



SPOTLIGHT ON PUBLICATIONS: URBAN ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE



Latin American cities are tackling environmental challenges through governance mechanisms and initiatives at the local level. The following list of publications highlights key research, policy analysis, and case studies focusing on the urban environmental governance strategies used in Latin American urban areas.

► [State of the World's Cities 2010/2011: Bridging the Urban Divide](#)

This report analyses the growth of urban populations across the world and the key challenges that need to be addressed, like poverty, environmental pollution, and housing deprivation, in order to improve equality in cities. It emphasises the need for integrating infrastructure programmes like housing, water, and sanitation. It suggests that micro-level strategies like local programmes for income generation, microfinance, and education are more effective approaches for improving living conditions of slum inhabitants and developing inclusive and sustainable cities. With specific information about Latin American conditions and an analysis of policy strategies, the report can help policy makers and researchers in Africa and Asia to plan local policy responses that generate inclusion and follow a rights-based approach.

Full Citation: United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT). 2010. *State of the World's Cities 2010/2011: Bridging the Urban Divide*. UN-Habitat, Earthscan, London.



► [Regularising Land Tenure Within Upgrading Programmes in Argentina: The Cases of Promeba and Rosario Hábitat](#)

African, Asian and Latin American countries suffer some of the highest rates of inadequate housing, with large proportions of populations living in slum conditions. This article analyses two large-scale slum urbanisation programmes in Argentina that not only provided land titles to inhabitants, but also improved infrastructure, services and housing. The paper shows that Argentinean legislation only treats isolated situations and is inadequate in dealing with land tenure in a holistic way; it then argues for changes in legislation. The paper will be useful for African and South Asian policymakers addressing land titling and urban upgrading in their own countries.

Full Citation: Almansi, F. 2009. Regularising Land Tenure Within Upgrading Programmes in Argentina: The Cases of Promeba and Rosario Hábitat. *Environment & Urbanisation*, 21(2) 389–413.

► [Rosario's Development; Interview with Miguel Lifschitz, Mayor of Rosario, Argentina](#)

This interview with Miguel Lifschitz, second-term mayor of Rosario, one of the largest cities in Argentina, shows how a city with significant levels of extreme poverty can go through a participatory planning process to support local economic development and the expansion of public spaces. The approach to urban management in Rosario has been based on efficient organisation with a significant emphasis on social policies and urban planning reform, and offers an interesting example for South Asian and African cities.

Full Citation: Almansi, F. 2009. Rosario's Development; Interview with Miguel Lifschitz, Mayor of Rosario, Argentina. *Environment & Urbanisation* 21(1) 19–35.

► [Limits to Participation: The Struggle for Environmental Improvement in Moreno, Argentina](#)

This publication describes a poverty and environment initiative implemented through a partnership between a local NGO, the municipal government, and community organisations in one of the poorest peripheral municipalities of Buenos Aires, Argentina. It discusses not only positive results, but also analyses the challenges encountered, despite the willingness of all parties to work together. The authors suggest ways in which these problems might be avoided in other initiatives that seek to support community participation and develop partnership-based management structures in which community organisations can be real partners. It will be of particular interest to those who work at the interface of community and local government in urban settings in South Asia and Africa.

Full Citation: Almansi, F. et al. 2011. *Los Límites de la Participación: La Lucha por el Mejoramiento Ambiental en Moreno, Argentina. (Limits to Participation: The Struggle for Environmental Improvement in Moreno, Argentina.)* IIED-América Latina Publications and IIED, Buenos Aires.



► [The Transition to a Predominantly Urban World and Its Underpinnings](#)

This paper presents an interesting perspective on urban change around the world, including Latin America, Africa and South Asia, discussing the diversity and complexity of urban change in different nations. It is a somewhat controversial paper written to expose various myths about urban change and to highlight the limitations of available data. For example, it shows how there is no direct link between urban growth and urban problems, as some of the fastest growing cities in the world are also the best governed. Providing an interesting alternative viewpoint, it is essential reading for understanding trends in urbanisation and urban growth for actors in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Full Citation: Satterthwaite, D. 2007. *The Transition to a Predominantly Urban World and Its Underpinnings*. Human Settlements Working Paper Series Urban Change N° 4. IIED, London.

► [Adapting Cities to Climate Change, Understanding and Addressing the Development Changes](#)

Compiling articles published in the journal *Environment and Urbanisation*, this book analyses the abilities of developing countries' urban centres to adapt to climate change. In spite of the number of urban dwellers at risk, few discussions of climate change deal specifically with urban areas, where understanding urban contexts and urban governance frameworks is essential. The articles assess the difficulties and challenges faced and propose innovative strategies for addressing climate change vulnerability and adaptation in cities. The book should be of interest to all development actors working on urban issues who want an urban-focused understanding of climate change adaptation.

Full Citation: Bicknell, J., Dodman, D., Satterthwaite, D. (eds). 2009. *Adapting Cities to Climate Change, Understanding and Addressing the Development Changes*. Earthscan, London.

► [Improving Water Sanitation Provision in Buenos Aires: What Can a Research-oriented NGO Do?](#)

This paper offers an in-depth case study of the efforts of the NGO IIED-AL to improve access to water and sanitation services for low-income communities in the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. IIED-AL's initiative included implementing specific projects in collaboration with different stakeholders such as community groups, local government, and private service providers. At the same time, they also focused on conducting research and disseminating results in order to influence policy makers and pressure groups. The authors describe the stages of the initiative and outline the key determinants of success. The lessons learned from this experience in Argentina can be useful for actors in other urban contexts working on water provision for poor settlements.

Full Citation: Almansi, F. *et al.* 2010. *Improving Water Sanitation Provision in Buenos Aires: What Can a Research-oriented NGO Do?* Human Settlements Working Paper Water N°22. IIED, London.



► [Policy Paper On Urban Strategic Planning: Local Leaders Preparing for the Future of Our Cities](#)

This document offers a comparative analysis of strategic planning processes in Latin America, North America, Africa, Asia and Europe. The paper includes both a global chapter and regional chapters covering Latin American, African, and Asian experiences and challenges, and offers recommendations. The publication is key for any reader who wants to understand the variety of different strategic planning approaches implemented in cities around the world.

Full Citation: United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). 2010. *Policy Paper On Urban Strategic Planning: Local Leaders Preparing for the Future of Our Cities*. UCGL, Mexico.

► [Revisiting Urban Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean](#)

This paper is one of the eight regional studies carried out to produce the 2009 Human Settlements Report, and analyses the urban planning processes carried out in Latin America in recent decades. The author shows different trends of urbanisation and argues that each city should be examined according to its specific needs, including social, economic, political and environmental, in order to develop unique urban planning policies to satisfy them. With a historical chapter about urban planning's roots and chapters that offer contemporary analyses of different aspects of urban planning in the region, such as institutional and regulatory frameworks, monitoring and evaluation, sustainability, and participatory experiences, this paper provides useful information to actors working on urban planning in other contexts.

Full Citation: Irazábal, C. 2009. *Revisiting Urban Planning in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Regional Study Prepared for the Global Report on Human Settlements 2009. UN Habitat, GRHS, Geneva.

► [Strategic Urban Planning in Latin America: Experiences of Building and Managing the Future](#)

This useful document summarises the Strategic Planning (SP) processes carried out in cities throughout Latin America, including Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, and Peru. It discusses the use of SP as a tool for achieving change in these cities, using specific city examples to describe the themes, successes and challenges of these SPs. It may be useful for policymakers in South Asia and Africa who are considering the use of SP in their own cities.

Full Citation: Steinberg, F. 2002. *Strategic Urban Planning in Latin America: Experiences of Building and Managing the Future*. IHS Working Paper. Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies, Rotterdam.



► [Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction: Revealing Risk, Redefining Development](#)

Every year UNISDR publishes a comprehensive report on Disaster Risk Reduction, orientated towards both public officials and civil society. This 2011 edition focuses on addressing the underlying drivers responsible for increasing risk. It uses examples from around the world to show ways in which risk drivers may be tackled, including by integrating them into programmes' conditional transfer mechanisms. The online edition includes an interactive version of the main report in English, Spanish, French, and Arabic, plus background papers and access to disaster loss and risk databases, making it a valuable resource for actors from any region.

Full Citation: United Nations – International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). 2011. *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction: Revealing Risk, Redefining Development*. Information Press, Oxford.

► [World Disasters Report 2010, Focus on Urban Risk](#)

Published annually since 1993, the World Disasters Report brings together trends, facts, and analysis of contemporary crises, both natural and man-made. It examines urban risk in the context of a rapidly urbanising world that presents specific challenges for international agencies, NGOs and national and local governments in terms of how to respond to disaster events in urban areas. It describes the main trends in urban disasters, such as urban violence, health crises, governance and community rights, as well as how these issues can be tackled. Drawing on examples from many regions, it offers a good information base for analysing strategies for reducing urban risk that will be useful for practitioners and government officials working in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Full Citation: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. 2010. *World Disasters Report 2010, Focus on Urban Risk*. Geneva, Switzerland.

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To learn more about Latin America's approach to urban environmental governance, read the [ELLA Guide](#), which has a full list of the ELLA knowledge materials on this theme. To learn more about other ELLA development issues, browse other [ELLA Themes](#).



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