvement of people in decision-making frameworks and processes. Most importantly, however, the question as to what would be the 'new' roles of all the actors, considering the social and political settings, is a crucial one. The Programme's overall objective was to 'enhance good governance' by reconsidering the roles, responsibilities and tasks of existing public and private institutions and actors. As a prerequisite, it is imperative, as a basic principle, to accept the prevalent differences between the various roles and to simultaneously accept their mutual complementarity. Such differences could emanate from the distinctions that exist between collective and individual values and are consequently expressed in diverse investor, producer and consumer interests [Salet 2000].

It seems obvious that within collaborative interactive processes, in view of the overriding consideration for sustainability, the overall responsibility for collective goods is a specific mandate of the public sector. However, this does not necessarily underplay the more private responsibilities of the individual. Although the guidance and management of public processes and decision-making is the task of public authorities, these need to proceed from and to take place in an attitude and atmosphere of modesty and cooperation. Another basic principle is the need to build up a relational trust between the actors, not based on naïve consideration, but instead on the acceptance of the relative responsibility of each actor's tasks in relation to governance.

Forums built upon these principles can therefore have a more fundamental impact, considering the changing role of government in present-day society vis-à-vis the gradually improving capacities of civil society.

In principle, the partners in the LA21 Programme started with a strong belief in the second type of forum. As mentioned before, the first activity was the setting up of a public forum. These included diverse 'stakeholder' groups ('settings') such as political organisations, civic bodies, professional associations, Non-Governmental Organisations (such as the World Wide Fund for Nature), representatives of diverse interest groups (such as the Chamber of Commerce) and key service institutions (colleges, religious organisations). It also included formal and informal associations in Nakuru between bus owners, *matatu* drivers, hawkers, housing co-operatives, and others [Esho 2003].

However, it cannot be assumed that all the local actors involved shared this belief in 'co-production.' It became apparent that in each of the three cities, some of the actors were, to varying degrees,

aware of changing circumstances, while others were not and as such were unable to fully embrace this co-productive role. Therefore, for this and other reasons, the 'co-production' role of the forums established in the context of the Programme remained largely consultative and, at times, even marginal.

Similarly, the forums were fraught with many challenges that impacted negatively on their ability to function efficiently. The biggest dilemma was probably encountered in Essaouira, where decision-making on large-scale projects involving a few 'local decision-makers' and supra 'local developers' was not at all subject to any participatory discussion. However, during the process, a specific forum (*cellules*) — a kind of working group — was created to allow more continued involvement on specific issues. Working in smaller groups allows greater efficiency, creativity and more direct participation. Nonetheless, it involves only a limited number of participants, thereby making the need for feedback with a broader forum essential. In Nakuru's case, it was not always easy to bring on board all the potential participants, as some pulled out of the process and pursued their own individual priorities without due regard to the actions communally agreed upon. In Vinh, following a few consultative sessions, disagreements relating to power struggles between some of the key actors led to parallel, albeit non-collaborative processes in relation to the Quang Trung Housing Revitalisation project [Belpaire 2003]. Such challenges are however not unique to the three cities, as this is often seen to be the case in many other situations and countries. There were, however, numerous instances where the application of the second model registered a significant level of success. Most of these relate to the increasing acceptance by society and the political elite of the new collaborative arrangements and redefined relationships. Creating visions for future action was a successful collaborative effort in Nakuru, as was the attention given to resolving the problem of uncontrolled waste water discharge by industries or the willingness to improve the relationship between the city and the National Park. In Essaouira, the concept for an urban park and the first steps taken for its implementation were significant results of collaborative processes, as was the agreement reached on the adaptation of the *Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme* (SDAU). In Vinh, the efforts to renovate Quang Trung have proved to be positive.

Work-shopping

The second activity involved 'continuous informal work-shopping.' The workshops acted as broad-based assemblies and open forums. Most importantly, they acted as avenues for initiating discussion on key issues and problems. Often lasting three to five days, they created environments conducive to informal discussions and productive social networking (figs. 8.2 and 8.3). They facilitated brainstorming on and evaluation of the city's main assets and people's collective values and aspirations as possible building-blocks for a desired vision of the city. Subsequently, possible solutions and strategies for interventions were negotiated. The different workshops also served as fundamental steps in the process in the sense that conclusions were reached and clear proposals formulated and formalised in 'Urban Pacts' meant to serve as an agreement or commitment between the actors. These agreements were used as tools in the action-oriented character of strategic planning (see chapter six).

During the first workshop in Nakuru, the main issues for the city became clearer. These included the pollution of the lake through industrial activity, the (illegal) encroachment upon the Crater Edge for settlement purposes, the failure of the municipal revenue collection system, land speculation in the eastern part of the city, the problematic relationship between city and park, as well as social, financial and other spatial aspects. At this early phase, a provisional vision for the city could already be developed based not only on existing knowledge but also on a certain nostalgia for the past — the 'Green/Clean City' image, a legacy of good services and governmental organisation, albeit one that no longer existed. Another source for the vision was the city's strong asset base, primarily composed of natural features such as the Lake and the Crater and the strategic location of the city along a main road and railway, coupled with its regional function and the inherent potentials of its diverse population (see Chapter two). In Essaouira, the initial workshop triggered a conflict concerning the future development of the city in relation to its interesting and unique compactness and the surrounding natural landscapes (see chapter three). This provided a good opportunity to initiate a discussion concerning the city's fundamental developmental issues and possible solutions. In Vinh, such forums were crucial in the initiation of discussions on the review of the city's master plan (fig. 8.4) and the Quang Trung Housing Revitalisation project, (see chapter four). In the three cases, the open workshops, with their informal character, were the main avenues, not only for capacity-building but also for discussion, negotiation and consensus-building. In doing so, they surpassed the existing capacities of formal governance bodies [Belpaire 2003].

Actions and Projects

The third participatory activity aimed at the implementation and actual realisation of actions, in line with the second track of the three-track process (see chapter six). Right from the start, the Programme tried to look for opportunities that could have a strategic and/or structural impact on

fig. 8.2 Informal work-shopping in Nakuru.

fig. 8.3 Workshop in Essaouira.

fig. 8.4 Vinh's masterplan until 2020 following the LA21 Programme [Vinh DPC], see chapter 4.

aspects linked to its key objectives. In Nakuru, for instance, the Flamingo Public Housing revitalisation project (see chapter two) was necessary (both psychologically and content-wise) to inform the discussion about densification, social housing, rent collection and organisational aspects. The 'cobblestones project' (fig. 8.5) was a very modest intervention intended to impart local labourers with

the necessary skills for the use of appropriate road construction material. The two projects became the image of the city's cooperation with the city of Leuven. Providing water kiosks in popular neighbourhoods and demonstrating locally appropriate building techniques in cooperation with the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) provided another set of realistic, 'realisable' actions.

fig. 8.5 Nakuru: Cobblestones project in the frame of the city-to-city cooperation between Nakuru and Leuven, see chapter 2.

In Essaouira, discussions about the intended urban park concept raised questions about 'where and how' the city should and could develop in an ecologically sustainable manner (see chapter four). The project was also meant to sustain the structure of the city and to meet the recreational needs of the population. Cultural activities emphasised the importance and identity of the city as well as its potential as a tourist attraction. Another initiative, involving the renovation of the *Palais de Justice*, an important historical building, not only created a positive image for the Programme, but also helped in building up the project team and in providing meeting spaces for various formal and informal LA21 Programme activities right in the centre of town (fig. 8.6). The implementation of the first phase of the urban park in Essaouira is a good example of another type of action-oriented co-production: a public-private partnership (Municipality – TotalElfFina foundation – LA21 Programme Local Team).

fig. 8.6 Essaouira: the Centre for Urban Development and Protection of the Environment in the former *Palais de Justice*.

Such concrete actions in the field responded to the social and political need for change and in so doing, built and sustained the capacity and efficiency of formal authorities and informal self-help organisations. In addition, they represented an ingenious way of enlisting the cooperation of local actors in the neighbourhoods as a step-by-step implementation of the evolving long-term vision. Much more than forums and workshops that deal with a more generic complex reality — the whole city or a big area — actions and projects can stimulate and facilitate collaboration and co-production among actors because they concern a concrete reality, a well-known space, or an issue. Projects enable the identification of bottlenecks, different interests, perspectives and solutions; they allow for the listening, discussing and accepting of divergent opinions, learning the importance of

cooperation and negotiation in order to reach a commitment. People can also learn a more technical language, such as how to read a budget and other pragmatic concerns and processes inherent to urban development.

Promoting Citizen Initiatives

The fourth activity was the encouragement and promotion of citizen initiatives with the intention of bringing about direct and concrete change in people's living conditions and to empower them [Mitlin 2001]. This includes the organisation of activities of a socio-cultural nature related to the unique circumstances of specific local places (streets, neighbourhoods, etc.). Such initiatives are mainly carried out by enthusiastic volunteers willing to accept the responsibility. In principle, the nature of the activity is not of paramount significance, as long as it serves as a kind of common language between people and actors with a stake in the city's development. To achieve a direct influence on real decision-making and concrete planning processes is not and should not be the objective of these activities. In the case of Nakuru, for instance, following the impulse of a councillor, a school took the initiative for the greening of the city by starting a tree nursery. Such 'modest' initiatives can lead to a fundamental change in people's attitudes in relation to the sharing of responsibility for the city's many challenges.

The final objective of the approach was the development of a framework within each city where citizens, groups, institutions, and other parties could debate and develop their own initiatives and take care of some specific aspects of 'public' or 'governmental' responsibility with special concern for previously excluded people and groups. It is obvious the Programme did not fully realise this objective. In the case of Nakuru, however, such initiatives culminated in the formation of new institutions such as the Zonal Development Committees (ZDCs), [Esho 2003].These served as co-ordinators of development activities at the very local level. They have since continued to play a significant role in various aspects of the city's development, ranging from the collection and management of solid waste to the provision of water kiosks, and are crucial as information disseminators, awareness creators and community advisors. They also act as mediators between local communities and local authorities, serving as venues for the formalisation of relations between different partners. They are currently exploring additional means and ways of linking up local organisations with each other, as well as connecting them to external organisations and institutions like funding institutions and public authorities. These ZDCs can then possibly become real and dynamic bodies, the second type of forum, engaged in collaborative policy-making and implementation.

Although this fourth type of activity can contribute to improved communication and is thus part of the third track in the process, it is more appropriate to see it as belonging to the proposed fourth track in the process (see chapter six). Subsequently, it should be interesting to evaluate the performance of the Programme in relation to this activity and to discuss the results as they were realised in each of the cities. This constitutes part of the ongoing discourse not only in the three cities, but also in the wider international forum.

PARTICIPATION / CO-PRODUCTION: FEASIBLE OPTION OR UTOPIA?

The debate on 'participation' has remained high on the agenda of many decision-making processes since the end of the 1960s and is today an important issue in spatial planning theory and practice. Of course, the notion of participation has been changing fundamentally, both in definition and content, due to the changing circumstances of prevailing practice and research. A substantial body of literature is available concerning all aspects of public involvement. For example, Arnstein's 'Ladder of Citizen Participation,' from 1969, categorises different stages from non-participation to citizen control, focusing on the degree of power citizens can or should have in decision-making (fig. 8.7). This categorisation has to be seen in the context of the 1960s, where relations between society and the authorities were under strong pressure, especially in Europe. The demand for real participation by the general public, specific action groups and even institutions trying to stimulate and organise participation was huge and certainly had an influence on policy formulation and decision-making processes [Appudurai 2001]. Needless to say, these were largely superficial. Top-down participation procedures in most cases only paid lip service to 'information and consultation' and were often used as 'oil' to smooth over the authorities' decision-making engines. At its worst, such participation was used as an instrument to manipulate citizens.

The account below will attempt to explain some of the key aspects of the previously discussed debate on participatory planning by attempting to answer some pertinent questions.
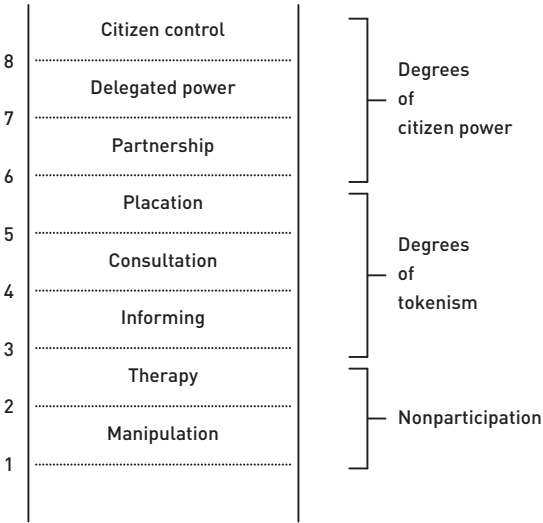
fig. 8.7 Ladder of Citizen Participation.

Is Collaboration and Co-Production of Policy Possible?

Collaboration and co-production are based on an acceptance of the specific and relative autonomy of the different actors with regards to the 'sharing of responsibility' and 'delegation of power.' Of course, there is a strong opposition to collaboration, cooperation and certainly co-production, arguing that possibly it is against human nature given its often relentless pursuit of power and the furthering of its interests. Hence, cooperation may not be the ultimate driving force, even in the field of spatial planning, as competition between individual interests may prove to be stronger and, more often than not, the motor for development and progress. Then again, competition and cooperation between actors, and sometimes partners, is not necessarily contradictory. Furthermore, both can be combined and none of them should be neglected if the intention is to develop a feasible and realistic policy [D'Hondt et. al. 2002; Janssens 1995].

The belief in the possibility of building a 'consensus' or even better, an 'agreement' is the departure point for co-production. This means that for agreements to be realised, one has to accept as a basic principle that each actor has the same weight in the decision-making process. This is not always the case in reality, as often financial considerations and political power remain the most important criterion in decision-making. There is also the risk of an unclear, uneasy consensus. Similarly, some planning theorists and practitioners argue that in such unpredictable and fitful processes the focus ought to shift from the content (a good product) to the process, where the achievement of a consensus on the matter at hand takes precedence [De Bruyn, et. al. 1998]. This position is not necessarily always tenable; such consensus may not be in the interest of sustainable and good development, which remains the overriding objective of policy and, for the planner, the ultimate ambition.

Co-production is a difficult process and is highly dependent on circumstances. Hence, an overall agreement on all issues, in view of the very disparate and irreconcilable interests of actors and competing power structures, is not possible. This means that the only agreement possible is that which is restricted to a limited set of issues for which a win-win situation for the majority of actors is possible.

How should one deal with the Many Barriers to Public Involvement?

Real involvement of civil society organisations and the general public in planning and decision-making processes is a highly seductive goal. However, it is also a very difficult and even possibly risky prospect. Many structural and cultural barriers to real involvement exist depending upon the specific context. Such barriers and hindrances are the subject of an ongoing worldwide debate. Structural barriers, for instance, include social segregation, marginalisation, exclusion and alienation from access to power and government. Cultural barriers may be due to the lack of education, inadequate skills and capacities, and the social background of people. On the other hand, for practical reasons authorities, administrators and even planners often hesitate to involve people too much in their decision-making processes. Not only do they perceive it to be a time- and energy-consuming exercise, but they also tremble at the prospect of it raising too many expectations amongst the participants, most of which may not be fulfilled [Albrechts 2002]. Whatever the case, there is an emerging consensus that such barriers limit accessibility to decision-making forums and processes. Of

course, this depends on the specific realities of different locales, prevailing political and power structures, existing conflicts and the absence or lack of resources.

Based on a Delphi-research (an interactive research method based upon expert knowledge and opinions) carried out by academics and practitioners, Albrechts [2002] concludes that two options exist for removing these barriers. The first, mainly proposed by academics, emphasises trust-building and increased support for organised groupings that are pursuing various development goals. The other, proposed by practitioners, stems from a strong belief in direct democracy, real collaboration and accountability. Both schools of thought ask for a different approach and appropriate methods. The first deals with the long-term perspective, while the second aims at directly influencing decisions as they are made. In practice, some programmes use approaches focusing on the former and aiming at social learning, while others have the ambition of changing policy and influencing political programmes in the short term. The latter, while trying to define the needs of people and their priorities through dialogue within many of the city's informal forums, creates at the same time too many expectations and eventually leads to frustration. In building the capacity of civil society to participate — in cooperation with the NGO Enda–Maghreb, which specialises in community participation learning processes — the Essaouira experience was quite successful because the overall context in Morocco, where public involvement was limited, was not favourable. The organisation of activities for associations, creation of institutional space in the debates for these associations and provision of facilities to operate can be considered important steps.

Firm Policy Agreements: An Urban Pact

There has been, in recent years, an emerging discourse on the need for policy arrangements that are different from the prevailing ones. Such arrangements are alternately defined as 'result agreements' or 'binding contracts' between the various actors in a participatory process. They stipulate the specific tasks and responsibilities and options for the financing of the action plan's concrete actions through collaboration [Van den Broeck 1996]. Although the impact of participation and involvement on decision-making processes cannot be formally ascertained, supporters of the 'firm policy agreements' approach argue that the only expression of real involvement and guarantee for success and change is the attainment of firm agreements on various issues between actors and stakeholders. This, in turn, is evidence of their influence on the participation process. Consequently, this is a prerequisite for their engagement in realising agreed-upon objectives and actions during successive implementation efforts.

In the context of the LA21 Programme, the 'Urban Pact' was used as a tool for specifying commitments. Where real and direct impact of the people on municipal decision-making processes was lacking or limited, discussions and negotiations between participating actors (reached at the end of each workshop) were carried out and in some cases indeed became an important avenue to realising this very goal. Because the content of the different urban pacts was linked to the desired and feasible actions, and well matched with the available means and resources, they became a kind of selective working programme for successive phases of the process. In doing so, they assisted in avoiding

the endless and often unfruitful discussions about 'priorities' that characterise many decision-making frameworks. The decisions reached were about the feasibility of actions and not their importance. The impact of the urban pacts on daily policy and council decisions so far vary from city to city, but positive results are evident.

Plugging a Democracy Deficit or a Fundamental Reform?
The conventional official hierarchically organised bodies in cities, namely councils and boards, are often dominated by 'frozen' ways of thinking and acting. Similarly, these bodies are also often reluctant to permit or facilitate the involvement of non-conventional actors in their decision-making frameworks and action forums. In some cases, they are averse to new ideas and change. Case studies conducted in the past, as well as those done by the LA21 Programme, have proved that a well-functioning network is a powerful instrument [Albrechts, Van den Broeck 2004]. This is because it is based upon collaborative processes that bear characteristics such as adaptability, flexibility, efficiency, promptness, creativity and contextual suitability. By involving new actors, networking can generate a significant body of knowledge with regards to processes, visions and concepts. On the other hand however, such processes might be lacking in transparency, while their tangible results may prove to be unverifiable.

The collaborative approach and structure starts from the involvement of civil society and people in policy formulation and overall decision-making. UN-HABITAT states that 'the role of civil society is not just about policies and processes. For it to work, it has to be underpinned by some core values and a sense of citizenship, trust, reciprocity and solidarity. These values are different from those of consumerism and marketing practices' [UN-HABITAT 2004]. In practice there is a need for a more inclusive forum, a feasible framing structure, where actors can discuss, negotiate and decide [Healy 1997]. Such informal forums and policy agreements can not only have a significant influence on existing institutions and their capacity, but also be the remedy for an apparent democratic deficit in today's decision-making frameworks and governance structures. The pursuit of better democratic decision-making and better government therefore constitutes the main justification of the approach [De Rynck 2003; Van den Broeck 2001].

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The need for approaches to manage the complexity of present-day reality, taking into account the demands by civil society for more direct and meaningful involvement and responsibility, has become the preoccupation of many all over the world. Today, collaborative processes based upon cooperation within informal dynamic settings seem to be the preferred model to tackle these realities. Although different approaches are proposed and practiced, these often have contradictory objectives and use different methods and techniques. 'Involvement,' therefore, does have different meanings, which should be taken into account in policymaking and planning processes. The focus ranges from

the long to the short term, from trust-building to social learning, from capacity building to direct political influence, and from quality to pure compromise.

It is difficult to introduce the deeper notion of 'collective needs' (sustainable development and quality) into the dialogue with the actors, as often only the direct sectoral and 'individual needs' (housing, infrastructure services) of the people are put on the table for discussion. Similarly, it appears difficult to communicate the importance of space as an integrating framework and an important dimension of sustainability. It is also not clear what the role of the planner should be in these circumstances. It possibly remains somewhat ambiguous because, in principle, he or she can have different capacities and interests: as a co-ordinator, facilitator and manager or as a researcher and designer of visions, concepts, and projects [Van den Broeck 2003].

In contrast with prevailing practice, participatory approaches modelled on 'co-production' approaches become 'a way for politicians and planners to participate in society instead of the other way round' [De Rynck 2003:199]. The critical issue here is how to find the appropriate and contextual language to communicate in a specific situation. Planners and urbanists should therefore develop a proper language as an interface to explain the notion of spatial sustainability and quality. Research by 'localised design' and dialogue could certainly be a major tool for such a communicative language. This should facilitate learning about each other and about different points of view and the strengthening of a store of mutual understanding as a sort of 'social and intellectual capital' [Innes 1995].

Based on the experience of some of the LA21 Programme partner cities, co-production has demonstrated that trust in municipal authorities can be enhanced as politicians build new relationships and strengthen existing ones. Consequently, improved relations influence the formulation of concrete policy and help create another kind of city. This necessitates the adoption of a new attitude where the notion 'primacy of politics' is given a new meaning. The 'four-track' approach (or three-tracks, as in the case of the LA21 Programme) tries to combine these different dimensions of a 'city debate' using different languages, capacities and techniques for the distinct contexts to initiate and sustain a structural dialogue among the people.

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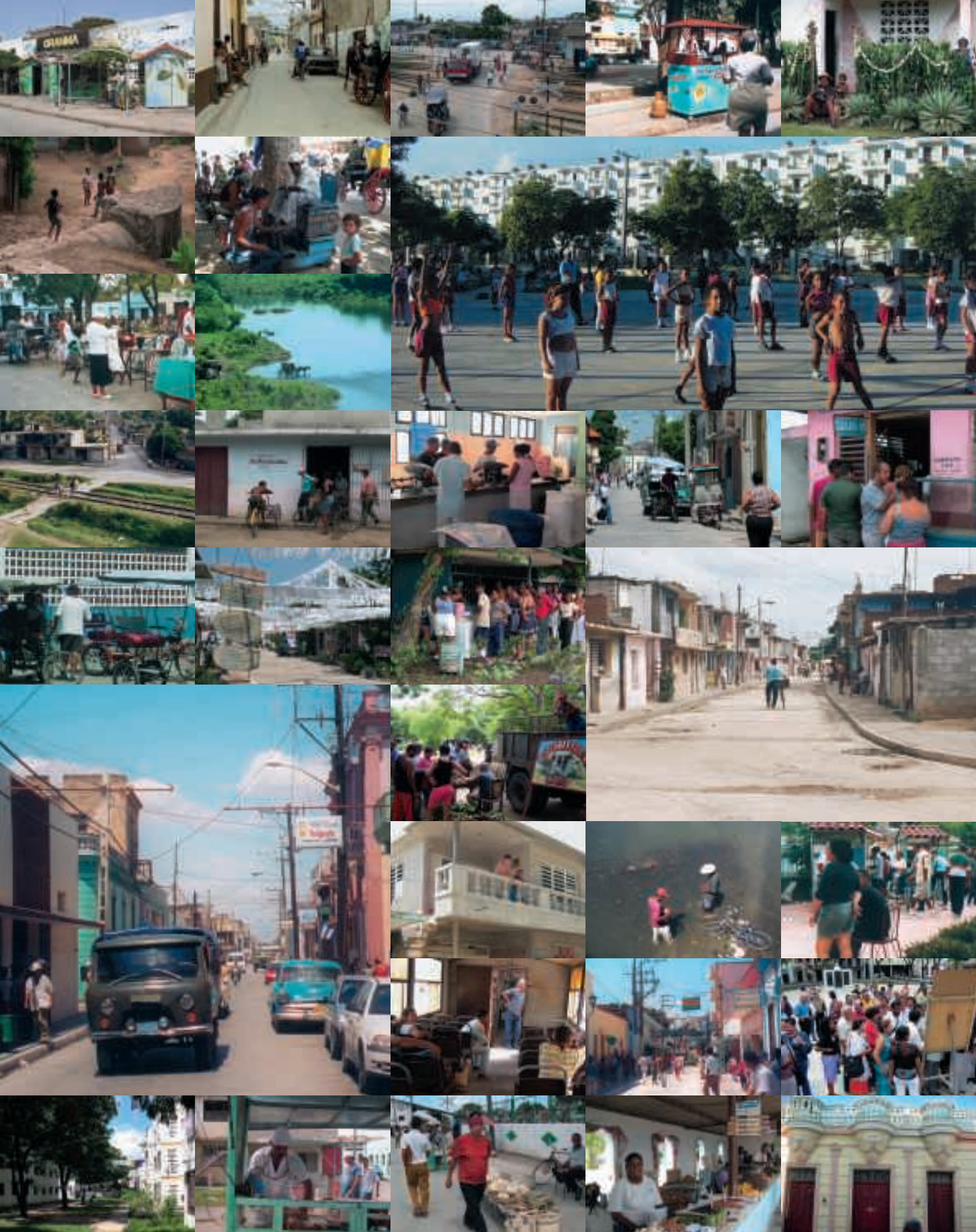
Neither Sleeping nor Dreaming

LIESL VANAUTGAERDEN, ANOJIE AMERASINGHE, FREDERIC SALIEZ

fig. 9.1 Aerial view of Bayamo, 2003.

fig. 9.2 Cuba is bounded by the Atlantic Ocean and the USA to the north and the Caribbean Sea and Latin America to the south west.

Bayamo, cradle of Cuban–Spanish history, centre of revolution. Bayamo in Cuba — Cuba in Bayamo — an ambivalent relationship that inspired the national anthem 'La Bayamesa'. Paradoxically, unlike other Cuban cities, the cityscape evokes few direct memories. Today its heritage, identity and potential are not be found in grand monuments, great heroes or unique treasures, but within its institutions, landscape, urban fabric and structure, and daily life.

Bayamo (fig. 9.1) is a city on the river without a riverfront, a city in three parts — an asymmetrical city sprawling to reach its boundaries, provincial capital with limited resources in a socialist state — an incomplete city with a rationalised service network, a city of coaches (horse-drawn carriages) and a city of passage — a city of two flows with two energies determining the rhythm of everyday life.

This chapter deals with further describing and reinterpreting some of the urban realities in Bayamo. In particular those that directly concern or determine spatial form and planning. The complexities of the context are difficult to grasp. Beyond typical spatial considerations, limited resources, evolving institutional and social structures, socio-economic uncertainty, and the culture of wait-and-see are realities which need to be reconciled in the development of a vision for the city.

The LA21 Programme has acted as a vehicle for structuring various encounters, investigations and initiatives. This chapter attempts to elaborate some of the Programme's observations and findings to stimulate further thinking about localised spatial potentials and practices. The project is still being developed, which makes this chapter unique and more thought-provoking than conclusive as an LA21 case.

EVERYDAY UNCERTAINTIES AND LONG-TERM DREAMS

A socio-cultural-economic conundrum

Cuba is a context which generates widespread interest and arouses controversial opinion.[1] While some describe it as a valid/treasured/fantastic/exotic/inspired way to maintain a socially engaged society, others perceive it as a local geo-political anachronism, predestined to disappear. Without venturing into the details, which define these oppositions, this discussion can still be used to focus attention on some considerations that seem important because of their influence on territorial development in general, and on physical planning in particular, in Cuba (fig. 9.2).

Development in Cuba has not only been affected by the Revolution itself but also by the economic embargo imposed by the USA, which weakened the economy and links within the Latin American region. One of the major elements deeply marking daily life and seemingly constituting a fundamental

component of national cultural identity is the profound economic crisis that ravaged the island at the beginning of the 1990s when the demise of the socialist bloc translated into the cancellation of vital economic agreements and trade. This shock further aggravated conditions resulting from the economic embargo. Through the 'Special Period in Times of Peace' — as this crisis is officially known — the vast majority of the population carries a memory of empty market shelves and scarcities in energy, building and other materials, which paralysed the functioning of the country overnight.

A side effect of these exceptional constraints has been a degree of ingenuity, which has become an integral part of Cuban culture and therefore local decision-making. The need for strategic thinking to achieve everyday, small-scale pragmatic as well as state-sponsored large-scale projects is well and widely understood. Examples of this can be found locally in abundance, ranging from the management of family real estate and patrimony[2] to local inventions such as the hybrid motorbike born out of the marriage of a bike and a chainsaw or the water heater made out of metal cans. One could also cite the formalisation of urban agriculture by the Government as an exemplary attempt, recognised all over the world, to institutionally address the problem of food shortages.

Concerning local government, it is easy to see that severe restrictions of the 'Special Period' have led, little by little, to management defined by an awareness of scarcity. This has meant that measures are in principal taken on the basis of meeting the most important and basic needs. Working with very limited budgets, local administrations find themselves obliged to address only the most pressing issues, as more radical intervention requires more resources that are often unavailable even at the national level. In the midst of this battle, officials work hard to limit the impact of new restrictions and to keep up the morale of their workforce, leaving little time to search for long-term solutions and new visions.

For many years, the majority of citizens appeared to be highly committed to the established system. However, today many people have no memory of the situation before the Revolution but have seen their welfare dramatically decline since the 'Special Period'. It is a major challenge for the authorities to enthuse and entice a younger generation to actualise revolutionary values and aspirations in light of present global and local socio-economic and cultural realities. This combined with a wider debate on the exact form of a desirable socio-economic model, makes it more complex to define development scenarios for the future.

The conditions described help one to better understand the difficulties and challenges local institutions face to organise and manage physical planning in Cuba. The local authorities, shaped in the spirit of a planned economy where development was not only planned but taken for granted in the long term, are now confronted with uncertainty and urgencies in the short term. Accustomed to operating in the shadow of strong national institutions, they are now expected to formulate coherent ideas for local development in the medium or longer term.

It is in this context that one has to therefore situate the LA21 project of Bayamo. It acts as a support mechanism that helps Cuban institutions and communities in their efforts to successfully address these challenges, by stimulating local debate and re-engaging local participation, which have been adversely affected by the harsh realities of the Special Period.

A PROVINCIAL CAPITAL IN A SOCIALIST STATE

Spatial realities and identity

The following readings of the city and its structure should not be seen simply as a statement of its problems, instead these can also simultaneously be read as an articulation of its potentials, which can support its transformation and sustainable development.

Bayamo is essentially a twentieth century city built on what remains of San Salvador de Bayamo, the second settlement founded in Cuba by the Spaniards in 1513. It was once the most prosperous city in Cuba and is still considered to be the cradle of Cuban culture. In the late nineteenth century, the city was set on fire by its inhabitants during the struggle for independence from Spain. It is this event, along with the fact that its population has included important revolutionaries and a number of key historic sites are located within the region that has given Bayamo a reputation as a centre of revolution and national pride.

Bayamo, the capital of the Granma province, is situated

757 kilometres from Havana in the eastern part of Cuba (fig. 9.3). The provinces in this part of the country were severely underdeveloped prior to the Revolution and, despite efforts to bring the eastern provinces to the same level as the other provinces in the country, they still lag behind. According to development indicators, the Granma province is one of the least advanced and at the same time one of the most populated in the country [*Oficina Nacional de Hidrografía y Geodesia* 2000].

Since 1960 national planning policy has sought to ensure an equitable distribution of resources to urban, as well as rural areas. This initially created new development opportunities for the province. An essentially green territory, Granma developed as a promising landscape for large-scale agricultural and related agro-industrial activity. However, radical changes occurred as the country entered the Special Period; the territory has been transformed into a less productive landscape supporting little more than cattle grazing and dispersed rice and sugar fields. Cultivation has become refocused on food production for local and national sustainability. With the reintroduction of old techniques such as intercropping and experimentation with new ecologically sensitive methods of cultivation, most large state farms have become relics of another era and have given way to small-scaled activities that establish new synergies with the city and urban life.

The Revolution played a key role in the rapid growth of secondary cities. In 1976 the city was granted the status of a provincial capital. In contrast to the seemingly unstructured surrounding territory, Bayamo has developed as an urban centre with a relatively high concentration of services due to its simultaneous functioning as a city and provincial capital. The development of regionally scaled specialised infrastructures for administration, health, education, transport and culture along one of the main armatures, the *Carretera Central*, increased the capacity of the city to act as a strong attraction for nearby municipalities lacking such services. At a neighbourhood scale a rational distribution of medical facilities, schools, cinemas, food shops, hair dressers, and the like is based on the needs of the *consejos populares* and *repartos*.[3] As a result, neighbourhoods consist of points of intense service infrastructure and activity (figs. 9.4 and 9.5).

Statistics show that the population of Bayamo has more

fig. 9.3 Located 757 kilometres southeast of Havana, Bayamo links the provincial transport network to the national system.

fig. 9.4 The newer residential areas of Bayamo, those which developed post-Revolution, are marked by a rational distribution of dispersed building service blocks.

fig. 9.5 Service block with public space in *Zona Nuevo Desarrollo* (see also 'A city in three parts').
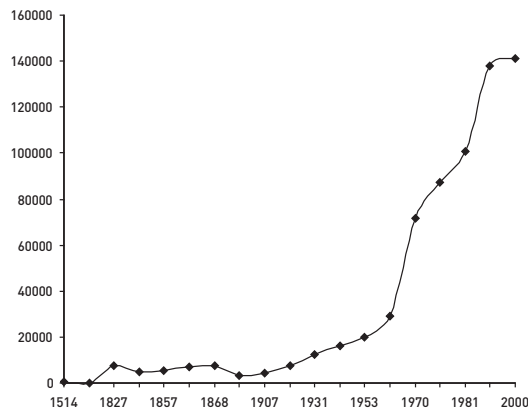
fig. 9.6 Population growth in Bayamo. The period between 1960–1990 shows high growth whereas it has been relatively stable since. Today, Bayamo is a city of 142,000 inhabitants

fig. 9.7 A peso shop and dollar shop located at the Ciro Redondo public square — impact of the double 'peso and dollar' economy on the built environment.

than quadrupled in recent years, reaching approximately 140,000 inhabitants between 1960 and 1990 (fig. 9.6). This rapid growth mainly took place in the northern area of the city and prevented the State from providing adequate infrastructure and services to keep pace. The 'Special Period' especially affected the development of amenities in the newer residential neighbourhoods. Important amenities were planned but never completed; urbanisation was frozen due to constrained resources. With the exception of some experimental housing projects and reclaimed or reserved plots for urban agriculture in the city, the State has encountered difficulties in developing the urban services that typically formed the basis of socialist planning. As such, Bayamo remains incomplete, consisting of a barely distinguishable rationalised network of dispersed building service blocks. In some instances these blocks, aside from an occasional solitary shop, await expectantly the arrival of other neighbourhood services. This has perhaps played a key role in curbing the flow of rural-urban migration stimulated by the aforementioned administrative change. It seems that since the 'Special Period', for many it has become easier to live in the surrounding rural areas than in the city. At present, population growth is modest and mainly due to an increase in family size.

Whilst centralised decision-making has attempted to distribute resources equitably, it may have inadvertently prevented cities from becoming self-reliant and dependent upon asserting and exploiting their own advantages. The objective of creating homogeneous secondary cities based on the rationalised development of basic services and where priority has been given to meeting immediate needs has made it especially difficult to create a sense of place and character that is essential for strengthening city identity. In keeping with socialist principles, Cuban cities were not planned and developed to exploit their uniqueness. It was essentially more desirable for them to develop without the competitive advantages of difference. However, global changes have had an impact leading toward a readjustment of some of these qualities. Few socialist states continue to exist today and most have endeavoured to evolve to meet their requirements without abandoning their principles. Since the 1990s measures have been introduced to rebuild and strengthen the Cuban economy. The Government created conditions for
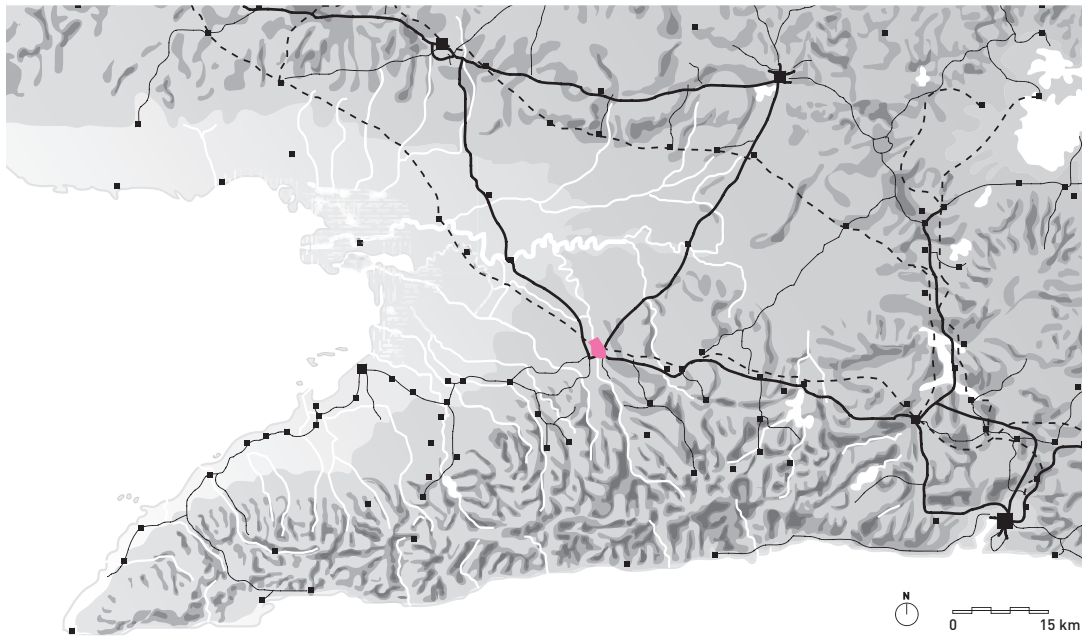
fig. 9.8 Bayamo was founded in 1513. The river system provided the means for developing water-based transport and fertile land for agricultural activities.

attracting foreign investment, recognised the dollar as legal tender, encouraged the development of a limited amount of private family-run small businesses and created opportunities for stimulating tourism (fig. 9.7). In some measure this has led to the development of a two-tier economy, which has created limited opportunities. In the context of these new developments, city identity has therefore become more important as a means for generating much-needed income.

Consequently, it can be said the capacity and structure of the system to control change makes it also possible to resuscitate city identity. The Cuban administration has proven its capacity to create opportunities and mechanisms for controlling spontaneous urbanisation and speculation, which has safeguarded development potential of the public realm, environment and patrimony. Unlike other contexts, the structure of the Cuban system has an added latent potential. There is an opportunity for more synergy between different levels of administration, which can serve to moderate the dynamic interplay between history and change. The LA21 project aims to reinforce and complement the development

of this inherent opportunity, embedded in the institutional structure of the State, by increasing local capacities and encouraging broad-based participation.

AN ASYMMETRICAL CITY

In morphological terms Bayamo is an asymmetrical city. This is due to the dynamic between both natural and man-made elements that have determined its form.

A river city
The Bayamo River is part of a system of waterways that rise in the southern mountain range known as the Sierra Maestra, cross the extensive northern plain of Cauto Guacanayabo, and feed into the River Cauto before finally discharging into the Gulf of Guacanayabo (fig. 9.8). The existence of the city is directly linked to the river. Whilst the extensive water network created the possibility for access and movement between cities and the hinterland, the fertile

fig. 9.9 The Bayamo River is eroding its riverbanks creating a city-valley interface of alternating steep escarpment and low lying flood land.

fig. 9.10 Map of 1840. The original city morphology consisted of a distorted grid with its main roads running perpendicular to the river. *Barrancas* linked the city directly to the river and dealt with the topographical difficulties.

fig. 9.11 Today the river valley is a residual space that is not integrated in the urban structure.

clay and abundant alluvial soil provided the basis for agricultural activity, which further supported the colonisation of the region. It was, however, the topography that played a key role in determining where a settlement could be founded. The low-lying areas along the river were deemed less conducive to settlement as they were more susceptible to flooding. It was therefore the higher terrain — essentially lying to the east of the river — that provided safety and good access to the surrounding fertile higher ground.

The city-river interface consists of alternating steep escarpment and low-lying flood land. The width of this territory ranges between 150m and 1100m and has a maximum difference of 16m in elevation (fig. 9.9). This condition serves to reinforce the development of the city to one side of the river.

The original city structure consisted of a distorted grid that established a strong and direct relationship to the river (fig. 9.10). In its early days important roads ran perpendicular to the river to provide direct access and a structural connection to the surrounding fertile lands and to support the development of agricultural activity. In the early seventeenth century, silting made the Bayamo River un-navigable and put a stop to shipping and related economic activities. Without an economic *raison d'être*, the river became less important in determining the structure and spatial form of the city. The former *barrancas*[4] that linked the historical centre with the river have virtually disappeared. The orthogonal street pattern has abruptly stopped at the city-river interface and created an undefined territory, with only an informal system of pathways to allow access through the river valley. Houses that border the river generally address the street rather than the river. Today the residual space at this edge of the city is seen as a space where it is possible to escape social control, to engage in activities which have no place in the city, an ambiguous place, a backyard space, and hosting a range of miscellaneous activities such as small-scale agriculture, dumping of waste, washing, fishing, bathing, cleaning of horses and coaches (fig. 9.11).

Due to the availability of water and clay, the riverbank opposite the city attracted principally industrial and agricultural activities. A natural landscape remains in between pockets of activity. As such, the territory largely functions as a peripheral area with a stronger desire to connect to the

HAVANA

MANZANILLO

fig. 9.12 The river valley largely functions as a peripheral area with a stronger desire to connect to the main road between Manzanillo and Havana than to establish links with the city.

main road between Manzanillo and Havana than to establish links with the city (fig. 9.12).

There has always been a tension between river and city, a tension between nature and urbanity, which to a large extent has determined the city's form.

A city in three parts

New infrastructure has also played a key role in reinforcing the asymmetrical development of the city. Development of the rail (1910) and national road, the *Carretera Central* (1930), simultaneously re-orientated the city and re-defined its structure, its limits and economic potential. Whilst the city's morphology was once dominated by a perpendicular structure to the river, it was the introduction of new transport arteries, which reorganised the urban structure, movement and re-determined its functioning as a city of passage. These infrastructural developments generated expansion to the north and east, making Bayamo's identity as a city of agriculture less significant (fig. 9.13).

Since the 1970s, the *Carretera Central* has gained greater significance primarily due to the change in the administrative status of the city. Whilst it fulfils its principal purpose to facilitate transport and access by acting as a corridor, it also acts as an important structuring device organising the provincial administrative facilities and de-limiting the modernist housing fabric that characterises the south-eastern part of the city.

These two transport arteries are locally considered as the main structuring elements in Bayamo. The city is therefore perceived as being dissected into three parts: the *Centro Historico*, the *Zona Nuevo Desarrollo* and the *Zona Norte del Ferrocarril* (fig. 9.14). These three parts do not fully correspond with the administrative organisation of the city, nor take into account the subtle realities which influence development potential, but are used as a base for city planning by the authorities. According to widely held local views, the *Centro Historico* is essentially structured by a dense network of narrow streets with continuous frontage and well-defined public spaces. *Nuevo Desarrollo* is an area consisting of a structure of dispersed slab buildings and poorly qualified public spaces based on a modernist planning scheme. Finally, the *Zona Norte* can only be described in terms of having a lack of both these qualities and elements.
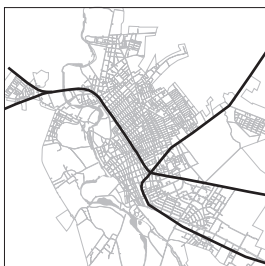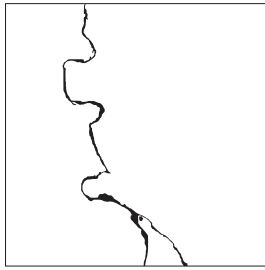
fig. 9.13 The railway and the *Carretera Central* played a key role in structuring urban expansion in the early part of the twentieth century.

fig. 9.14 Bayamo is considered as a city with three distinctive parts: the *Centro Historico*, the *Zona Nuevo Desarrollo* and the *Zona Norte del Ferrocarril*.

It is characterised by a lack of amenity and an incomplete structure. This has enabled the development of a variety of building typologies and morphologies. Besides the previously described tension between nature and urbanity, the vision of the city in three parts further reinforces its reading as an asymmetrical form.

A city with unqualified boundaries

The sharp contrast between the urban form at the western and eastern edges of the city further accentuates the reading of the city as an asymmetrical form. In opposition to the defined river-city interface, structure and urbanity slowly disintegrate at the eastern edge of the city (fig. 9.15). It is a territory in transition with many undefined and unqualified spaces in between oxidation lakes, plots of land for urban agriculture, and an incomplete grid with scattered dwelling units. This fabric consists of pockets of low-density collective and individual *esfuerzo propio* (self-help) and experimental state-built housing. This fringe area, although poorly serviced and relatively unstructured at present due to the lack of available resources, still attracts new inhabitants. The slow rate of change and unfinished and semi-rural qualities should not be seen simply as problems, but rather also as potentials for the development of both the area and the city.

According to the existing master plan, there is a desire to support further physical expansion towards the eastern administrative boundary (fig. 9.16). The existing city structure would simply extend to reach new neighbourhoods. Each neighbourhood would be organised around a core of local service facilities. These actions contribute to the development and reading of an asymmetrical and fragmented city structure. Endless urban expansion, which is of the same nature as that constituting the *Zona Norte*, will place even greater strain on the limited resources and structures of the city. The sustainability of this form of urbanisation should be further considered.

Therefore, the reading of Bayamo as an asymmetrical city, which is structured by nature, regional infrastructures, undefined edges and fragmented into three parts, provides a starting point for investigating the inherent potentials embedded in its morphology. These potentials could be exploited to improve the functioning of the city. It can facilitate the process of identifying and addressing local challenges.

CUBAN INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AND LA21

The Institute of Physical Planning (IPF) has been responsible for territorial management and urbanism in Cuba since 1960. In line with socialist principles, which have underpinned the running of the State, the IPF has been responsible for the rational and sustainable utilisation of all territorial resources and the creation of an environment that favours collective development. The IPF has therefore been an instrumental force behind the development of the homogeneous services and infrastructures characterising Cuban cities.

Almost all development has been planned and implemented by the State through a variety of public organisations since the private sector is virtually non-existent. Local municipalities are meant to play a key role in planning and implementing commercial, housing, transportation and education projects. In practice they mainly play an administrative role in implementing projects, since all important decisions — including defining municipal budgets — are made at a provincial and national level. Although a wide range of local urban actors take part in the municipal decision-making process, most tend to act as delegates of national enterprises or ministries. In this respect, their actions essentially reinforce national policies and do not necessarily respond to locally felt priorities.

By the end of the 1980s, the Cuban administration had identified the need for decentralisation. However, the 'Special Period' created the need for greater centralisation and allowed the decentralisation of only certain functions. Economic activities such as the development of international tourism, distribution of building materials and management of hard currency became more centralised. The transfer of key activities and responsibilities by the IPF to local municipalities and local IPF teams continued. It also encouraged the development of new localised participatory processes and initiatives. These changes are creating new opportunities for developing localised urban initiatives that require building and strengthening local capacities.

The LA21 project in Bayamo is an initiative that aims to support this process of decentralisation. Its main focus is to stimulate the process of local capacity building in urban design, planning and management. The LA21 team has been

fig. 9.15 The sharp contrast between the urban form at the western and eastern edges of the city further accentuates the reading of the city as an asymmetrical form.

future housing development (feasible scenario)

future housing development (ideal scenario)

expansion of industry (feasible scenario)

new roads (feasible scenario)

Northern Ringroad (ideal scenario)

N

0   2.5km

fig. 9.16 Further urban expansion is envisioned in the east.

integrated into the structure of the Municipal Urban Planning Department of the IPF and works in close connection with the Mayor and other local institutions.

The IPF encourages and supports an exchange of knowledge of localised urban planning and design experiences between Cuban cities. It plays a key role in organising training programmes and developing education centres across Cuba to increase local capacities for sustainable urban planning and management. In Santa Clara, IPF and the LA21 Programme have already set up a LA21 national training and education centre that forms part of the IPF's national capacity building strategy. Its programmes have a particular emphasis on LA21 processes and methods. In parallel the project also contributes to IPF's magazine, disseminating these experiences widely and thereby strengthening local interest and capacities.

To further support the changes initiated by the IPF, the LA21 Programme has been grafted onto an already well-established *Programa de Desarrollo Humano Local* (PDHL). This UN programme with its national, provincial and municipal representations acts as a framework for the local co-ordination of various international actors facilitating the formulation and implementation of localised projects within the Cuban institutional structure. This programme also provides the technical cooperation framework for the LA21 project. It has determined guidelines for the transfer of funds and the definition and management of projects at the local level, the relationship with relevant Ministries, and the facilitation of local formalities. Within the framework of the PDHL, the LA21 Programme has provided an opportunity for developing approaches that address urban environmental issues.

In other contexts where the LA21 Programme has been implemented, city authorities have played a central role with provincial or national agencies secondarily involved as and when required. In the Cuban case, national level involvement has been present from the outset. Although there is an attempt to transfer activities and responsibilities to local institutions, there will continue to be a strong national level presence and involvement in the planning and development of Cuban cities. This can be seen as an advantage as there are inherent opportunities in having simultaneous national and local involvement. Better or more effective links between different levels of administration can lead to the develop-ment of plans that are more localised and sensitive to real needs, to the realisation of projects, the dissemination of knowledge, the replication of capacity building processes and to using limited available resources optimally.

URBAN INITIATIVES

The LA21 project in Bayamo explicitly focuses on improving local physical planning capacities to understand environmental issues from a spatial point of view. This is meant to improve possibilities for identifying and formulating urban projects, which reinforce and enhance the city structure and local patrimony, landscape and identity. It also serves as a means for developing small-scale strategic localised urban initiatives to improve city functioning in the short-mid term and for evolving local planning practices.

The first step of the project involved the preparation of an environmental profile of the city. These findings were documented in the '*Diagnostico Urbano-Ambiental de la Cuidad de Bayamo*' [Rosell Ochoa, Lemes Paneque 2003] (fig. 9.17). The document identified and described various problems the pilot LA21 project in Bayamo could address. It identified the range of sectors and institutions involved in local urban development, highlighted their links with the environment, and described urban and environmental risks and resources, as well as existing mechanisms for information exchange, coordination and decision-making. During the course of this process a selection of four priority issues was made and approved by the Municipal Council. Selection was based on their cross-sectoral nature, the impact actions could have on the most vulnerable population, current political priorities and achievability based on the limited available resources and financial constraints. The four problems to be addressed were the degradation of the Bayamo River, the deficiencies of the local waste collection and recycling systems, the lack of urban transport services and the need for public space and neighbourhood community centres. Two other key issues identified but not addressed were the problem of housing, which was considered too difficult to tackle at a local level, as well as sewage disposal and water-supply, which was considered too expensive. The priority considerations which emerged were the subject of intense de-

bate during the first official Urban Consultation organised in Bayamo (see also timeline p. 242) and conclusions were formalised by the first Urban Pact (fig. 9.18).

Shortly after the Urban Consultation, within the framework of Localizing Agenda 21, various actors were brought together to form working groups. Each working group is focusing its energies on one of the priority problems. The objective of these groups is to collectively negotiate and agree on how to respond to the problems identified in the Urban Diagnosis and Consultation process. The working groups meet weekly to define priorities, strategies and actions for potential realisation. They also provide advice to the local authorities. At present, the groups are in the process of formulating, developing and implementing demonstration projects or urban initiatives.

Each of the four problems identified involves addressing various issues, directly and indirectly. Re-claiming or reconditioning the Bayamo River is perhaps the most complex and challenging problem facing the groups (fig. 9.19). First, there is a need for addressing the degraded condition of the river before new activities and life can return. The river and its banks, once used for both leisure and functional purposes, are no longer safe since untreated waste water pollutes the river. The city relies almost exclusively on a system of biological oxidation lakes to purify its waste water. Malfunctioning related to the design and maintenance of the sewage system means that the water has not been adequately treated. The direct connection of sewage and storm water drainage into the river, in certain locations, further compounds the problem of water contamination. Clay extraction and deforestation have and continue to worsen the natural process of erosion along the banks of the river and further exacerbate the problem of local environmental degradation. Furthermore, the river banks are often used for illegal waste dumping.

Thus far, within the framework of the LA21 project, a laboratory for monitoring the quality of the water has been initiated as a preliminary measure. In parallel, the working group has attempted to integrate and coordinate a number of projects relating to the river through the creation of a park. The park project will simultaneously address the decontamination and rectification[5] of the river and reforestation of the riverbanks; involve the construction of a canal to

fig. 9.17 Cover image of the '*Diagnostico Urbano-Ambiental de la Cuidad de Bayamo*'. This comprehensive document builds an environmental profile of the city and re-presents the first step in the LA21 process in Bayamo.

fig. 9.18 The signing of the Urban Pact by actors during the Urban Consultation, April, 2003.

fig. 9.19 One of the four priority issues is the re-claiming or reconditioning of the Bayamo River.
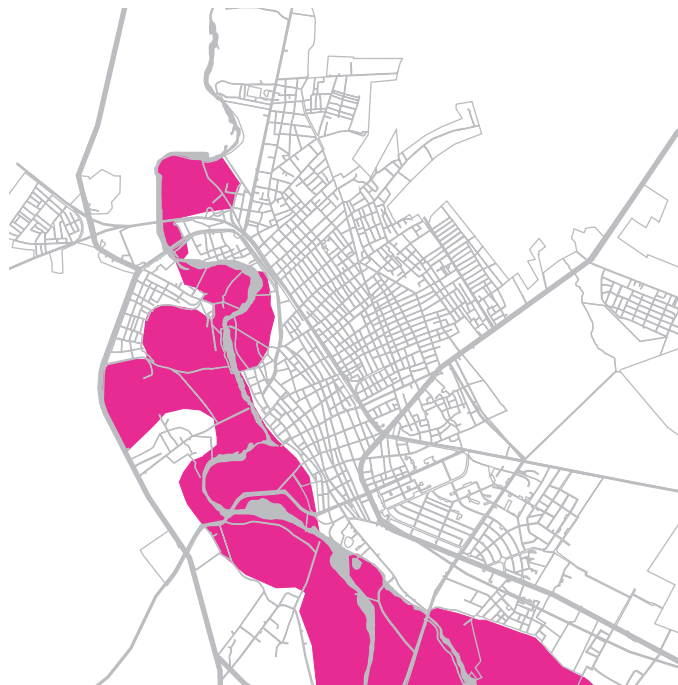
fig. 9.20 The idea of a river park.

- - - - ○ bus routes and stops

———— ● coach routes and stops

———— ● new coach routes and stop
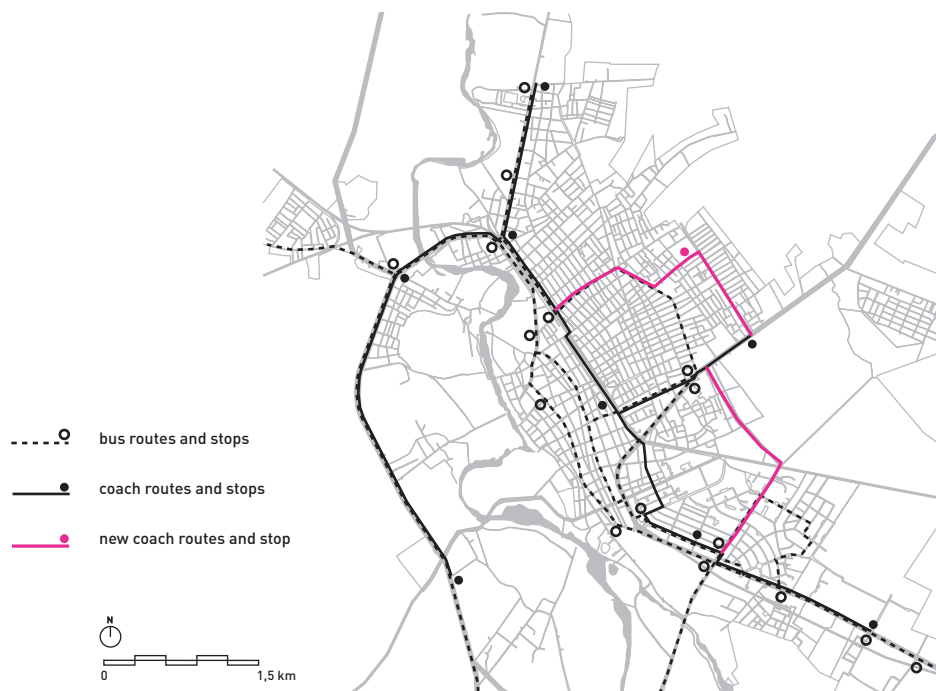
N

0   1,5 km

fig. 9.21 Line drawing of the new transport [coach] route and stop in relation
to the existing transport routes.

fig. 9.22 The LA21 working group focused on the revitalisation of *Camilo Cienfuegos*. This public space is situated in the *Zona Norte* and has a link to the railway turning point. It can be seen as a strategic location for enhancing the functioning of the railway and city.

collect and divert contaminated water via an oxidation lake for purification before it reaches the river; and consist of developing a new public space to establish links between the historic centre and the river. It also takes into consideration other projects currently being studied or implemented by the Province in Bayamo (fig. 9.20).

Beyond primarily environmental concerns the project also attempts to highlight the possibility for using the river as a mechanism for improving the quality and image of the city. The river is largely seen as a physical phenomenon with historic significance. Although it is not directly visible from the surrounding streets or open places in the city, due to its lower elevation, the project attempted to explore possibilities for reinforcing its presence by drawing and encouraging activities to it, which could support and enhance the public life of the city. This on-going and planned initiative along with the Municipal and Provincial intervention have almost put a stop to further degradation and give hope that the river can be reclaimed in the coming years.

Initiatives addressing the issue of improving solid waste collection and management are also in the processes of being implemented. This has so far principally involved the creation of a landfill area with a unit for sorting and storing recyclable waste, re-organisation of waste collection and initiation of a study concerning the amelioration of the waste collection vehicles.

Both the urban transport and public space working groups have explicitly focused on the *Zona Norte*. The LA21 demonstration projects of both working groups attempted to address the following conditions. Mainly due to a lack of resources this area is not yet completely urbanised, though it is occupied. The area is poorly serviced in terms of trans-

port infrastructure and public space. It is a predominantly residential area that does not attract other inhabitants from the city, creating a sense of isolation further compromising its functioning. The working group recommended that the area should be improved and integrated into the city through the implementation of a new transport route. As a first step a new route serviced by coaches was identified and finally inaugurated in July 2004 (fig. 9.21). From a spatial point of view, the location of the coach stop was seen as an opportunity for creating a new point of centrality to stimulate the development of new amenities and commercial facilities. Identifying an appropriate location for this facility involved a long process of negotiation with local inhabitants, private interests, transport authorities, and the Municipality. Coaches have been used in Bayamo since the beginning of the twentieth century and were rediscovered during the 'Special Period' as a response to fuel scarcities.[6] The widespread use of coaches in the public transportation network has strengthened the image of Bayamo as the 'city of coaches'.

This initiative aims to stimulate the formulation of a municipal strategy to encourage the development of a sustainable system of mobility for the city (as envisioned in the first Urban Pact). The focus would be on developing non-motorised modes of transport such as coaches and bicycles, as well as new pedestrian routes. This LA21 process demonstrates that insights combined with technical solutions and participation can lead to improvements in everyday life.

In terms of public space there was initially an attempt to focus on the revitalisation of an existing public place in the *Zona Norte* (fig. 9.22). The public space working group en-

countered various difficulties and has since stopped its activities. Aside from the general difficulties associated with defining project priorities, clarifying objectives and expected results, as well as preparing budgets, the group especially suffered from a lack of local support and gradually lost its motivation. The strategic importance of the spatial intervention was not fully appreciated.

The demonstration projects will serve as examples of feasible urban projects and strategies for development by the Municipality. The LA21 working groups, local and national authorities and participating international institutions play a part in steering the project's development.[7] The LA21 project in Bayamo is therefore a capacity building exercise that has expanded to identify and address real local problems.

DESIGN INVESTIGATIONS

The PGCHS, through the LA21 project, plays a complementary supportive role in the newly localised development planning process in Bayamo. It has sought to reinforce capacity building activities with a design investigation of the context. Spatial planning initiatives in the Cuban context are constrained by largely technical or empirical approaches to problem identification and spatial considerations are typically secondary in such a process. Problem formulation incorporating design thinking creates the necessary flexibility to simultaneously work across a range of disciplines, sectors, and beyond realising a technical solution within a short time frame. The involvement of PGCHS has specifically served to focus attention on the need for Bayamo to identify and develop a long-term vision. Without this, the broad spectrum of urban initiatives formulated and being implemented by the LA21 working groups will not necessarily lead to the creation of a coherent and robust development strategy.

Design has an iterative quality in the capacity to move between formulating and reformulating questions and finding solutions and, therefore, the capacity to investigate changing conditions that are an intrinsic part of the urban development planning process. It can be used as a vehicle for revealing, defining, understanding and interrogating the potentials of a context. The process involves a reading of the city, which forms a basis for identifying and prioritising

opportunities and spatial potentials. Sensitivity to temporal aspects of urban projects which recognise and acknowledge the need for considering different time scales also form an integral dimension. Design also has the capacity to allow the consideration of social, economic and environmental aspects of urban development in parallel with spatial dimensions. Design decision-making is also underpinned by an understanding that the cities are characterised by a simultaneous combination of deliberately planned and spontaneous actions. It is principally these considerations that form the basis for identifying and defining localised strategic opportunities.

In the Cuban context, the 'Special Period', widely recognised as a period of transition and uncertainty, can be characterised as a period in which a culture of shortage has determined the nature and pace of urban transformation. As such, in Bayamo there has firstly been a need for developing projects which can reconcile immediate needs with limited and uncertain resources. As it is widely recognised, short-term measures should not compromise future development opportunities. Projects need to both directly, as well as indirectly acknowledge and address immediate and long-term social, economic, and environmental dimensions simultaneously. Projects that are multi-dimensional in their scope and make optimal use of available limited resources can enhance the character, form and functioning of the city.

In parallel with the development of urban initiatives through cooperation with the IPF and LA21 local working groups, PGCHS initiated a complementary design investigation which took advantage of its position as an outsider (figs. 9.23 and 9.24). It allowed for a critical examination of local realities, which may otherwise be viewed with a bias and/or vested interest. The insights into the spatial realities and potentials can be used to further stimulate discussions about the city and planning opportunities. However, these need to be further developed and tested to incorporate localised mechanisms for implementation, financial constraints, environmental priorities and political complexities.

Being removed from the local planning process and everyday Cuban realities has meant the design investigations have not stayed solely focused on the identified LA21 priority problems and initiatives. They have not started from an exhaustive and detailed technical analysis of any one particular

fig. 9.23 Physical model of the city of Bayamo built at 1:5000 that was made to support the design investigation. It was used in the PGCHS design studio and by several under-graduate students for their theses during the academic year 2003–2004.

fig. 9.24 A collage of the PGCHS design studio results.

issue or problem either. Whilst environmental issues have remained a key concern, they have been examined in parallel with a range of other considerations. The result of this has been that otherwise hidden and overlooked opportunities have been uncovered in the process. A range of strategies have been developed which highlight unexploited potentials. This approach makes it possible to see that there are multiple scenarios for transformation, which need to be critically examined and further developed. It also suggests there are multiple realities no single urban project can address in and of itself. Therefore these findings can be used to stimulate thinking about strategic projects, which support the development of projects that are multidimensional and flexible enough to accommodate uncertainties and change and make better use of limited resources.

A first design investigation focused on the river, both confirming and further elaborating the potentials uncovered by the LA21 working group. It focused on exploring the dynamics between the river and city in morphological terms, with a view to understanding how to re-define the river as an integral part of the city structure. The investigation focused on possibilities for developing the public realm as a structure of the city — by connecting public space[s] at the city edge to the water, reprogramming some of the residual spaces that already exist, and using the river to reinforce the identity and patrimony of the city.

With respect to an examination of the *Zona Norte*, the design investigation highlighted new considerations. Whilst the LA21 working group primarily focused on the lack of public space, services and mobility, PGCHS attempted to look at the functioning of the area more generally. This led to the following simultaneous readings of the *Zona Norte*: as an area in transition undergoing relatively slow and piecemeal but constant transformation; an intermediate place with a unique relationship to both the historic centre and the surrounding productive landscape; and a place that is relatively disconnected or isolated from the rest of the city. These conditions naturally required thinking in terms of different temporal and physical scales and therefore concerned more than the neighbourhood area alone and its immediate needs. These conditions can be interpreted as opportunities to be developed to enhance the functioning of the area and city simultaneously (fig. 9.25).

The railway area was also seen as an element within the city with inherent latent potentials such as its scale, relatively low physical density, strategic location and connection to the city, and changing character. It acts as a rupture in the urban fabric, producing physical and social discontinuities. It also acts as an interchange connecting different types and scales of transport, creating conditions that facilitate social and commercial exchanges to serve the daily needs of the city. Movement is an essential quality shaping the identity of the city. It can function as a mediator between different flows of energy. The design investigation therefore focused on identifying and unlocking the potentials of the railway to support the transformation of the city. Rather than seeing it as simply a throughway and transport corridor, the investigation drew attention to its potential as a generator of urban intensification, creating a new centrality and public space, therefore giving it the capacity to assume a more complex role in the city (fig. 9.26).

These investigations have helped to highlight the potential of design to synthesise various inextricably linked factors.

THE MASTERPLAN

The working groups, consisting of local experts and inhabitants, with an extensive and intimate knowledge of local realities; the IPF with its planning capabilities and national reach; UN-HABITAT with its long-standing training experience in supporting urban processes; the PGCHS with its design expertise; and other international experts all play an essential role in capacity building through the formulation and implementation of more localised strategic spatial plans and projects. The LA21 capacity building actions are a source of support for various local planning activities including the revision and development of the Masterplan of Bayamo. A new version of the Masterplan of Bayamo will be technically reviewed by the IPF by the end of 2004, after which it will be submitted to the Municipal Council for approval and implementation.

This process is directly and indirectly supported by the LA21 project. The insights developed through the aforementioned design investigations and experience from pilot urban initiatives will be used to stimulate discussions about new

strategic approaches and initiatives, as well as support the development of a long-term vision for the city. A direct link between the IPF and the LA21 local working groups has ensured that the pilot LA21 urban initiatives have already been incorporated into local planning activities. Approaches and initiatives concerning the re-organization of transportation and waste management and the development of a river park system have been incorporated.

The reading of Bayamo, as an asymmetrical city, which is structured by nature, regional infrastructures, and undefined edges and fragmented into three parts could be exploited to improve the functioning of the city. It can be used to re-focus attention on identifying and exploiting the hidden opportunities within the existing urbanised territory. It also introduces the notion of strategic interventions to create synergies and overlaps between various parts of the city, thereby stimulating the development of a coherent structure.

A first opportunity lies in reclaiming the river as a vital element for organising the public realm to support the growth of the city. A second opportunity lies in engaging the *Carretera Central*, the railway and the river as elements, which have an unexploited capacity to structure the city. Bayamo is not only a transit point within a wider national network, it is also an important destination for inhabitants from the province. In this regard, transport infrastructure has become a key determinant of the city's form. Efforts to make the city structure more coherent can simultaneously contribute to developing its character, quality and identity. The process of restructuring the city can therefore strengthen its reading as a 'city of passage', 'city of destination', and 'city of coaches.' A third opportunity lies in the realisation of the southern ring road, an extension of the main road that links Manzanillo and Havana. An investigation of this project can bring into question the peripheral status of the river valley. It could present new opportunities for expansion of the city, helping to create a more compact structure or for further emphasising its peripheral status. A fourth opportunity lies in consolidating and integrating neighbourhood fabrics through the development of public space and new building typologies. A fifth opportunity lies in determining a structure for the fringe areas east of the city, which can trigger a process of consolidation and prevent further sprawl.

fig. 9.25 The *Zona Norte* is characterised by a lack of amenity and an incomplete structure. It is a green residential zone with relatively low density which can support further development through intensification.

fig. 9.26 The speed of the trains and the actual number of train stops in the city make it possible to approach the railway as a transport mode on the urban scale. In the design investigation it was approached as a tramline.

As design is an ongoing and complex process, it is a challenge to synchronise and insert the findings of the project into the existing administrative revision of the master plan. Most importantly, the project has successfully involved various levels of local, national and provincial participation. The involvement of a national institution such as the IPF plays a critical role in disseminating new and developing more effective strategies for planning to other Cuban cities, in strengthening local commitment to projects, and supporting the process of identifying local spatial realities. Simultaneously, local involvement ensures an appropriate level of interest and ownership in shaping urban realities.

The LA21 project in Cuba has reached a moment at which it is appropriate to valorise the development of the new localised process and the key opportunities it has uncovered in Bayamo.

NOTES

1. Cuban culture and society during the 20th century have been shaped by successive radical political and economic changes. Since its struggle for independence, Cubans have endured a period of American exploitation, fought a Revolution, and adjusted to the development of a socialist state.

2. The Cuban film 'Se Permuta,' written and directed by Juan Carlos Tabío [1984], focuses on aspects of life in socialist Cuba, revealing how transactions such as 'acquiring' a house or obtaining a telephone connection can inadvertently imply entering into marriages and divorces.

3. Consejo popular is the smallest administrative unit created by the Government in the 1980s to facilitate greater participation. Bayamo consists of eight consejos populares. Each consejo is governed by a president, vice-president and a team of elected representatives. Their aim is to improve the provision and quality of medical, educational, social and cultural services at the local level. The unit also works to support the effective development of economic activities. It attempts to satisfy the social needs of the population through wider participation and by alerting higher authorities to local problems and deficiencies. In general, most community work and organisations involve the consejos.
   A consejo is generally divided into two repartos, which is neither a political, nor an administrative unit. Each reparto has its own community centre that is responsible for almost all commercial activities. As such, the reparto is used for planning purposes to provide an indication of required services for its inhabitants. [Colpaert and Dens 2004]

4. Barrancas or ravines form routes to overcome topographical differences between the river and city.

5. Rectification refers to the deepening and widening of the river by removing some of the little islands preventing through passage.

6. According to the Diagnostico, motorised transport only serves 15 percent of local commuters [Rosell Ochoa, Lemes Paneque 2003].

7. Reporting makes it possible to keep all parties informed of developments and ensures effective follow-up of debates and decisions generated by the various groups.

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LA21 Local Team mission to Curitiba, Brazil (14–16 April)
    Forum 'Sustainable Urbanisation in Latin America
    and the Caribbean'
Follow-up mission to Bayamo (18–23 July)
    by the LA21 Programme coordinator
LA21 Local Team mission to Havana (September)
    Regional consultation 'Local management and risk
    management of human settlements in the Caribbean'
LA21 Local Team mission to Brussels, Belgium (October)
    World HABITAT Day and the Conference 'LA21 in Develop-
    ment Perspectives'
LA21 Local Team (JPO) mission to Bogotá, Colombia
    International Forum of Local Governance
Follow-up and evaluation mission to Bayamo (December)
    by the LA21 Programme coordinator

Assessment mission to Cuba (7–16 May)
    Expert mission by BC and UNCHS
    Bayamo was concluded to be the most appropriate
    priority town
Project set-up mission to Bayamo (6–20 December)
    by UN-HABITAT, LA21 Programme Coordinator
    and JPO

Start Local Team (January)
    Establishment of the provisional office and
    purchase of equipment, furniture, and computers
Preparation of the 'Diagnostico Urbano-Ambiental'

Publication in the magazine of IPF (No. 2, 2001)
    'Local Agenda 21 Experiences of HABITAT in
    the world during the last ten years. The focus
    areas and lessons learned.'

2001

2002

BAYAMO

'Diagnostico Urbano-Ambiental' by the local team (October–December)
    Extensive urban environmental profile, identifying issues, problems
    and institutional mechanisms, documented in a publication for
    distribution to more than 200 local and national actors
Publication in the magazine of IPF (No. 3, 2002)
    'The selection process of a Cuban city in the LA21 Programme'
    From now on, in each number, two pages are devoted to the
    experience of LA21 Programme in Cuba.

**Official signing of the LA21 project Bayamo by the
    UN representative in Cuba and the Ministry of
    International Cooperation** (20 February)
**Presentation of the project and approbation
    by the Municipality** (13 March)
**Presentation of the project and approbation by
    the Province** (24 April)
**Preparation of the LA21 national training
    and education centre in Santa Clara**

International short term consultancy to Bayamo (9–16 July)
    Set-up of Environmental Management Information System

BC mission to Bayamo (January)
Preparation of the Consultation Workshop
LA21 Local Team mission to Havana (February)
Regional Seminar of Exchange between Researchers
and Actors 'Democratic City Management: Local Initiatives'
LA21 Local Team mission to Agadir, Morocco (February)
Urban Consultation in Agadir
Belgium: meeting with DGOS and the city of Ghent
in view of a city-to-city cooperation
Workshop: 'Urban Consultation' (April)
Focus on four priority issues: river degradation, waste
management, urban mobility and public spaces and services,
200 participants. Analysis of technical and institutional aspects.
LA21 Local Team (JPO) mission to Quito, Ecuador (May)
Workshop of Capitalisation of Urban Consultation of PGU-ALC
Follow-up and training mission to Bayamo (June)
by the LA21 Programme coordinator
PGCHS Mission preparing design investigation
LA21 Local Team mission to Alexandria, Egypt
Participation in the LA21 / Sustainable Cities Global meeting
Meeting in Paris, France, with the Committee of United Cities
LA21 Local Team mission to Lima, Peru (September)
International Exchange of Urban Waste Management
Follow-up and evaluation mission to Bayamo (October)
by the LA21 Programme coordinator

Common mission UN-HABITAT / UNEP (12–21 February)
Defining a common replication project between
GEO-Cities and LA21, within a common strategy
for the LAC region
**UN-HABITAT EMIS follow-up mission to Bayamo
and Santa Clara** (29 March–9 April)
UNEP mission to Santa Clara (19–24 April)
Starting the replication: Training session with the local
teams and workshops in Santa Clara and Cienfuegos
Mission of the Belgian Ambassador to Bayamo. (5–6 July)
Inauguration of new coach line: meeting with local
team, thematic groups and local authorities
**LA21 National Team mission to the 2nd World Urban
Forum, Barcelona.** (13–17 September)
Meeting with the 'Diputación de Cataluña' in view of a
decentralised cooperation
BC mission to Santa Clara and Bayamo (October)
Support to the national training programme
Workshop on master plan of Bayamo

Self-Evaluation workshop in Bayamo (18–20 February)
Identifying learnt lessons, with the presence of the LA21 Pro-
gramme coordinator, the UN-HABITAT regional office
and national authorities

2003

2004

Initiation of the working groups (June)
Weekly meetings and fieldwork of the four groups
Search of a city-to-city cooperation (June)
Candidature of Bayamo for city to city cooperation with the
Belgian cities Brasschaat or Ghent. The city was not selected.

Pilot project proposals by 3 Working Groups (January–March)
Pilot project: Inauguration of new coach line in Bayamo (5 July)
Inauguration of the LA21 National Office (November)

Formation of thematic working groups (May)
Working groups around priority issues
identified in Urban Consultation
Urban Pact 1 (11 April)
Commitment to develop concrete measures to curb
the four priority problems identified in the Urban
Diagnostico. Visions: river city; clean city through
community participation; city with sustainable
public transport; city structured by community
centres at the neighbourhood level.
**Inauguration of the LA21 national training
and education centre in Santa Clara**
(27 October) Announcement of the 3 selected cities
for replication: Santa Clara, Cienfuegos and Holguín
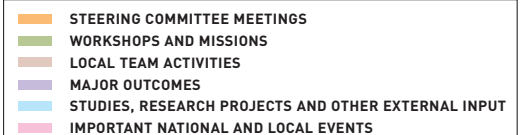
PGCHS Design Studio (February–March)
River landscape and urban agriculture, railway line
and public spaces

The local team moves to the newly constructed office (June)
**Start of the first training module in the LA21 education centre
in Santa Clara** (October)
10 sessions of 1 week, participation of 27 professionals of 11 cities
**JPO leaves Bayamo and becomes national adviser of the
LA21 Programme in Cuba** (November)
Preparation of the replication of the project in three other
Cuban cities and setting-up of a national office within the
Physical Planning Institute

■ STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS
■ WORKSHOPS AND MISSIONS
■ LOCAL TEAM ACTIVITIES
■ MAJOR OUTCOMES
■ STUDIES, RESEARCH PROJECTS AND OTHER EXTERNAL INPUT
■ IMPORTANT NATIONAL AND LOCAL EVENTS

Lessons Learnt

HAN VERSCHURE, RAFAEL TUTS

The major aim of this chapter is to draw some conclusions from the experiences of those who have participated in the implementation of the Localising Agenda 21 Programme since 1995. These conclusions are formulated more in a manner of 'lessons learnt' or more modestly as 'lessons learnt so far.' In the direct partner cities of Nakuru, Essaouira, Vinh and Bayamo, the local LA21 Programme teams are continuing with their efforts, implementing proposals and adding new dimensions. However, the very nature of the initiative means several Programme objectives will only be realised as planned on a long-term basis. In other cities in Morocco, Kenya and Cuba, the Programme is being replicated. Based on this accumulated experience, new national programmes have been launched in Senegal, Brazil and Peru.

The lessons learnt are therefore tentative, at best, and can be further modified. Whereby it needs to be stressed that each partner city has developed its own timeline, phasing and intensity of implementation, this has very much depended on local dynamics, the political stability and commitment, the strengths of the local teams, and, to a more limited extent, the external support.

AGENDA 21 AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, A CONTINUOUS EXPLORATION

Agenda 21, as formulated in Rio de Janeiro, is a powerful tool and a valuable source of inspiration. However, the Agenda does not cover the full extent of sustainable development, a concept that itself is very broad and vague. Nevertheless, it is clear that sustainable development calls for a departure from conventional notions of development, which from the 1950s to the 1980s were often based on a rather one-dimensional interpretation of economic growth within an expanding free market as a measure for development.

By now it is clear that sustainable development calls for a rethinking of conventional production and consumption patterns, which often use far too many resources. It advocates a reorientation of these patterns in order to contribute better to a more equitable distribution of resources. The degree to which sustainable development deals with fundamental changes in lifestyles, particularly of those having, control-

ling or consuming a major share of the earth's resources, is an essential measure of the LA21 Programme. Sustainability concepts as spelled out in Agenda 21 thereby advocate both changing and challenging societal orientation. The prevailing world division between 'North' and 'South' is fast becoming obsolete and has instead been replaced by the 'haves' and 'have-nots' or, better still, by the 'powerful' and 'powerless,' acknowledging that each category can be found in the North as well as in the South and can also be found in each of the partner cities of the Programme.

It is also necessary to further explore and redefine the concept of sustainability, particularly as it needs to be applied to specific urban settings in the various contexts concerned. At times this process of exploration can be helped by courageously exposing what is unsustainable. For example, the endless expansion of cities through encroachment on fertile agricultural land or on valuable ecological zones is in most of the partner cities thoroughly unsustainable, even though unscrupulous actors may continue the practice. Likewise, central and autocratic urban development practices that are disconnected from local needs, interests and aspirations are in the long run unsustainable.

This exploratory nature, of giving substance to the concept of sustainability, implies a certain flexibility in taking the necessary steps toward sustainable development. Each individual context requires a search for its key interpretative accents and its possible time-frame. This also calls for developing a systematic way of learning and measuring progress. One must learn by doing, but one must also evolve from ad-hocism to systematic learning from various local experiences and previous mistakes. Mutual learning and capacity-building are needed to strengthen our understanding of urban sustainability processes and to enable their more systematic functioning. Each context and each generation must necessarily re-think and relearn its key issues and responses.

LOCALISING AGENDA 21: A POTENTIAL FRAMEWORK

The framework as initially developed by the Localising Agenda 21 Programme has evolved over time and is now a

workable approach to enhance sustainable urban development. The work presented in this book is not an end in itself and, as the case may be, it largely serves as a promising initial step for the direct partner cities, as well as a useful example of a possible trajectory for other cities.

The specific focus of the LA21 Programme can be viewed as complementary to other programmes that have developed over the years, such as the Sustainable Cities Programme, the Urban Management Programme, and the Healthy Cities Programme. ICLEI (International Council for Local Environment Initiatives) has regularly made inventories of the cities having initiated or undertaken a Local Agenda 21 Programme.

Useful lessons can be learnt from these various programmes. However, it should be clarified, that these programmes do not necessarily have the same objectives, methods and visions for what is implied by urban sustainability. To assume that by simply using the label of 'sustainability' all the actors in these programmes are of the same mind, is wrong. The term 'sustainability' is so broad that it allows for debate, interpretation and elaboration but also a divergence of focus.

Distinctive elements of the Localising Agenda 21 Programme include the following: a strong focus on secondary cities in which growth and expansion has to deal with the need for conserving fragile ecosystems; and defining sustainable development in a broad way to include searching for an equilibrium between the economic, social and environmental dimensions, but with emphasis on the spatial and built context in which these different dimensions are to be harmonised. The environmental point of entry that dominated some programmes in the late 1980s and early 1990s is not necessarily taken as a starting point. Although in the case of Bayamo, Cuba, this point of entry did to some extent take the lead (see for example, Diagnostico Urbano*). In Nakuru, Vinh and Essaouira, a more diverse series of entry points came to the fore during the first consultation workshops held in order to elaborate a development vision for each city. Within the reality of a spatial setting, with a strong interaction of the built and natural environment — its potentials, bottlenecks and obstacles, opportunities and aspira-

* OPPM Bayamo, Proyecto AGENDA 21 LOCAL: Diagnostico Urbano-Ambiental, Ciudad de Bayamo, March 2003.

tions were all explored with a broad range of actors (or stakeholders). In the case of Bayamo, although the focus was more on environmental issues, the involvement of the stakeholders was active from the beginning. It can thus be concluded that entry-points can vary, provided one carefully balances all the aspects in the ongoing process.

A unique feature of the Localising Agenda 21 Programme is its strong emphasis on strategic choices and interventions, or accepting uncertainty and inherent limitations, and thus insisting that strategically important choices be made to contribute to the sustainable development of the city. To do this in a structured way requires using existing structures (including the spatial structuring of the cities) while also developing a planned approach with a time-path that spells out key moments, including commitments and checkpoints for the various actors (e.g. urban pacts). This strategic and structural focus, to a certain extent, brings the LA21 Programme approach close to so-called 'Strategic Structure Planning,' which attempts to end the reign of normative, comprehensive and top-down master-planning.

LOCAL VERSUS GLOBAL: BEYOND THE OPPOSITES

Balancing the local and the global in the drive towards more sustainable development within a globalising world is not easy. In each of the cities concerned, this search for a good balance was a challenge: increasing international road transport through Nakuru adds to the significance of the highway as a major attraction in the city, yet hinders the linkages between neighbourhoods; in Essaouira, the exploitative nature of international fishing practices has brought some local industries to a halt while investors in international tourism look for quick gains, disregarding the invaluable natural assets of the city; and in Vinh, the process of achieving this balance revolved more around the difficult process of upholding social equity and redistribution efforts and yet opening up to a liberalised market economy. A case in point was the debate about increasing rents in Quang Trung to recover the costs of renovations, while at the same time respecting the social benefits provided to the tenants. In Bayamo, the balancing of local and global concerns is greatly affected by the effects of the embargo imposed by its powerful neigh-

bour and by the effect of the fall of the Eastern Block on the Cuban economy.

Whereas in the 1970s and 1980s several countries adopted decentralisation policies to devolve powers to the local authorities with varying levels of success, the greater challenge by far remains the localisation of development processes, the stimulation of local communities and their sense of belonging, and the balancing of the local and the global with a locally based decision-making process. More fundamental is the recognition of the unique character of the 'locus,' the places people live in, their houses and neighbourhoods, their parks and playgrounds, the natural setting, and the land- and cityscape, as well as the specific collective memory and civic awareness of each 'locus.' Combined, the collective memory and locus form both a unique frame and resource for local development. At the same time, improved international communication provides a plethora of other 'loci' images that, at times, alter aspirations and often condition future 'needs' to unrealistic or alien expectations.

An interesting and to some degree unique feature of the LA21 Programme has been to strengthen North–South, local-to-local, inter-municipal partnerships (e.g. Leuven-Nakuru and Essaouira-Etterbeek), which has contributed not only to implementing specific (demonstration) projects, but even more so to establishing dialogues that can undo the simplistic imagery of the 'other' and put the life experiences of two different 'loci' next to each other without necessarily giving up each other's uniqueness.

These collaborative experiences have encouraged the achievement of concrete outputs, but the extent to which this cooperation has contributed to the improving of long-term urban governance, in both municipalities involved in the inter-municipal partnership, is yet to be evaluated.

FOSTERING NEW RELATIONS BETWEEN ACTORS WITHIN A CONTEXT-SPECIFIC SETTING

The degree of success of Localising Agenda 21 processes depends very much upon the quality, commitment and strengths of the actors involved. From the outset the LA21 Programme made a deliberate effort to work directly with actors at the local urban level, unlike some multilateral

programmes. The Programme initiated the preparation and elaboration of elements in direct cooperation with municipalities and, in doing so, it partially skipped negotiating with national actors at first. Although care was taken to consult some national actors (such as the Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Construction, Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, national research and capacity-building institutes, national or international NGOs, national consultants), getting the Programme off the ground was very much a collaborative effort between municipalities, (often together with provincial authorities) UN-HABITAT, and the Belgian Consortium.

Gradually, and as the reality of the context dictated, supra-local partners were directly involved. This process was easier in those contexts in which decentralisation was already explicitly incorporated into the legal framework (e.g. Kenya, Morocco and, to some extent, Cuba), and a little more difficult in contexts in which centralised national powers were not easily shared (e.g. Vietnam and again, to some extent, Cuba). In addition, the Programme can be strengthened through enhanced cooperation with supra-local institutions. This was the case in Cuba, where cooperation with the National Physical Planning Institute is exemplary; it is also the case in Morocco and Kenya, where there was collaboration with academic institutions. On the other hand in Cuba, despite national policy and mechanisms encouraging City to City Cooperation, decentralised cooperation with Belgian municipalities, although well explored proves to be more difficult.

Striking a good balance that was respectful of political contextual specificity was, in itself, an interesting learning process of the Programme. However, a decentralised system or greater autonomy at the local level, although being a necessary condition for a sound bottom-up LA21 process to take place, proved not to be sufficiently adequate. Indeed, good urban governance at the local level, transparent decision-making and willingness to share information, participatory processes, a commitment to long-term sustainable development objectives, and a sound equilibrium between self-interest and the interests of the local communities, are all equally necessary criteria. In many contexts good progress has been made but there is still a long way to go towards meeting these criteria as prerequisites.

In the case of Nakuru, the frequent changes in the political decision-making order (mayor, town clerk, councillors) were an obstacle to the continuity of the LA21 process. In the case of Essaouira, the lack of transparency with regards to major projects in the city hindered the process. In the case of Vinh, the interweaving and overlapping of the roles of elected and party officials added to the complexity and lack of clarity. In the case of Bayamo, certain decisions taken in Havana, especially in terms of investment in big urban development, did not necessarily reflect the priorities identified locally.

There is no standard specification in the general LA21 Programme design for the institutional location and relationships of the Programme. This is always a question that hinges on the specifics of the local situation. High-level support is often critical to the success of an initiative. Political will and a democratic governance system are also key ingredients for achieving credible commitments. It is also clear from the experience that the proximity and organisational relationships of the project to the relevant local government are critical in determining whether the local government develops a sense of 'ownership' and thus takes up, supports and sustains the concepts and activities. In some cases, insufficient integration of the initiative with the day-to-day running of the local authority led to lack of ownership at a later stage. A key mechanism to ensure strong linkages between the LA21 Programme and local government decision-making is creating formal linkages between the priorities coming out of LA21 processes on one side and day-to-day concerns, immediate issues, municipal budgets and development plans, on the other. This appears to be an indispensable factor for sustaining the LA21 Programme beyond a period of external support.

The Programme did gradually develop specific activities and improved methods to increase the role of local authorities as facilitators and partners in an open dialogue. This was done through many methods:

- Specific capacity building sessions for councillors
- Organising consultation processes and open workshops inviting several key actors in the towns (ranging from councillors, private sector representatives, community leaders, administration, informal sector actors, and actors from NGOs and CBOs)
- Calling upon partners specialised in community action programmes (e.g. ENDA-Magreb in Essaouira and ENDA-Vietnam in Vinh City)
- Setting up innovative locally specific new actors to stimulate bottom-up involvement (e.g. setting up of Zonal Development Committees in Nakuru, strengthening of neighbourhood associations in Essaouira, enhancing community development in Vinh, and setting up of working groups in Bayamo)
- The tool of 'Urban Pacts' was explicitly introduced to build in greater commitment and longer-term continuity; this was particularly successful in Nakuru and Bayamo and partially so in Essaouira

However, it has become evident that the degree to which the three-track process (vision, action and participation/communication and co-production) is well-balanced and encompasses the preoccupations and interests of all the actors, provides better chances for sustainable urban development, going well beyond decentralisation or even formally established consultation-in-planning processes. In addition, for such a process to function well requires transparency and a willingness to share information as a step towards for participatory decision-making. However, fostering effective trialogues between local government, civil society and the private sector about co-producing a more sustainable urban quality of life is not easy.

A forum that allows for wide participation in strategic thinking, enables consensus, motivates actors and an assessment of progress is essential for a successful sustainable urban development initiative. The city workshop with all actors raises awareness of key environmental issues, formulates visions, mobilises stakeholders, builds popular and political support, and provides the foundations on which the Programme proceeds. It should be noted that the extent to which civic society and private sector representatives can be involved in strategy development and priority setting during the process depends to a great extent on the existing planning traditions, institutional structure and cultural context. It is very important to have baseline indicators for each city on the participation of stakeholders in planning, against which progress in broad-based consultation can be meas-

ured. Workshops tend to generate long lists of actions, which need to be prioritised. Criteria for prioritisation include, amongst others, urgency, strategic value, structural impact, political feasibility, impact on poverty and economic viability. Evaluation and progress reports of running projects, brainstorming and designerly research on new projects allow local stakeholders to acquire insight and concretise the consultation of issues, visions, priorities, contributions and responsibilities. The LA21 Programme has shown that 'Urban Pacts' are a useful instrument to maintain direction and avoid deviation from the initially agreed list of priorities. When political, economic and environmental conditions change, these Pacts should be renewed and updated to reflect new conditions, while keeping in mind a long-term vision of the development of the city. In Nakuru and Bayamo such Urban Pacts were particularly successful as they were supported by all actors involved.

In general, it can be said that the Programme was successful in initiating and stimulating realistic broad-based consultation and even co-production processes specific to the cultural and institutional context of each city, even if not all the actors have remained involved during the full period of the Programme. It is as yet too early to assess whether these processes will, in each city, withstand the test of sustainability for creating long-lasting, improved democratic processes and better urban governance.

BALANCING VISION, ACTION AND COMMUNICATION AND THE NEED FOR REALISTIC TIME-FRAMES

While implementing LA21 processes, it is important to pay equal attention to vision-building, implementing concrete projects and actions and promoting participation, communication and co-production between stakeholders. A good mix of these three ingredients into an urban trialogue is likely to yield a successful LA21 process. However, prevailing planning and management practices in diverse institutional contexts show there is often a lack of balance between these three components. Vision without action does not produce immediately tangible results. Action without vision does not address strategic long-term conditions, which ensures that essential resources for a qualitative urban life are available for future generations. Vision and action without communication are deemed to fail, as it does not take into consideration the aspirations of civic society as a whole. The different institutional, economic and political contexts of Kenya, Morocco, Vietnam and Cuba result in LA21 processes that tend to over-emphasise, downplay or isolate one of these key components. Capacity building efforts should be primarily geared to restoring the balance between vision, action and communication. Various methods can be used:

- Developing visions is more than a one-time consultation or an institutional hearing on a master plan. Activating the process of vision-building can be done through exhibits, and proposals and could occur over a period of time.
- Actions and projects should be of sufficient variety and occur over differing time spans; short-term actions should be exploratory and engage actors, while long-term projects can be broken down into different phases (e.g. urban park in Essaouira).
- Co-production can be 'tested out' in actions and projects. Periods of slowdown or inactivity (e.g. during election time) can be used to increase capacity building, to mobilise donor support, and to stimulate research so that results can be presented to local authorities.

LA21 Programme initiatives should be set up with a sensible time-frame from the outset. External initiatives can be catalytic to put LA21 processes in place, but patience is needed to see results come through. In almost all contexts, the supporting programmes were faced with reactionary forces, which threaten achievements and slow down the pace of implementation. Considerable time flexibility is needed to allow for local actors to fully back politically or socially sensitive components of action plans. Capacity-building initiatives of this nature, the purpose of which is to fundamentally change attitudes about and approaches to urban management, must necessarily take time and cannot be rushed. Unfortunately, most of the interventions begin with a wholly unrealistic two-year time-frame. Such a short time scale is often chosen not with any view to the dynamics of the project process, but rather to fit to the administrative requirements of external support agencies. An initial process of at

least five to six years seems to be more appropriate, with decreasing intensity of external inputs and with effective review procedures built in. However, it is clear that in the long run, no sustainable urban development is possible without the will and commitment of subsequent generations of urban citizens and decision-makers.

SPACE IS A MAJOR RESOURCE

There was a tendency from the 1970s to the 1990s to downplay the physical reality in programmes and projects, even up to the point of forgetting that, after all, people and their places are physical. Yet we know that space as a basic resource is also becoming a scarce one. The LA21 Programme started with the explicit intention of reinstating 'built space' or 'built environment' as a resource and to see it as a new challenge for positively working towards sustainable development. Although, in principle, all environments are also 'built' environments to the extent that they are transformed, reinterpreted or given meaning by human interaction, we use the term in its more literal, physical connotation. Anyhow, both in the physical and non-physical sense, built environments are references or 'anchor' points for people in their daily lives. The term 'environment' is, however, in the Programme's viewpoint, not limited to ecological aspects (air and water quality, waste, etc.) but encompasses the very (re)structuring, (re)organisation and realisation by which space becomes built space. It is a process that in the urban context is represented by the term 'urbanism' and the discipline of urban planning and design. As such, this discipline that so far has participated only marginally in the current debate on sustainable urban development is brought back to the centre of it.

Such a definition of 'urbanism' does not accept the split between 'landscapes' and 'cityscapes.' Yet the urban built environment includes a mix of 'hard' and 'soft,' of 'solids' and 'voids,' and of 'natural' (water, plants, and topography) and 'man-made' (parks, ponds, and slopes). Urban spaces are an essential mix between them.

We have learnt that this viewpoint, though seemingly evident, is not sufficiently incorporated into programmes and projects or is too often merely limited to a sectoral, easy-to-

grasp aspect of spatial elements to be tackled from among a long list of priorities (e.g. road-building, public buildings, housing construction, and water supply systems). Similarly focusing on processes (such as participation) may not necessarily yield improved spatial quality if the latter is not consciously stressed as a prime issue of the urban debate. We have argued that participation, for example, is a necessary condition but not a sufficient one to guarantee improvement in lasting spatial quality.

The form of towns and cities is not neutral but is related to each locale, to cultural heritage, and to contemporary modes of production and consumption that have transformed previous city structures and are now shaping the present fabric. We have also termed this built heritage of the city as 'layered narratives,' as it tells the story of the many preceding generations that have shaped the city. Footprints of towns and cities show that the energy efficiency of urban forms can vary greatly: a compact city (which is not the same as a city of high-rise development) can be more appropriate for a particular culture or more cost-efficient in terms of infrastructure. Whereas in other contexts — for instance the East Side of Nakuru — the crucial issue is to find a sustainable productive balance between built space and land for gardening or agriculture.

Infrastructure works are constantly shaping and changing the structure of the city. In Nakuru for instance, urban transport — 'the struggle to move' — is such a crucial issue that the simple decision to tarmac (or pave) a dust road becomes a strategic urban intervention with impact on the long term development of the adjacent neighbourhoods. Moreover, the search for alternative basic infrastructure (for example, rethinking the underground networks or end-of-pipe solutions) is only just starting. How this search will reshape our cities is still a matter of much more fundamental exploration. In the Programme, this exploration should be more courageously addressed.

These issues have all constituted the core of concern for the Programme in its search for visions and projects for another, more sustainable urbanism.

As can be seen in the chapters on the different LA21 Programme cities, the analysis clearly illustrates how each of the cities was formed and structured and of how the potentials of each place could be brought out and made part

of the intensive elaboration towards a sustainable urban development. Such analysis requires sound research — in most cases research by design — and a receptive mind.

In practice, this meant searching and developing proposals for strategic intervention in the cities. In some cases, the accent was on the interface between 'nature' (e.g. the park in Nakuru and sand dunes in Essaouira) and 'city' (housing and open areas along the park and the *lotissements* in Essaouira). In other cases, it meant exploring new potentials for urban bodies or water-courses (e.g. riverfront and rice fields in Vinh and the river edges in Bayamo).

Perhaps the most difficult lesson lay not in drawing attention to these elements (as often physical planners, engineers, and architects have had to do in the course of their professional duties), but rather in showing the known elements from a different angle so that for instance conflicting interests are turned into mutual support.

In Nakuru, the National Park authorities initially perceived the Nakurese as a 'hindrance,' while the town's citizens perceived the Park as 'alien' or as a 'backyard' (the dumping of garbage there was an obvious sign). The Programme managed to bring these two parties together and to convince them the Park and city were essentially complementary to each other and that the Park's edge offered new spatial potentialities. Similarly in Essaouira, the sand dunes are no longer treated as the town's backyard or as an encroachment area for greedy land-speculating bulldozing developers, but as a potential transition area between the city and the dunes, creating a new city front ('dune front' as analogy to 'water-front') with an urban park offering opportunities for small-scale urban agriculture (home gardening), sports facilities, playgrounds, and walking trails.

However, such visions translated into urban projects are by necessity long-term operations, often needing almost a generation to be fully implemented. Complementary, short-term projects are equally important. The Quang Trung urban project in the Vinh proposals is an excellent example of combining short-term objectives (renovation of some dilapidated housing blocks) with the long-term objective of restructuring and revitalising a central city area. Seeing short-term actions and projects as opportunities to develop long-term strategic urban development objectives has been one of the major achievements of the Programme.

Experience indicates the potential usefulness of small-scale 'demonstration' projects that can be swiftly implemented during the first few years of a LA21 Programme project. Properly done, such demonstration projects have three potential benefits. They enhance visibility, which can be extremely valuable for generating community and political support. They can help test and refine methodologies, particularly the participatory, bottom-up approach as operated through local LA21 Programme teams. Lastly, they can give a welcome boost to the morale of those involved in the project and especially its local LA21 Programme team. For this reason, it has been suggested that the LA21 Programme should have, as an integral part of their project design, a process (with activities and resources) through which a local team can generate 'fast-track' community based projects, organising their implementation in a participatory but expeditious way. When the process matures, Programme funds should be increasingly matched by local funds, as tying in local support for further interventions is likely to be more sustainable and replicable. Projects and actions contribute to *efficiency* and *accountability*. They increase the quality of the collective realm, at the benefit of a vast majority of urban dwellers and users. As such, they enhance the collective patrimony, the physical or spatial capital of all citizens and of the poor in particular. However, pure ad-hocism has to be avoided and 'social energy' — the willingness to co-produce — is not an unlimited resource. The key issue here is to define short-term community based actions that prepare, introduce, and present the long term urban projects.

LIMITS TO EXTERNAL INPUTS AND LOCAL RESOURCES

The LA21 Programme is based on the strong hypothesis that the first and most important pools of resources for sustainable urban development lie with people and their locales in their capacity to optimise local assets and to localise global currents. Exploring the potentialities of each place in all its great physical variety and inherent limitations (topography, water, soil, and climatic elements) has already been done by people locally over several generations. Furthermore, throughout history local people have developed meth-

ods — a collective memory — to ensure their survival and produce conditions for enabling their culture to thrive. A good understanding of and respect for this collective memory has to form the basis for initiating a LA21 Programme initiative.

It is to the credit of the major Programme partners that such an attitude of willingness to understand and respect the collective memory of each city continues to underlie the Programme up until the present day. This attitude was partially the result of the good blend achieved between international and multilateral agents, committed local actors, international and national academics and advisors and practising professionals, and the general desire for cooperation in a mutual learning engagement.

However, weaknesses have appeared in the Programme at several levels, each providing interesting room for reflection and re-orientation.

While the Programme was initiated with the explicit intention of being a long-term programme spread over several years, following conventional donor practice of approving programmes with a time-frame of three years to a maximum of five, in reality donor support for the LA21 Programme slackened after a period of about three to four years. This was due not as much to a lack of results as to internal factors within donor administration and policy. At the same time, it should be mentioned that the Belgian Development Cooperation has continued its financial support to the Programme for more than nine years and, in some years, has even increased its support.

The Belgian Consortium and particularly the coordinating PGCHS have contributed substantially well above and beyond the budgets allocated by the UN-HABITAT sub-contracts. In fact, in the last few years, funds from the subcontracts have not covered any commissioned staff time. It can thus be easily asserted that the PGCHS and, in general, the K.U.Leuven have been major financial contributors to the Programme. Partners in most other programmes do not naturally assume such a strong and sustained commitment, which is usually not sustainable in the long run. Of course, the Programme has seen other partners providing support, the longstanding Leuven-Nakuru C2C being a good case in point. The more recent Etterbeek-Essaouira cooperation could evolve in a similar way.

In general, one can conclude that a LA21 process is by its very nature a long-haul process in which time-frames of at least ten years are to be considered. Solving the conflicts between social time, political time and Programme time remains one of the open challenges.

Another point of reflection relates to the availability or rather the efficient use of resources and financial means. In many small and medium-sized cities in developing countries, the necessary human resources are not always available. Frequently, professionals tend to move to the capital cities to look for better paid jobs or more challenging lifestyles. Attracting and keeping good professionals in the partner cities was not easy, especially in the first phase of the Programme. Vacancies for a town planner or town architect remained open for several years or team members, once well-trained, moved on to more prestigious, higher valued or lucrative appointments. It is clear that efforts to build up capacities in medium-sized cities need to be continued and maintained over many years.

Concerning the municipal budgets, financial means, even those available at the national level, may not be sufficiently redistributed to the local level. Moreover, local capacities for revenue collection have to be strengthened. Specific technical support and training programme addressed this issue in Nakuru. In Essaouira, major (inter)national investors proved that there is plenty of money (sometimes speculative money) available, but this may not always be channelled to programmes of priority (for sustainable development) or to programmes benefiting the local population. This is not always due to the unwillingness of donors or investors. For some issues and conflicts in the built environment, municipal consultations supported by professionals and academics on a goodwill basis are simply not sufficient as a vehicle to realise strategic and structural changes.

The major donor contribution for the Programme did allow for a good impetus on the three-track process and for small donor demonstration projects to be initiated. However, funding for major urban projects had to come from other sources, either through local revenue or national or international support. In some cases the complementarity with local, national or international support was quite successful (e.g. Leuven, French and Japanese donor support in Nakuru; French, Danish and UNESCO support in Essaouira; DANIDA and German support in Vinh; and UNDP support in

Bayamo). Yet the challenge remains to more efficiently co-ordinate all these local and external inputs and to converge these in urban projects with strategic and structural impact.

In most cases, the LA21 Programme has been able to a certain extent to act as a catalyst to leverage investment funding. Apart from the municipal councils themselves, additional resources are coming from international organisations, bilateral development aid agencies, National Ministries, international and local NGOs, community based organisations and municipalities from the North. This leveraging of resources to implement action plans is made possible by virtue of the catalytic multiplier effect of the core funding, which enabled local teams to formulate well-prepared action plans. However, several project documents placed too much emphasis on 'bankable' projects as a key output. This has had a number of unfortunate consequences, the most important of which has been to mislead people into thinking of the Programme as a source of capital funding, either out of its own budget or through some special access to other external funding. It should be made quite clear that investment proposals are outcomes of the LA21 process, not outputs. Moreover, it should be strongly emphasised that priority projects being developed through the local teams must be adopted by the relevant local government authorities, who should be encouraged to participate in their financing as a precondition for seeking external resources.

Last but not least, one needs to reflect on so-called *poverty alleviation*, a stated objective of many donor development programmes. The LA21 Programme has made a deliberate effort to avoid falling into the trap of the 'two extremes.' These extremes either see poverty reduction as the absolute and only objective of a sustainable development programme (thereby often starting from a simplistic definition of poverty as being equivalent to 'low-income') or see poverty reduction used merely as a popular term from the prevailing jargon in order to meet the needs of donors, thus only paying lip service to the otherwise structurally complex issue of the need for resource redistribution.

If poverty alleviation is seen in the narrow sense of increasing income, the Programme at present cannot answer this question as this criterion was not built in as a systematic measurement tool for specific groups in the partner cities.

More fundamentally, it is rather contradictory in today's debate on poverty reduction that often the very actors or agencies that so enthusiastically propagate Poverty Reduction Strategies may be the ones who are the least inclined to fundamentally restructure the exploitative nature of international consumption, production and benefit appropriation patterns and their effect upon national distribution of power and wealth, as indeed their real interest lies in continuing the prevailing neo-liberal societal model. The LA21 Programme as conceptualised certainly included the initiation of a search for better balanced societal concepts.

If poverty alleviation is seen in more dynamic, complex terms [UN 2002], [Mitlin 2001], related to increasing access to material infrastructure, to opportunities and community participation, to enhancing capacities, and to revitalising the city dynamics in general, the LA21 Programme has so far contributed substantially in different ways by creating a new dynamism in all the partner cities, almost literally by putting them 'on the map' again of national and regional attention and of creating a stimulus for new investment and improved support efforts. This has resulted in the more positive attitude of local governments and of the population at large that they can make a difference themselves. In more specific terms, this has resulted in more active community development (Zonal Development Committees are operational in Nakuru; neighbourhood groups in Essaouira are active; Community Actions in specific issues are ongoing in Vinh; and working groups to elaborate detailed projects are active in Bayamo), and in the initiation of new projects meeting the needs of popular neighbourhoods (housing improvement in Vinh, Nakuru and Essaouira; water provisions in Nakuru and Essaouira; improved waste collection in Vinh and Nakuru; greening of neighbourhoods in Nakuru and Essaouira; and road surfacing in Nakuru).

A critical issue in designing trialogue mechanisms is the empowerment of the urban poor to influence decision-making on local sustainable development issues. This brings up the fundamental challenge of finding a balance between representative and participatory democracy. Often elected leaders do not adequately fulfil their roles of representing the needs of the urban poor, having to operate in a political culture that does not promote actions and attitudes for empowerment of the poor. This can be compensated by encouraging the self-organisation of civil society and by creat-

ing opportunities for policy influence. Focused consultations directed to specific target groups can be helpful in creating negotiation space for the urban poor. Sometimes institutional change is required to structure the relationships between the local authority and other actors, including neighbourhood groups. In the case of Nakuru, the Zonal Development Committees offer a platform for organised civil society to participate in strategy development for local sustainable development. One needs to be vigilant, however, that the civil society organisations engaged in LA21 processes are truly representative of the needs and priorities of urban disadvantaged groups. To eliminate all possible confusion between empowerment of the urban poor and dubious populism aiming at providing short-sighted solutions to often ill-defined problems or using popular anger for private political profit, is a difficult but necessary task. Enriching representative democracy by developing context-specific participatory mechanisms contributes, again, to *civic engagement* and *equity* and can enhance the *social capital* of the poor.

Above and beyond these efforts is the need for a fundamental strengthening of the capacity to create new visions, to prioritise projects and to communicate with a greater variety of actors, all of which in the long term provides a better guarantee for a habitable city. Actions and projects thus serve a double purpose: to translate visions on the habitable city into feasible steps that allow for feedback and co-production and at the same time to test and learn modes of local empowerment that strengthen democracy.

COOPERATION, CAPACITY-BUILDING AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING

The LA21 Programme objectives have, from the start, stressed the need for cooperation, capacity-building, and continuous learning. This implies that some methods and tools have been developed during the Programme. To assume that a programme can only start when all insights and skills are fully formed not only reduces flexibility, but also limits innovation. In this regard, one of the key lessons learnt in the Programme is that building up an understanding of a locale and linking local issues to a global embed-

dedness requires continuous research and a willingness to learn. The success of this approach can be assessed through the insights given in the previous chapters. We can distill three key lessons in this regard.

Cooperation with a wide range of national actors

The commitments of local, national and international institutions need to be sustained for the Programme to achieve its long-term objectives and for it to continue having an appreciable impact. In particular, local and national institutions must play a leading role, as demonstrated in Morocco by the establishment of a National Local Agenda 21 Programme now engaging in work in the Marrakech region including renewed support to Essaouira, in Meknes and Agadir.

In Kenya, the cooperation with the Ministry of Local Government and particularly the continuous skilful involvement of the regional Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) holds substantial promise. Academic institutions in Kenya will have to follow suit lest they forgo their capacity for innovation.

In Vietnam, national level support is as yet unclear; the local team appears willing but needs further support. The initial initiatives taken to involve other secondary cities have will serve as a basis for designing a national programme.

From the very beginning in Cuba, the active involvement of the national IPF in implementing the local initiatives is exemplary. Moreover, their commitment to set up a national capacity-building programme simultaneously (in Santa Clara) and to involve several provincial capitals in the experiences of the LA21 Programme is very positive. However, care should be taken to build in time for learning and research to enable and encourage innovation. Involving academic institutions more systematically into the process will give it added strength.

In response to requests for replicating city experiences, different mechanisms have been deployed to promote LA21 Programme principles at the national level. These include links with ministries of local authorities, associations of local government authorities and university departments. National replication strategies are continuously being refined, matching the needs of the cities with the mandates, capacities and commitments of national partners. While peer learning is valuable, experience has shown that decen-

tralised dissemination has its limitations as the demonstration city is not supposed to play a key role in replication programmes apart from sharing its lessons of experience with replicating cities. It is recommended that potential national replication agents need to be involved from the start in the city projects, as was the case in Bayamo. As the power and revenue base of local authorities is often too weak to fully champion a LA21 process, national governments have a critical role to play to create a climate in which a LA21 process can flourish. They can enable associations of local government authorities to take up their role. They can run nationwide programmes, which can go a long way in complementing initiatives of individual cities. They can address concerns that transcend municipal boundaries. They can organise national post-election training programmes for elected municipal officials. Above all, they can remove legal and administrative barriers that hinder effective implementation of municipal LA21 Programme initiatives. National advocacy and sensitisation can induce legislative change, which can be critical in leveraging and sustaining change at the local level.

As the LA21 Programme is now working on expanding its experience to support National LA21 Programmes, care will have to be taken to respect the uniqueness of each town and city in which one renders support. Indeed, the tendency for top-down support increases with scaling up the Programme, whereas the real strength of the Programme lies in stressing the importance of the local and in re-instating an equilibrium between the local, the national and the international.

However, to set up national LA21 Programmes or to multiply the number of participating cities on the basis of the past experiences remains a challenge. In all four LA21 Programme trialogue cities an operation basis and the necessary strategic and structural dynamics have been set in motion. The work in the four cities will continue with continued commitment and follow-up in order to fully realise the compelling arguments contained in this book.

The need for building capacity, particularly in medium-sized cities

Several cities engaged in LA21 processes are faced with limited local human resource capacities for urban planning and management. This is particularly true for medium-sized cities. However, as urban sustainability problems in these cities are often in their early stages, much can still be accomplished in terms of prevention through choosing pathways of sustainable development.* In addition, in medium-sized cities there are less external factors interfering with urban development as compared to larger cities and it is therefore easier to isolate causes and effects relating to the improvement of the quality of the living environment. In smaller cities, some of the protracted coordination problems and disputes of authority between different layers of government (central, metropolitan, municipal, and neighbourhood) can be avoided, which can contribute to faster decision-making. Experience has shown that LA21 processes in committed medium-sized cities are more likely to achieve sustainable impact than in larger cities. To this effect, the city leadership should espouse the benefits inherent in attracting motivated and open-minded planning professionals, expose staff to innovative planning methods, and encourage them to enter into partnership with national government or University departments to fill certain capacity gaps. However, while encouraging such steps, one should continuously assess whether these measures can be sustained by the city's own resources. This attention to close collaboration between municipal and national levels addresses the governance principle of subsidiarity.

The LA21 Programme has, in the four cities, generated good practices, which have the potential to inspire other cities in the future. These good practices need further time and effort to come to sustainable fruition.

The importance of systematic monitoring and flexibility in implementation

With respect to evaluating methodologies, the Programme should have included a few more precise indicators to measure impact and progress. However, the development of urban sustainability indicators has proved, in international research efforts, to be more difficult than originally assumed.

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* This does not imply that prospects of sustainability are simply a function of scale. Sometimes environmental problems are worse in medium-sized cities and often economic benefits of urban productivity appear positively correlated with city population. See also World Bank. World Development Report 2003, p. 108.

Recent work of the last two to three years may hold more promise, but it needs to pay greater attention to the aspects of quality as elaborated upon in chapters five through eight.

There are advantages in terms of consistency and economies of scale in producing methods and tools of a generic nature. However, it should be recognised that when applying the methods and tools many efforts are required downstream to adapt these for use at the regional, national and local levels in order to reflect spatial, cultural, socio-economic and institutional diversity. These adaptations are often successfully developed by regional or national training institutions. Method and tool development is thus a two-way learning process iterating between methodological principles and their local applications. Well-designed methods and tools enhance the *efficiency* of LA21 Programme interventions.

A LA21 process should be considered as a general framework — not as a straitjacket. For a capacity-building project emphasising a LA21 Programme approach and dealing with a complex social-political environment, it is simply impossible to predict several years in advance how things will actually turn out. Allowing for phased implementation, geared to the natural progression of the LA21 processes described above, enhances this flexibility and offers opportunities to re-assess and re-direct particular projects on their best individual course. Alongside a flexible implementation pattern, it is essential to have an effective system of monitoring and assessment of progress in implementing LA21 Programme goals. The experience in the project cities has shown that the development of monitoring systems still leaves a lot to be desired. Attention is usually given to the establishment of for example an Environment Management Information Systems (EMIS) for the cities, but this is quite separate from the need for internal monitoring systems as an integral element of project management. Proper progress measurement systems should be developed at the start of the project and it should be ensured that necessary baseline data is collected. Clear monitoring systems contribute to *transparency* and *accountability*.

Irrespective of the preferred approach, local ownership of the indicators is absolutely critical. Moreover, it is crucial to stress that LA21 Programme objectives deal with long term qualities of urban society and urban space. Such qualities can never be reduced to immediate figures. An effective monitoring and assessment system needs to find an ingenious combination of qualitative and quantitative indicating measures. Since such a system is not yet available, further research and testing is necessary.

A final thought should go to the authors of this book and to other like-minded academics and professionals.

Academic performance is seldom measured in terms of achievements in the field, let alone in terms of how many and to what degree people are being assisted in achieving sustainability in their homes, neighbourhoods and cities. Instead, the dominant tendency in the academic world remains to judge academics by the count of publications; the 'publish or perish' attitude prevails and even prospers in what is an increasingly competitive world. Although this competitiveness has partially motivated the very publication of this book (while also giving the authors some academic credit for their many years of hard work in the partner cities), a rethinking of academia must be part and parcel of this exercise. This purpose is not to weaken its tradition of academic inquiry and critical reflection or to limit its long-term commitment, but rather to strengthen these qualities and, in addition, to enhance the capabilities of academics as essential partners in the efforts made towards urban sustainability. In the same way the results of the LA21 Programme effort cannot be measured in some quantitative indicators, academic performance should not be identified with bibliometric figures. Research, teaching and publication should enable academics to transmit to subsequent younger generations the drive, motivation and pragmatic attitude needed for such an undertaking. Furthermore, this attitude must acknowledge that one can learn from anyone, anywhere in the world, thereby transcending the traditional distinction between developed and developing worlds, a distinction that increasingly colours the self declared hierarchy in 'relevant' and 'less relevant' research fields or first rate and second rate publication channels. On the other hand, institutions and administrations involved in development issues should be aware of the absolute necessity of serious research and include this in their budgets, agendas and calendars. Relying on the goodwill of researchers or surrendering to commercial consultancy are both contradictory to a sustainable production and distribution of knowledge.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABOS	Algemeen Bestuur voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking (now DGOS)
ANHI	Agence National de lutte contre l'Habitat Insalubre
BADC	Belgian Administration for Development Cooperation (now DGDC)
BC	Belgian Consortium
C2C	City-to-City Cooperation
CBD	Central Business District
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CDUPE	Centre de Développement Urbain et de Protection de l'Environnement
CIAM	Congres Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DGDC	Directorate-General for Development Cooperation (Belgium)
DGIC	Directorate General for International Cooperation (now DGDC)
DGOS	Directie-Generaal Ontwikkelingssamenwerking
DURP	Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Nairobi
ENDA	Environnement Développement et Action (Maghreb)
ERAC	Etablissement Régional d'Aménagement et de Construction
ESS	Existing Spatial Structure
GDR	German Democratic Republic
HABITAT II	United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (1996)
HABRI	Housing and Building Research Institute (University of Nairobi)
K.U.Leuven	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven – Catholic University Leuven
ICLEI	International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IPF	Instituto de Planificación Física (Cuba)
ITDG	Intermediate Technology Development Group
ISS	Intended Spatial structure
JPO	Junior Professional Officer
LA21	Local Agenda 21 / Localising Agenda 21
MCN	Municipal Council Nakuru
MINVEC	Ministerio de Inversiones Extranjera y la Cooperación (Cuba)
MOC	Ministry of Construction
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIURP	National Institute of Urban and Rural Planning (Vietnam)
ONEM	Observatoire National de l'Environnement du Maroc
PDHL	Programme of Human Development at the local level
PGCHS	Post Graduate Centre Human Settlements
PPPO	Provincial Physical Planning Office
SCP	Sustainable Cities Programme
SDAU	Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement d'Urbanisme
SNEC	Société Nationale d'Aménagement et de Construction (Tensift)
SSP	Strategic Structure Planning
SUP	Settlement Upgrading Programme
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TPU	Town Planning Unit
UDD	Urban Development Department
UN	United Nations
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (now UN-HABITAT)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
VVIP	Values, Visions, Interests and Power Structures analysis
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature
WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development

Credits

Urban Trialogues: visions_projects_co-productions, Localising Agenda 21 is a critical reflection on the process and outputs of a multi-lateral programme, *Localising Agenda 21* (LA21) initiated in 1994 by UN-HABITAT, a Belgian Consortium coordinated by K.U.Leuven's Post Graduate Centre Human Settlements (PGCHS), the Belgian Development Cooperation, and a host of local actors, including the municipalities of the programme's partner cities of Nakuru (Kenya), Essaouira (Morocco), Vinh (Vietnam), and Bayamo (Cuba). Oscillating between theory and practice, the book attempts to make use of the benefit of insight from the process. These are simultaneously embedded in the global debate on sustainable urban development and the realities of the four urban contexts.

This collection of essays targets a varied audience including decision-makers, community developers, city planners, managers, scholars, designers, students and interested individuals. It not only offers the way forward on the implementation of the Localising Agenda 21 Programme at the local level, but perhaps most importantly it offers a critical reflection on the relationship between sustainable visions for possible futures and strategic urban projects, both elaborated through a co-productive process. Case studies form the core of this book. Documented as independent chapters, each includes an overview of the layered narratives of urban history, the contemporary contestation of territories, the visions and strategic projects co-produced during the LA21 process. These are further complemented by a series of cross-reading essays that conceptualise and develop particular themes with reference to the cities' case studies. Throughout the various contributions, the term 'localising' has been broadened to stress the importance of the 'locus' — urban space and civic awareness as a frame and a resource for development. This stance not only provides a new drive for planning and urbanism, but also adds a crucial dimension to the Agenda 21.