

Mega City Projects In The Brics Regions



Colin Mashikinya: 12-12-2018

The narrative on the progress of catalytic projects (Megatropolis) in the regional blocs of the BRICS is exciting and reflects extremes of sophistication and complex-challenges. The cause and effect of the dawn of these megacities have similar stories behind them. As social housing is a non-profit sector, it is necessary to think beyond the public-private model and develop a third option, where the local community is the driver, and housing is not considered as a commodity. It is when you mix the typology with industrialisation that the model produces return for investment to which increases palatability. Public and private sectors have to pro-actively support and participate in community led housing programs which should synchronise with poverty reduction, livelihoods, facilities, equity and security.

The BRICS have diverse expenditure and allocation for urbanisation underpinned by spatial information and city administration. The largest most tech-savvy with high cash spend per capita is China, Russia, South Africa, India then Brazil. China is aiming to build a Mega City larger than Britain with 100 million dwellers. Last year, more than 340 billion yuan – US\$48 billion was invested in Jing-Jin-Ji's (Beijing, Tianjing and Hebei) five pillar industries of education, health, transport, ecology and human resources (NBC News, 2014). This has set the benchmark of how typically a country can build symbols most representing them. Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen are each considered windows representing national profile to a fair extent.

In the most extensive resettlement project of Russia's Khrushchevka housing regime, 10% of Moscow is to be replaced with new housing model for a 1.6million Mixed Housing Typology (Rockefeller Foundation, 2017). Moscow is tackling several huge urban development projects which started with a 120bn roubles – \$1.8bn of road rehabilitation. In totality the Putin administration will spend close to 3tn-roubles (\$455bn) for revitalisation and megatropolis projects. The contemporary transformation tool has an important role in promoting a sensible debate for the BRICS on new paradigms and economic growth taking place globally. The urban global tipping point is yet to be reached as 60% of the world's population is currently un-urbanised (FIG, 2010).

South Africa's programme is set to reach R800bn – \$53bn by 2022 through the Presidential Infrastructure Commission, with Gauteng taking a larger share of the portion. India is prepared for a 7 mega city projects by 2030, of which the New Delhi city will receive an estimated 9.3 million people (Jain A.K, 2016). The government of India has launched the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) for building 20 million houses by 2022. The programme is found in the draft National Urban Rental Housing Policy (NURHP) 2015. Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Chennai are anchors of the megatropolis to be joined by Hyderabad and Ahmedabad by 2030. It was difficult to attain the value of the megaprojects, but an estimated \$45bn is earmarked till 2022.

Brazils Minha Casa Minha Vida (MCMV) is a major social housing programme launched in 2009 by Hon Lula da Silva to build 1 million homes in order to address low-income housing shortage amid rocketing costs – the downturn saw a \$551mn mega project canned in 2017. The revolution is styled “My House My Life” and has up to date delivered 2 million houses.

This growth has of course an impact on social, economic and ecological systems. The opportunity available for the coalition is to nature the growth in a sustainable manner, both professional and political managers should act proactively towards modern spatial management. Accountability, co-responsibility, precaution and dialogue between academics and practitioners, as well as collective decision making is key to addressing climate, energy and environmental sustainability. Energy in particular has been a topical issue due to inadequacies and illegal connections as common phenomena in all of the BRICS.

The positive is BRICS countries have shown demand for the collection, integration, management and sharing of information and the relevant education; experience sharing and development of best practices. This appetite is driven by multidisciplinary factors in society which in turn are magnified by rapid urbanisation and the conditions of the world’s megatropolis. Buenos Aires has invested in spatial data access on a public website – reporting on city administration, planning, disaster management and land tenure specific to address BRICS topics.

Although it must be recognised that citizen participation in information gathering suggests certain risks like the concern for privacy; suspicion of governmental intrusion and loss of public support; the issue of quality of data collected by non professionals and the need for quality analysis; the danger of miss-use of citizen-provided information by repressive governments; and the question of the capacity of governmental agencies to monitor, evaluate, and interpret the volumes of data collected in certain urban sensing systems is critical. The key factor for success will be utilising information technology to support growth as resources are necessary for the efficient use and economy of material, time and money.

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