

Amanda Burden ~ How Public Spaces Make Cities Work

More than 8 million people are crowded together to live in New York City. What makes it possible? In part, it's the city's great public spaces — from tiny pocket parks to long waterfront promenades — where people can stroll and play. Amanda Burden helped plan some of the city's newest public spaces, drawing on her experience as, surprisingly, an animal behaviorist. She shares the unexpected challenges of planning parks people love — and why it's important.

Pre-paid Meters: Bringing Affordable Water To The Slums Of Kampala

washfund.org. April 7, 2014. Editor's Note: This guest post was authored by Libby Plumb, Senior Communications Advisor for WaterAid America, who has recently returned from visiting WaterAid's water, sanitation and hygiene programs in the slums of Kampala, Uganda.

Mariam is the only child of 22-year-old single mom Rehema. On the way to and from the local spring, near the Rubaga slum in Uganda's capital city, Kampala, she toddles behind her mother. It's a journey they make four times a day to bring home enough water for drinking, cooking and washing.

Even little Mariam carries a jerry can of water: while Mom struggles under the weight of two 22 pound (10-liter) yellow jerry cans, Mariam follows behind carrying a bright red 11 pound (five-liter) jerry can - quite a feat for such a young child.

Rehema knows the quality of the spring water is questionable and could be risky

for her daughter's health. Kampala's poorly constructed pit latrines and a high water table are a lethal combination as feces can easily contaminate the water supply. It's not just water quality that is an issue. Accessibility is also a major challenge. With hundreds of people relying on the spring for water, crowds build up, with long waits common in the morning and evening when the heat of the sun is not so fierce.

Rehema commented: "It's very difficult to collect water from there. At 8 or 9 p.m. it is so crowded that it can take more than 30 minutes."

See <http://www.washfund.org/affordable-water-to-the-slums-of-kampala> more at:

Paula Lucci - Putting An Urban Dimension In Post-2015



Ills.: answers.com

www.globalpolicyjournal.com. April 2014. If we are to end poverty, we must think about urbanisation. The world's population is becoming increasingly urban and the number of people living in slums is set to rise. Urban poverty and sustainability have been longstanding themes in the discussion on what should replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) when they expire in 2015: the type of infrastructure built to accommodate these people in urban areas will have a bearing on sustainable development for decades to come. How might a new set of goals do a better job than the MDGs at addressing the problems and

opportunities of urban areas?

While it's clear that urbanisation and urban poverty need to be factored in to a new development agenda, working out how is much trickier. Urban poverty is defined by a number of dimensions: income, health and education are part of urban poverty, just as they are part of poverty in any other context. Further, urbanisation (the increasing share of population living in urban centres) is a dynamic and context-specific process: its consequences on the economy and poverty reduction, society and the environment depend on local circumstances and how this process is managed. As such, it does not lend itself to be easily framed in the SMART targets and indicators language of the MDGs.

Read

more: <http://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/putting-urban-dimension-post-2015>

Lyra Kilston - Good Design Is For Everyone: The Evolution Of Low-Income Housing In L.A.



Star Apartments elevation

kcet.org. April 2014. The phrases “public housing” or “low-income housing” do not generally conjure thoughts of architectural innovation. Instead, one may envision rows of faded pastel cubes surrounded by dead lawns and tall fences, or looming concrete towers gridded with small windows. Both schemes are typically weighted with a grim institutional air, appear to have been built as cheaply as possible, and often address only one problem, shelter, amid many others.

But it doesn't have to be that way, as several recent housing developments in Los Angeles prove. Instead, they pose the question: What if low-income housing was perceived as leading the vanguard of innovative, responsive architecture?

Take the recently completed Star Apartments, located in the heart of downtown's Skid Row. Commissioned by Skid Row Housing Trust, and designed by renowned L.A. architect Michael Maltzan, it provides permanent housing and social services to the formerly homeless. Star Apartments is also breathtaking architecture, consisting of a staggered row of four-story white blocks hovering over the existing ground level. Between these two levels is a large terrace, providing communal outdoor space away from the street. To save on cost and construction time, the 102 housing units within the blocks were prefabricated and lifted by crane on top of each other like blocks. Maltzan states that it's the first multi-unit housing to use this method since the mid-20th century, a time when prefabrication was celebrated as a modern, mechanized solution to the housing problem.

Read more: <http://www.kcet.org/public-low-income-housing-history.html>

Cruise Ship Terminal In Port Of Seville Deploys Shipping Containers

Shipping containers continue gaining popularity in architectural circles. In the Port of Seville, architects Hombro de Piedra and Buró4 have designed a new cruise ship terminal, recycling used shipping containers. This trend is looking quite stylish.



The architects write, *“The Port of Seville needed a new Cruise Ship Terminal with a flexible character, multipurpose, extendable, easily removable and even movable. This would permit to accommodate the unpredictable number of passengers in the port and*

it would not limit the possibilities of the urban-port valuable space of the Muelle de las Delicias. Re-using shipping containers was proposed. On the other hand, the place, near the historic centre, was claiming an object of architectural quality to dialogue with its urban environment.”

Read

more: <http://sustainablecitiescollective.com/port-seville-deploys-shipping-containers>

The Hollow Tower - Johannesburg

In the heart of Johannesburg, there is probably no building more notorious than Ponte City. The cylindrical tower with a hollow core was built in the 1970s as luxury apartments only for whites. In the ensuing decades, as whites decamped to the suburbs, Ponte became a symbol of urban decay, overrun by drug dealers and gangs and dubbed “suicide central” because of the number of people who chose to end their lives by hurling themselves off the tower.

Watch the trailer:

Full

documentary:

<http://www.vocativ.com/video/culture/society/south-africas-tower-trouble/>