

urb.im - Inclusive Planning And Housing



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July 2014. Millions of poor people in cities of the Global South live in informal settlements with low-quality living conditions, due in large part to the lack of affordable and adequate housing. Policies are needed to regulate, support, and provide incentives for the development of affordable housing in both the private and the public sectors. In addition, such housing must be inclusive by design, so that the urban poor are integrated into local communities rather than being marginalized by income and class.

Follow this topic here during the month of July to see and discuss reports from the 23 cities in the URB.im network about efforts by governments, NGOs, and communities to make inclusive housing a reality — and please share your thoughts in the comments below.

The market at the bottom of the housing pyramid

Bangalore. Like many Indian cities, Bangalore is in dire need of new housing options to meet the needs of its working poor. With an increasing ability to pay and new financing approaches available, families residing in slums have the means to pay for better conditions, yet few alternatives exist. Ramesh Ramanathan launched an affordable housing initiative to fill this growing gap, but found many unexpected barriers along the way.

And much more at: <http://urb.im/c1407>

Will Wiles - The Concrete Tangle



July 2014. *The urge to tidy up cities is deadening - let's celebrate the tangled chaos and honky-tonk energy that keep them alive*

Whitechapel Underground Station in the East End of London is a long, wide trench, an unexpected burst of sunlight that comes just a couple of minutes after your train leaves the City. Being mostly subterranean, the Tube does not generally foster window-gazing, but here the raised, curious eye is magnificently rewarded. The train passes through a chasm of tens of millions of bricks, not one of which is truly intended to be seen: the canyon's arched retaining walls, the plain huts and outbuildings used by the Underground's operators, and the rears of the Victorian terraces on Whitechapel Road and surrounding streets.

This brickscape is just a backdrop. It is painted over by an impossible multitude of stains and seepages, deeply overgrown by pipes and cables. In places, an unplanned arrangement of steel I-beams suggests mismatched forces and structural quandaries. Overpasses bear streets above us. Creaking clapboard walkways carry our fellow passengers. More trains pass below - paradoxically, it's the Overground beneath the Underground. While many other Tube stations have criss-crossing routes and rumbling suggestions of deeper lines, here we can actually see those other trains and platforms; the whole station, in fact, has an eerie sense of unintentional exposure, as if the surface city has been peeled back in layers like one of Gunther von Hagens's plastinated corpses, urban viscera laid bare for inspection.

Read more: <http://aeon.co/the-chaos-and-tangled-energy-of-living-cities/>

Ilang-Ilang D. Quijano - Where Did P11-B DAP For Urban Poor Housing Go?



An urban poor community in an area the government considers “danger zone” in Metro Manila. Macky Macaspac/PW File Photo

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July 2014. Urban poor residents in Metro Manila and off-city relocation sites are questioning where the billions of pesos in Disbursement Acceleration Program (DAP) funds meant for their housing went—and it seems like they have every reason to.

Former residents of Sitio San Roque, North Triangle, Quezon City today staged a protest at the National Housing Authority (NHA) office in Rodriguez (Montalban), Rizal to demand where the the P450 Million supposedly allocated for them under the DAP went.

Among the list of DAP projects released by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) last July 14 was a P450-M resettlement program for 10,000 North Triangle residents affected by the establishment of a business district in QC.

These funds, which supposedly went to the construction of medium-rise buildings (MRB) in Camarin, Caloocan City for the residents, were released to the NHA in 2011.

Jennie Espacio, a former leader in North Triangle and now a relocatee in Southville village, Brgy. San Isidro in Montalban, however, said that most of the residents were relocated by the government not to Caloocan, but to off-city relocation sites.

Read more: <http://pinoyweekly.org/b-dap-for-urban-poor-housing-go/>

Xuefei Ren - Urban Design And Inequality: The Case Of Urban Villages In China's Megacities



citiespapers.ssrc.org, July 2014. I would like to discuss some of the major planning and design challenges over redeveloping informal settlements in China's megacities. Specifically, I will focus on the settlement type of the "urban village," which is commonly found in cities in the Pearl River Delta in southern China, where migrant workers rent rooms from farmers-turned-landlords and form their enclaves.

Guangzhou, the capital city of Guangdong province, has one of the largest numbers of migrant urban villages. The city government has recently identified 138 of such settlements and some of them have been "successfully redeveloped,"

as claimed by the government. However, to date, the “successful” redevelopment approach in Guangzhou has been to demolish all existing structures and build high-rise apartment towers instead. Some of the apartment units are distributed to villagers to compensate their loss and the rest is sold on the market for a profit. A better planning and policy solution is needed to redevelop these urban villages that are vital to the survival of migrant workers in China’s large cities.

The redevelopment of urban villages is a highly contentious process, involving constant negotiations over compensation between developers and villagers/lease holders, and this is often mediated by the local government. But, whatever the compensation terms might be, migrant tenants are always the victims of the redevelopment. Without any title to either the land or the housing structures, they are simply forced out once their urban village is slated for “redevelopment.” The current approach of demolishing the old and building new is costly, in both economic and social terms. The local government does not have sufficient funds for compensation and construction, and therefore, redevelopment is left to private developers. Moreover, redevelopment pushes migrant workers further away from the city, thus causing a shortage in the labor market. In most cases, migrant tenants have to start all over again, move to a more remote location, and form a new enclave—until their new home is “redeveloped” again.

Read more:
<http://citiespapers.ssrc.org/urban-design-and-inequality-the-case-of-urban-villages-in-chinas-megacities/>

Slum Stories: Turkey - Urban Renewal, But Who Is Going To Profit?

There is not much left of the Roma district of Sulukule, which used to be so colourful. For years, thousands of Roma from all over the world lived in this

historic settlement in the Turkish capital of Istanbul. Because of urban renewal they were forced to leave Sulukule.

This video is part of the Amnesty International www.SlumStories.org project. An online videochannel about the life in slums in different parts of the world.

All videos can be watched with English, Arab, French, Spanish, German and Dutch subtitles.

Michael Silverberg - The World's Tallest Slum - A "Pirate Utopia" - Is Being Cleared By The Venezuelan Government



A woman looks out of her shop window in a corridor in Torre David. Reuters/Jorge Silva

July 2014. On a rainy night in September 2007, hundreds of squatters made their way into the third-tallest skyscraper in Caracas, Venezuela, and set up a temporary encampment. The unfinished, 45-story building—intended as a bank headquarters in the center of the capital—had sat vacant for more than a decade, after the developer's death and the country's 1994 financial crisis put

construction on hold.

Eventually, nearly 3,000 of the city's poor—many of them refugees from insecure shantytowns—would join the initial squatters, creating a makeshift city with apartments up to the 28th floor, even though there are no elevators or, in some places, even a facade. The squatters organized their own electricity, running water, and plumbing, along with bodegas, a barbershop, and an orthodontist. The improvised community became known as Torre David, or the Tower of David, after the developer, David Brillembourg.

Read more: <http://qz.com/the-worlds-tallest-slum-a-pirate-utopia>