

6th N-AERUS Conference, 2005

September 16th –17th, Lund, Sweden

Call for papers

Promoting social inclusion in urban areas: policies and practice

Social, economic and spatial exclusion has been one of the main features of cities in developing countries since colonial times. However, in recent years exclusion has been rapidly growing in most cities of the South, driven by market liberalization, globalization and the reduced role of the state.

Exclusion has different causes, as well as many consequences: growing urbanization of poverty, lack of job opportunities, a deepening divide between the haves and have-nots, a lack of voice in the political arena for an increasing share of the urban population, violence, insecurity of tenure, inadequate or no access to basic services, and environmentally hazardous residential locations, among others.

Exclusion from the economic and social opportunities of the city, as well as from adequate housing conditions, also generates political exclusion. In the cities of the South, due to their poverty and vulnerability, increasing numbers of people do not have access to citizenship rights, resulting in their exclusion from democratic processes.

Thus, the reduction of urban exclusion is one of the most urgent issues with which governments, particularly local governments, have to deal. Given the many causes and mechanisms that produce exclusion, policies and practices for promoting urban inclusion can be very different in their nature and scope. As with other urban policies, they should also be of an integrated nature.

However, policies and practices for promoting urban inclusion also have to face the fundamental contradiction between the exclusionary forces at work at macro levels on the one hand, and the need for local action to ensure that policies are inclusive on the other. The former are related to the paradigms that currently prevail in urban politics, based on familiar notions such as the reduced role of the state, decentralization, partnership, privatization, urban productivity and efficiency. Inclusive local governance, in contrast, implies policies and practices whose perspectives are almost by definition local, and need to be implemented by municipalities which are in poor financial

condition, communities already burdened with hard living conditions, NGO projects based on hard but essentially voluntaristic work and inevitably short term time horizons.

For a long time the Third World was looked at as a part of the world that could only learn from the First World, giving the latter supremacy in the production of knowledge, while leaving the former in a passive role. The original meaning of Third World was exactly the opposite: a third voice that has something to say. Nowadays there are examples in which innovative knowledge is produced in the South and new policies are being implemented, particularly in the realm of promoting urban inclusion.

The 6th N-Aerus Conference calls for contributions on aspects of urban inclusion in the cities of the South, with the aim of providing conceptual and political perspectives on the issues, as well as examples of policies and practices that have been implemented.

Papers will address primarily, though not exclusively, the issues of

A. *Eviction processes: trends and policy responses*

International finance institutions, national and local governments, as well as researchers, are now aware that protection from forced evictions and provision of secure tenure is a major component of any inclusive social urban policy, and a major tool of urban poverty alleviation policies. However, a distinction can be made between forced evictions and market-driven evictions. Though recognized as a gross violation of human rights by the UN, forced evictions of low-income families continue to take place under a number of pretexts, while market-driven evictions concern many more urban households but have not been sufficiently documented. Papers addressing this topic should focus on current dynamics regarding both “forced evictions” and “market-driven evictions” evictions, to assess the findings of research on evictions and to identify alternative policies .

B. *The privatization of services*

Access to infrastructure and services is a key element to urban inclusion. In the past ten years, driven by the neoliberal policies endorsed by international donors, many governments have reduced their expenditures with the optimistic expectation that the provision of urban infrastructure and services will be taken up by the private sector. However, as evidenced by the recent “Interim Report” of the Millennium Project Task Force on Water and Sanitation , the frequency with which W&S concessions have been postponed or cancelled over the past several years is evidence of how difficult it is to successfully involve the private sector in the provision of urban services. In fact, stern cost recovery policies have often resulted in the exclusion of an increasing proportion of the urban population, the deterioration of poor households’ living conditions, and the emergence of alternative service delivery systems. Papers will focus on the inclusionary/exclusionary effects of urban service privatization and the responses that have been attempted in order to improve access by the urban poor.

C. Micro finance as a tool for inclusive urban development

Over 900,000,000 people live in urban settlements that can be characterized as “slums.” To improve the living conditions of millions of these “slum dwellers,” as the United Nations Millennium Declaration calls for, requires new ways to address critical issues such as access to land and secure tenure, provision of basic services and improvement to the housing of the urban poor. In developing countries, the low-income households themselves build most of the new dwellings and improve their own housing. The process can take a long time, according to each individual or household’s capacities and resources. It is difficult to finance incremental housing through traditional mortgages from banks or other formal credit institutions. Increasing evidence suggests that private formal financial systems around the world are unresponsive to the needs and potential of the urban poor. Creative measures and new ways to finance the poor must be found.

Papers should focus on the inclusionary/exclusionary effects of micro finance programs on local and urban development and the responses that have been provided for in order to have a significant impact in resolving the housing problems of the urban poor.

D. Promoting organizational change for pro-poor growth

The type of pro-poor policies to be adopted on land, housing and services provision are largely embodied in the Habitat Agenda and many subsequent documents. However, progress on the ground continues to be slow and patchy, largely because the organizations that are responsible for implementing policy are not changing fast enough, or at all. In a world where the old distinctions between public and private sector organizations and their roles are rapidly changing, there may be different reasons for this slowness, including vested interests opposing the necessary changes, public sector officials acting as private speculators, private sector organisations fulfilling traditional public sector roles by providing basic services, inertia or the lack of professional will.

Papers should focus on the relationships between the public and private sectors and their implications for progress, assessing constraints and innovative examples based on empirical research.

Abstracts of between 150 and 250 words should be submitted in .rtf or .doc by Sunday, May 29th, 2005, to call@naerus.net. Abstracts should:

- a) state the issue to be addressed
- b) define the context
- c) highlight the main arguments

Authors of the selected papers will be notified by e-mail by Monday, June 20th.



Final papers should be submitted by Sunday, September 3^d and will be posted on the N-AERUS website.

N-AERUS will try to provide paper copies for distribution at the Conference. However authors, particularly from Europe, are strongly encouraged to bring their own copies.

Network-Association of European Researchers
on Urbanization in the South

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