Audio Archive: Funding Green Cities

 Advocates of sustainability know that urban retrofits and infrastructure projects offer opportunities to increase energy efficiency as well as livability, and reduce the environmental impact of our towns and cities. But proctrated economic challenges have left governments at nearly all levels ill-equipped to provide funding for many such projects, both in the U.S. and abroad. The Sustainable Cities Collective hosted our newest webcast to discuss this challenge, and potential strategies that governments and project planners might employ to overcome funding obstacles to sustainability.

Listen:
http://sustainablecitiescollective.com/25767/audio-archive-funding-green-cities

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Developing Countries Need To Harness Urbanization To Achieve The MDGs: IMF-World Bank Report

worldbank.org. WASHINGTON, April 17, 2013 – Urbanization helps pull people out of poverty and advances progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but, if not managed well, can also lead to burgeoning growth of slums, pollution, and crime, says the Global Monitoring Report (GMR) 2013, released today by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Urbanization has been a major force behind poverty reduction and progress towards other MDGs. With over 80 percent of global goods and services produced in cities, countries with relatively higher levels of urbanization, such as China,

and many others in East Asia and Latin America, have played a major role in lowering extreme poverty[1] worldwide. In contrast, the two least urbanized regions, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, have significantly higher rates of poverty and continue to lag behind on most MDGs.

GMR 2013: Rural-Urban Dynamics and the Millennium Development Goals starkly compares the well-being in the countryside versus the city. Urban infant mortality rates range from 8-9 percentage points lower than the rural rates in Latin America and Central Asia; to 10-16 percentage points in the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa and highest in East Asia (21 percentage points).

In South Asia, 60 percent of urban dwellers have access to sanitation facilities, compared with 28 percent in rural areas. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 42 percent of the urban population has access, compared with 23 percent of rural residents. Access to safe water in urban areas in developing countries was almost complete in 2010, with 96 percent coverage, compared with 81 percent of the rural population having access.
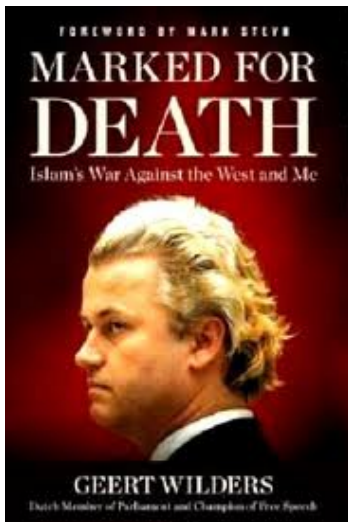
Read more: http://www.worldbank.org/developing-countries-need-to-harness-urbanization-to-achieve

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The Dutch Party for Freedom. An Analysis of Geert Wilders' Thinking on Islam

In *The Dutch Party for Freedom. An Analysis of Geert Wilders' Thinking on Islam* (Previously published as The *Speck In Your Brother's Eye)*, Jan Jaap de Ruiter analyses *Marked for Death. Islam's War Against The West and Me* writtten by Geert Wilders, leader of the Dutch Freedom Party.

Cover Wilders – Marked for Death

'The solution Wilders presents involves a high risk of invoking violence, even if he states repeatedly that his program should be realized by the word and the pen. Who will give me the assurance that this would indeed be the case? Who can guarantee us that there will not be people who, like so many Christians, Muslims and French revolutionaries, will take up the sword and 'help' to realize their goals that way? Wilders' book brings us nothing new. Not only that, it is also completely counter- productive. Wilders' message is not like that of religions and ideologies, which not only have a negative but also a positive side. It is exclusively negative. He focuses on the shortcomings of the other, accuses the other of being violent by nature, and uses words that can easily be interpreted as allowing violence to fight the enemy. He acts in exactly the same way as he perceives his opponent does. He sees the speck in his brother's eye but fails to see the log in his own.

It may very well be the case that Geert Wilders will in due time give up his position as leader of the Freedom Party and leave the Dutch political arena. He might indeed, as was suggested, join an American think tank or travel the world spreading the message of the danger of Islam. Irrespective of where his career leads him, this will not mean that the anti Islam discourse will die out. On the contrary, it is supported by numerous others and in particular on the Internet it is very strong. Therefore countering this ideology by arguments, by pamphlets like this, remains necessary.

'Am I showing myself to be a reprehensible cultural relativist here?', asks De Ruiter in one of the chapters. 'Undoubtedly', is his answer.'

The Dutch Party for Freedom. An Analysis of Geert Wilders' Thinking on Islam now online:

Reviving Our Inner Cities: Social Housing and Urban Regeneration In South Africa

Research Series published by the Housing Development Agency. nasho.org.za. 2013

Social housing in South Africa is a government programme to redress the old apartheid spatial inequities by providing low- and moderate-income households with good quality and affordable rental housing opportunities in well-located parts of South African cities. Its primary mechanism is the use of Restructuring Capital Grant (RCG) and Institutional Subsidy funding sources in Restructuring Zones (RZs) to assist in the financing and development of good quality rental housing opportunities for low- and moderate-income households by accredited social housing entities.

The restructuring capital grant
In the first 6 years of allocation from 2006 to March 2012, an estimated R1.204bn of RCG was allocated to projects. It is now appropriate therefore to reflect on the spatial spend of this financing and its impact on urban restructuring and urban regeneration within South African cities with the intent of recommending ways of enhancing the impact.

Restructuring Zones (rZs)

In looking at this, it is important to understand that during the above period the initially determined Restructuring Zones (RZs) were limited to 13 municipalities spread across all 9 provinces. Within these municipalities there was a diverse range of locally defined spatial areas – RZs.

Some of these and the resulting projects might or might not be linked specifically to zones for restructuring the apartheid city or areas dealing with urban regeneration of blighted parts of the city.

Read more: http://www.nasho.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/HDA-NASHO-Reviving-Our-Inner-Cities-SH-UR-in-SA-Reseach-Report-2013.pdf

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Rethinking Design for Social Housing to Make Better Communities

sustainablecitiescollective.com – April 10, 2013

Different models of public housing have been planned and constructed over the years, ranging from Le Corbusier's inspired super-blocks to less dense low-rises. Often, the less dense form of housing has been designed with separate entries, limited communal or shared space, and an abundance of parking lots. As social housing has evolved, so has the family formation and composition. The nuclear family no longer represents the most common and typical family formation, and we are seeing a rise in more diverse household arrangements and single-parent homes. In addition, affordable public housing has been known to serve the traditionally known minority population, but that is no longer the case.

The shift in population and demographic change surely indicates the need for a comprehensive inclusion of all groups such as older single adults, multi-generational kinfolk living together, young single professionals, and single-parent

families. The change in family formation should be adequately addressed through social housing by means of [architecture design](#) and construction.

http://sustainablecitiescollective.com/rethinking-design-social-housing-make-better-communities?

Who Is Social Housing For, And Who Should It Be For?

alexsarchives.org. Alex Marsh – April 10, 2103

Yesterday I participated in a consultation event organised by Bristol City Council. it was designed to start a debate locally about the revision of social housing allocations policy. My talk, which ranged rather more broadly than simply allocations policy, is a bit too long to include in a blog post, so I have bunged it on to Scribd. It can be accessed below.

Read more: http://www.alexsarchives.org/?p=5640