

### **III. LESSONS LEARNED**

#### **WHAT CAN BE LEARNED ?**

The eight countries studies are rich in themselves, but they also represent something much broader. They stand on top of two general surveys, each with responses from more than 125 urban administrators from most of the countries of Asia. They also follow a set of in-depth comparative studies of population growth and urban development in ten Asian port cities. In addition, the country study directors and members of AUICK's International Advisory Committee met in Bangkok for two days of rich discussion around these studies. We shall draw on all of this in attempting to distill lessons.

The eight studies are, of course, somewhat uneven. They deal with very different cities, from the most wealthy and well developed city of Kobe, to one of the poorest and most problem ridden, Hyderabad. They are written by different authors, who bring a wide range of skills, experience and perspectives to their studies. The group of country study directors met in Yogyakarta for two days of discussion in October 1993, prior to the actual field work. There, some general agreement was reached on the specific foci of the studies, the methods and approaches to be used, and the general questions to be asked. Inevitably, however, when the study directors returned to the field and their own subject cities, they were attracted by different conditions, which demanded the study follow somewhat different directions from those generally agreed upon. Thus we cannot push the studies too far in their individual components. Certainly there are no statistical analyses to be performed.

Nonetheless, because of the point of departure, and the work that has gone before, we believe we can make some important and useful general remarks. We set out these lessons in seven major section, A through G. Then we turn attention in a final section, H, to the training needs that the administrators themselves identified for the study directors. These will be useful for the Kobe International Cooperation Center, which is organizing a series of training courses in urban management for administrators from the rest of Asia.

#### **A. GEOGRAPHIC CONSTRAINS AND OPPORTUNITIES.**

All of these cities occupy specific pieces of territory, whose location and topography pose both constraints and opportunities. None can ignore its geographic conditions, yet none of these conditions is in any sense determining of the city's outcome. Human ingenuity can overcome major obstacles, but human venality, greed and ignorance can also squander great opportunities.

Bombay is squeezed between the sea and the bay and has little room to expand, except to the more distant northern suburbs. But Kobe, too, was squeezed between mountains and a deep sea, and it turned these to real advantage with the engineering miracle of Port and Rokko Islands, and the new town that give people a comfortable, green surrounding. Surabaya and Cebu City occupy broad coastal or deltaic plains, which permit extensive expansion inward and along the sea front. Both are sheltered from storms by important islands that help to make them suitable ports. Hyderabad and Nokhorn Sawan lie on ancient

river systems, but in the shadows of larger and more attractive cities that draw resources away from them. For Hyderabad this appears especially hurtful, though it must be admitted that Hyderabad's problems appear to stem far more from political and administrative conditions than from geographic location. Nakhorn Sawan may, on the other hand, be given some time and leeway, since it is spared the problems of rapid growth that beset its larger cities to the south and north.

We cannot forget these geographic constraints, but just as well, it appears today that the problems and progress of all the cities is far more due to human organization than to geographic constraints.

## **B. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND URBANIZATION.**

All of these cities have grown rapidly in the past half century and all represent the massive world wide transformation from rural-agrarian to urban-industrial society. Continued urbanization seems inevitable. Only in Kobe, Japan, and to a lesser extent in Pusan, Korea, do the cities appear to have reached stability. Natural increase has been brought down in both cases to below replacement level, and in both net migration has stabilized or even turned negative. All the other cities in our studies, however, continue to grow and to attract migrants from the rural areas.

In the Bangkok discussions, however, Mr. Bal Gopal of the UNFPA reminded us that economic development and urbanization do not always mean an increase in the quality of life. Development driven only by aims of increased investment and per capita GDP can well miss providing a better quality of life to the citizens. Too often, it appears that the benefits of development go only to a small group, who get wealthy while the rest of the society remain poor and stressed. It is not difficult to see the squalor, poverty, and environmental degradation that accompany so much of urbanization and development. Yet there is a clear paradox here. While the squalor and stress are visible, death and sickness rates continue to fall and life expectancy, education and access to opportunities continue to rise. Whether or not we have simply not yet come to the saturation point, beyond which there will be negative returns, is far from clear. In any event, economic development does incur some benefits and most of the world's people and leaders seem to want more rather than less of it. Recognition of both the benefits and costs of development should simply alert us to the fact that it is possible to increase the benefits, especially for many who are left behind, and it is possible to reduce the costs. Doing this will remain a major challenge for world and national leadership for the years to come.

## **C. POPULATION DYNAMICS.**

All of the cities examined here are well into the modern demographic transition, and some have come to the end of it as well. But they also represent very different positions in that transition, which reflect both the effects of government policies and the population dynamics that can be expected to dominate their futures. All the countries have experienced a rapid decline in mortality in the past four decades. Japan is the most advanced, but it is a remarkable condition of the current demographic transition that countries today can achieve much lower levels of mortality and morbidity, with far less national wealth than Japan

required to reduce its mortality or fertility.<sup>4</sup> Pakistan remains behind the other countries in this study, and the death rates in Hyderabad, which may even be increasing, bear stark witness to the failure of government policies, even while economic development has been quite impressive. At the end of the demographic condition, however, we see an aging of the population, giving rise to a new set of problems. These face Japan today, which requires new forms of urban services for the increasing proportion of the aged. The problem lies not too far in the future for Korea and China, and even for Thailand.

After mortality has fallen, fertility can follow, if governments develop the effective delivery systems that go with strong national family planning programs. Korea, China and Thailand have been most impressive in this respect, and a result in the cities is a reduction in growth from natural increase. Indonesia is also moving along well, and experiencing some respite from the high natural increase rates of the past. For all cities this reduces demands on health and education services, giving higher quality to those fewer who now share the services. The Philippines and India lag behind, largely because of failures in government policies. Religious objections and weak government delivery of all social services keep the Philippines birth rate high, and it also brings in its wake a rising medical problem of deaths and sickness from abortions, which grow out of unwanted births. In India, it is government's failure to embrace the full range of contraceptives, and to remain focused on sterilization alone that constitutes the real problem. Pakistan remains far behind the rest, with little sign of any relief in sight for the women who want help to reduce the burden of child bearing.

#### **D. SYSTEM OVERLOAD.**

The administrators from India put it well when they said that Bombay bears all of the symptoms of system overload. Rapid urbanization in most has brought more people and more demands than can be met by the weak and overburdened infrastructures of the cities. Transportation is every one's favorite nightmare. Roads are too few and too small and mass transportation too weak, while private cars, trucks and motorcycles grow exponentially in numbers. The result is clogged streets, foul air and unremitting noise. There is also a viscous cycle in much of this. Mass transit systems are usually under-financed as governments are faced with other pressing demands. Plans and projects are delayed, only raising the cost later on, and promoting further delays. With weak mass transit and a well developed vehicle production and marketing system, people opt for individual transportation. The cycle goes on, and any simple projection of current trends quickly runs to double system overload. Too often, transportation planning is dominated by civil engineering with its well developed technical capacity to build roads. And so we work at moving vehicles more efficiently rather than

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4. The current demographic transition is very different from that in the past especially in the extent to which mortality and fertility can be affected by government policies. Modern primary health care using the full range of the mortality attacking technology, can reduce mortality much faster than in the past, and for countries at lower levels of wealth than in the past. The same is true of fertility. Government policies, as we have seen in China and Thailand, can reduce fertility far more rapidly and with less national wealth and development than was the case in the past. All of this, of course, places a heavy on governments and their policies, for they are very much responsible when death or birth rates remain higher than they could be.

working to move goods and people more efficiently. Clearly transportation planning needs to put people, rather than vehicles, first, and to design ways to move people more efficiently and comfortably.

In this respect Kobe is a model to be emulated. Subways, trains and automated elevated trains move millions of passengers daily. Although traffic is often clogged, we have seen that the overall system actually move vehicles more rapidly than in Niigata on the Japan Sea,<sup>5</sup> which is only a third the size of Kobe, and with a lower car to population ratio. Changchun City in China is also less troubled by traffic congestion than other countries at its level of development, for two interesting reasons. One is the lower ratio of cars to population. For a variety of political and economic reasons, China has not embraced the private automobile as have the other countries in this study. At least not yet. The new and rapid pace of economic growth may well imply a rapid increase in the automobile population, and China's major traffic problems may lie ahead, in the not too distant future. But there is another reason as well, which bears examination. Much of China's housing has been connected with government businesses and factories. Thus workers live close to their place of employment and the bicycle provides an effective, efficient, and exceptionally clean and healthy mode of transportation.

Pusan and Kobe offer a comparison with an important lesson on the locus of planning, a lesson to which we shall return below. Kobe was given the authority and resources to plan its own transportation system, Pusan was not. The result is a reasonable flow of traffic in Kobe, and massive congestion in Pusan as port traffic competes with regular urban traffic for too few roads. The Central government in Seoul was far away from Pusan's transportation problems. Its planners did not have to live with Pusan traffic. Little wonder that the planning is deficient.

Close to transportation come basic urban utilities: water, sewage, garbage and power. The combination of rapid population and industrial growth places immense stress on a city's water and sewage system. These are often overwhelmed, and cities sink in their own putrid waste while their citizens too often go without clean water. If Surabaya has found an effective means of garbage disposal by mobilizing local urban communities to recycle and help with their own waste management, too few cities seem to have recognized that local communities can help. There are, to be sure massive needs of large scale public investment, but there are also lower cost solutions, as Surabaya has found, in organizing local communities. And Pusan as well has found that the originally planned massive centralized sewage treatment systems might well be far less cost-effective than smaller more decentralized systems. Unfortunately plans were laid down long ago, and there is little flexibility to change them now, however much that may be indicated. What is striking is the paradox noted earlier. Despite massive overload in water and sewage, deaths from waterborne diseases still seem to be on the wane. This may, of course, be a problem of unrepresentative sampling, or we may still have in the near future great shocks of rising mortality from waterborne diseases.

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5. See AUICK, *Population Dynamics and Port City Development*, (Kobe: AUICK, 1992), chapter on Kobe and Niigata.

Housing is also greatly strained. The rising tide of homeless bears stark testimony to the problem. More than half of Bombay's population lives in slum or slum-like conditions. The proportions may be larger in Hyderabad, but the capacity to count has eroded along with the capacity to govern and provide effective social services. Overall, the problems of housing appear most serious in South Asia, less serious in Southeast Asia, and almost not a problem, at least by comparison, in Japan, China and Korea. National wealth surely makes a difference, but so do national policies.

## **E. UNEQUAL BENEFITS AND THE PROBLEM OF GENDER.**

One of the most common, and most distressing, observations about the process of economic development and the benefits it provides, is that the benefits are not shared equally among all people. The poor continue to be neglected and even exploited as the benefits of development go disproportionately to the wealthy, or even to the middle class who have some capital on which to draw. From this perspective, one of the most heartening stories in our city studies comes from Hyderabad, the most distressing city of all we have seen. Even there, where the problems seem insurmountable, and the future very bleak, some effective and well meaning urban administrators did find a way to make land for housing available to the truly poor and needy. More on that later.

After all the progress there remains a stubborn inequality in the treatment of women. Gender inequality may well constitute both the most difficult problem to solve and the greatest source of human inefficiency. To deny half the population the ability to develop their individual talents fully is to deny the human population one of its most important resources, the use of intelligence to solve problems.

Violence against women is rising in Hyderabad, where already women were the most disadvantaged among all the cities we have studied. In other countries they have made important gains in health and education, yet remain largely closed out of higher political and administrative positions. In Korea and Japan women appear to have better health, and equal access to basic education, but they also continue to be locked into the wife-mother role as the one acceptable way in which to develop and express their individual talents. Thai and Philippines women seem to be freer, and with more opportunities than women in other societies. In both cases women are fully active in the market and business ventures. They have a great deal of freedom of movement and autonomy, and manage their own and even the household finances with great independence. In Thailand women have achieved full gender equality in access to health care, and especially in the most important area of control over their own fertility. In education, they have achieved equality in access to primary school, but the gap increases as one goes up the educational ladder. The situation is somewhat reversed in

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6. This may, of course, be due to what Ashley Montague called *The Natural Superiority of Women*, in a provocative book written two decades ago. Women do appear to be physiologically stronger than men. When given even minimally equal treatment, women have lower age specific death rates than men **at all ages**.

7. This is also true throughout Southeast Asia, in striking contrast to both South and East Asia, indicating some deep seated cultural sources of gender role differentiation.

the Philippines, where women show higher life expectancy than men, but have little access to health services in the control of fertility. Although this study did not touch on the issue, death and sickness from illegal abortion are known to be some of the most serious health problems in the Philippines. This, of course, indicates a high unmet need for fertility control. In education, on the other hand, women seem to be less disadvantaged than in Thailand. We find women in active participation throughout the Philippines' educational ladder. Even where they are most advantaged, and have the most freedom and autonomy, however, women remain highly underrepresented in positions of public power and responsibility.

## **F. LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION**

Despite all of the problems of the system overload, urban administrators can achieve some successes. Intelligent and dedicated leadership counts for a great deal. The head of the Hyderabad Development Authority was apparently committed to providing housing opportunities to the city's poor and found a way to make this possible. The Mayor of Surabaya was committed to cleanliness and found a way to organize local communities for their own betterment. Chungchan City's leaders were concerned about pollution, and found ways to clean up industrial effluents. Leaders in Bombay and Pusan continue to chip away at their cities' intransigent problems of traffic congestion and clean water. Cebu City's leaders develop plans for growth centers to help promote development and relieve inner city congestion. Nakhorn Sawan's leaders see most of their problems in the future, and work to create plans that will meet those problems and make their city a more livable place. And in Kobe, we found extremely visionary and effective leadership that developed long range plans and made their city one of the most enviable living places we have seen.

Leadership does count. But we can also learn much from the way effective urban administrative leaders solve their problems. From these studies, from the previous AUICK studies, and from the rich discussions of the country study directors and the members of the International Advisory Committee, we can distill the following four general observations.

1. Control over territory. To plan effectively for their growth and to meet their problems, urban administrators must have effective control over territory relevant to their cities. We have seen in almost all cases the growth of administrative boundaries, which appears to be necessary for effective planning. Much of Kobe's success depended upon expanding its boundaries and gaining control over the territory that now provides the residents with comfortable suburbs and space for recreational activities. Pusan is hampered in planning its water supply by lack of control over upstream dumping that pollutes its own water sources. Bombay is hampered more by geography than by political boundaries. It cannot expand into the water. Changchun City and Cebu City now have boundaries that extend far beyond its urban built up area, and this should give the city administrators ample room for the exercise of effective planning.

One of the most intractable problems urban administrators face in this regard is that of multiple jurisdictions. Nowhere is this more serious than in Hyderabad, where the city administrators' share jurisdiction with the district, the province and with a number of national agencies, including the defense department. But even there, dedicated leadership can find a

way around the problem, at least in providing land for house building to the urban poor. Their task would be far simpler if they had more complete control over the territory the city occupies.

2. Devolution of Power, Authority and Resources. One of the most intractable problems we have seen in the years of observing urban administrative problems is the reluctance of central governments to give cities the authority and resources they need to solve their problems. Planning is best done where the problems are. Administrators far away in the capital city do not live with the daily problems of a city, nor with the failures that their own jealously guarded control produces. Everywhere decentralization or devolution appears to be a fashionable catchword. Too often, however, it is only a catchword that is not translated into real devolution. Too often cities are given only the responsibility for solving their problems, but are not given the authority or resources to discharge that responsibility adequately.

Kobe is the exception that proves the rule. It has been given both the authority and the resources to plan effectively. The results are striking. Urban services are well organized and provide a good quality of life to the citizens. Pusan's traffic problems, on the other hand, show the worst effects of central control. Administrators in Seoul do not have to live with Pusan's congested traffic and thus could not be expected to work to alleviate those problems. Indonesia seems committed to decentralization, but we shall have to wait to see to what extent that commitment is translated into actual allocation of authority and resources to the cities.

For port cities the problems are amplified. For the most part, ports are under the control of specialized central government ministries, whose interest lies primarily in making the port an efficient revenue generator for their own agencies. This deprives port cities of the ability to plan for the effective integration of the port with the rest of the urban scene. Again, Kobe provides an excellent model of the benefits of urban control over the port, and Pusan again shows how costly that lack of authority can be.

3. Flexibility is Key. The most important lesson we learn from the successful housing program in Hyderabad is the need for flexibility in applying rules. The ability of the Hyderabad Development Authority to change the rules as they proceeded was the key to breaking the back of the housing-for-the-poor problem. When rules are followed slavishly, distortions, bottlenecks, and failure are too often the only result.

Government planning is necessarily bounded by fiscal schedules. Budgets are made on annual schedules, but the problems urban administrators face do not begin and end with the fiscal year. One of the most important advances made in public financing in the past half century is the emergence of the five year plan. This enabled leaders to take a longer view and to accept such things as deficits in annual budgets as they experienced the longer term cycles of trade and economic affairs. Despite this important advance, the fixation with annual budgets remains a serious problem. It leads planners, especially those in the central government far away from local issues, to demand results by the end of the fiscal year. When this demand is coupled with the all too common delay in making allocations of resources, the results will almost inevitably be failure. Planning and budgeting must be broken out of the annual cycle and built on a longer term, and flexible schedule.

4. Popular Participation. When people are given the opportunity to express their desires, these often turn out to be simple things like access to good primary health care, good educational opportunities for their children, clean water and a clean environment. Systems that empower what the Filipinos aptly call “the little people,” place pressures on government to supply these simple services. Perhaps the greatest example of this rule is found in Sri Lanka (at least until it was torn apart by ethnic civil war). Sri Lanka is everyone’s favorite deviant case. Any statistical analysis of economic development shows a strong relationship between per capita GDP and all measures of health and welfare. But the association is never a total and perfect. At every level of development some countries do far better and some far worse than others in translating wealth into welfare. Sri Lanka is found in a deviant position in any statistical array. It is a poor country, but has exceptionally high levels of health, education and welfare. Most of this is attributed to its democratic political system, which allowed the little people to put pressure on government for the things that really matter: health and education.

Popular participation can be advantageous in other ways as well. Surabaya has shown how the local communities can be mobilized to participate in cleaning their own environments. They have given the city a level of cleanliness that would have cost government far more than it could possibly afford. Too often, however, central administrators, again those far away from daily local problems, look upon popular participation as a way of reducing costs by mobilizing cheap labor. It seldom works. Local people have too often been burned by governments, and find ways to stay away from, or to reduce their efficiency in, projects that only take their labor and give them nothing in return. Mobilizing effective popular participation, as Surabaya shows, implies giving local people both power and resources. The mayor not only called upon local communities to clean up their environments, his teams showed the poor in those communities how they could earn income from separating solid wastes for recycling.

Dr. Krasae’s Four Ds. Dr. Krasae Chanawongse is a member of AUICK’s International Advisory Committee. He is now a member of parliament and a past deputy governor of Bangkok. More telling, however, is the fact that he served for many years as a rural doctor near his home in Khon Kaen in Thailand’s poverty stricken Northeast Provinces. And for his years of innovative service, he won the coveted Ramon Magsaysay Award. He summed up much of the AUICK group discussion in Bangkok by explaining his rule of the four Ds.

Demystification Government must be demystified. It must be made more open and transparent. As he put it, “national security” is too often invoked to hide from the people what government was doing, and much of what it was doing involved corruption, incompetence and neglect.

Decentralization Resources and authority must be given to those who face the daily, local problems of building a better life for themselves and others.

Democratic Participation The “little people” must be given a voice. Too often government only tells people what to do, and seldom asks what their needs are and what can be done for them. Too often government agents act as officials who tell people what to do and take taxes and

resources from them. There is a need, Dr. Krasae says, to change the skills and attitudes of government officials, so that they become public servants and not dictators. **The need is to turn officials into public servants.**

Distribution of Resources Inequality of resource distribution remains one of the most serious, and probably most rapidly growing, problems of our times. All people should benefit more equitably in the progress that is undoubtedly being made. This is especially urgent in the case of equality for women.

## **G. QUALITY OF LIFE INDICATORS**

One of the tasks set for this study was to have urban administrators tell us what they felt would be the most important indicators of the quality of life. We did not received results from all cases, but we did receive some useful suggestions.

There is a common and basic set of indicators of the physical quality of life that is widely agreed upon in the literature and which the urban administrators also find important. Basic health and welfare measures are considered some of the most important. Infant and maternal mortality rates (IMR and MMR), life expectancy, nutrition (caloric, protein and vitamin intake), education, and access to basic urban amenities like clean water sewage and waste disposal, power and housing. Employment is also important, since it provides income to individuals and families and gives them a real capacity to obtain the things they want most. It is especially important to note the extent to which these amenities and services are available to women, the great underprivileged and disadvantaged of the world. One of the most important services women can have is access to contraceptive information and supplies. This gives them control over their own reproduction, which is a key to their health and to the health of their children. There are also important environmental indicators, like clean air, protection from toxic effluents and protection from the noise and dirt of much industrial operation. Finally, freedom from crime and physical violence is noted as an important indicator of the quality of life.

These are all especially important indicators for the lower income countries, but they may not be the most effective or useful for the more wealthy countries. For Kobe, for example, these indicators are all already at a high level, and would not point to some of the more serious problems that remain. Thus there must be a range of indicators that can be applied more sensitively to societies at different levels of income. In Kobe, for example, deaths of motorists and pedestrians from traffic accidents are considered an important indicator. Kobe also found that the major determinant of the level of these indicators was public investments in traffic lights, safe walkways, and road crossings. There is also extensive work done on quality of life indicators in the high income countries, which focus on a range of somewhat more subjective and intangible conditions. Most of these concern occupational and marital happiness, and there are many excellent and well tested indicators of these dimensions of the quality of life. They

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8. These were extensively reviewed in the Kobe International Symposium on urban Metabolism convened jointly by AUICK and the university of Michigan in Kobe in September 1993.

may be of little immediate relevance to the lower income countries of the world, but it may be expected, and hoped, that they will gain importance as the more basic problems of health and welfare are solved.

## **H. TRAINING NEEDS**

To assist the AUICK in its plans for training urban administrators, the study directors were to ask respondents in various staff training programs, both at the national or provincial level and in their own urban governments. Nonetheless, administrators welcomed the possibility of assistance in more training. Much interest was expressed in basic training in urban administration. This includes, budgeting, personnel and planning, with a special emphasis on long term planning and implementing projects. We found in pervious surveys interest in statistical data collection and management, and the use of statistical information for planning and monitoring urban conditions. There is also expressed need for training in all of the specialized technical agencies that are involved in government. This would include all forms of engineering for urban utilities, water, sewage and garbage management, traffic management, housing, public health, and educational planning.