

## **Social integration**

Cities are faced with major challenges at the start of the 21st century. They have to position themselves against global competition and attract both investors and highly qualified employees. The initial conditions for them to do so are good. Cities are the engines of growth in the economy. They generate 55 percent of the gross national product in low-income countries. In countries with mid-range incomes, this figure is 73 percent, and in those with high incomes as much as 85 percent. Urbanization thus offers many opportunities for development, employment and income generation.

However, the opportunities presented by urbanization are distributed extremely unevenly. Globalization is reinforcing the tendency for cities to become divided. Islands of affluence are often situated alongside areas of deepest poverty. According to calculations by the United Nations, one in three city dwellers in developing countries lives in conditions of poverty. This means that about one billion people live in housing with no secure right of residence, often without water, sanitation facilities or electricity. Most of the poorest of the poor are women. The traditional backup systems, first and foremost the family, often no longer exist or break down in the face of growing demands. If the trend continues, around three billion people will be living in marginal areas by the year 2050.

Life in these informal settlements is not only characterized by day-to-day environmental hazards; residents are also discriminated against through a variety of social mechanisms and suffer social exclusion, for example as a result of inadequate access to education, preventive health care and socio-cultural infrastructure. The provision of municipal services for these residents in particular is also inadequate, and options for political participation in decision-making processes are often limited. The majority of people living in such poor settlements are far removed from normal employment relationships, with most just barely helping their families make ends meet with informal job opportunities.

Two thirds of all children in developing countries are now being born in cities, many of them in slums. Cities are also drivers of economic growth, and social, economic and cultural poverty cannot be allowed to spread like wildfire there – not only because of the need to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Consequently, municipal and regional decision-makers should do more to ensure that the “urbanization dividend” benefits all inhabitants. They are called upon – and are supported in doing so by research and development cooperation – to maintain their powers of social integration, to fight poverty, to establish opportunities for employment and income, and to enhance the quality of life in the poorer districts.

Often, though, the necessary funding and state structures are not in place. Objectives such as “democratization” and “better living conditions” threaten to recede into the distant future in many cities. There are no simple solutions. Interdisciplinary approaches are needed that offer help at various levels to those affected so that they are able to improve the circumstances of their lives on a sustainable basis themselves.

Since the 1980s, many governments have changed their policy on illegal and informal settlements. They no longer tear the shacks down, but instead try to improve the accommodation erected in the settlements and the infrastructure facilities serving them. This alone, however, does not cancel out the social disadvantages suffered by the residents. Germany has been supporting projects in the field of social integration for many years now. German research and development cooperation builds on the experience that German municipalities have gathered in the context of their own self-government. The general conviction is that only a holistic approach can improve the quality of life in these districts over the long term.

## **Opportunities and Risks of Socio-spatial Differentiation (Chile)**

Megacities are often engines for growth in their region and consequently present many opportunities. However, growth is frequently uncontrollable and also entails numerous risks for the inhabitants, such as that of socio-spatial differentiation. This is one of a total of ten research topics addressed by the Risk Habitat Megacity initiative coordinated by the Helmholtz Association in cooperation with various international cooperation partners. Socio-spatial differences are one of the problems that emerge particularly blatantly in megacities and need to be taken into account in the course of sustainable urban development.

In Santiago de Chile, new legislation relating to the housing market and land use is currently causing land prices to rise and is increasing the pressure on investors to switch to lower-priced and less privileged areas. This is giving rise to new patterns of intra-city migration that are causing a massive shake-up in previous spatial social structures. As a result, in certain sectors of the city of Santiago, richer and poorer segments of the population are suddenly living closer together. What are the positive and negative consequences of this new spatial proximity?

The social mixing of residential areas – in other words the influx of the upper middle class and upper class into once exclusively poor districts on the margins of cities – represents both a risk and an opportunity for social integration. To date, however, the interrelationships between the spatial proximity of different social groups and social integration have not yet been adequately understood or recorded. The researchers involved in the study thus hope to obtain a better understanding of the relationship between the development of the urban land market and the formation of new socio-economic segregation patterns, as well as gaining insights into the impacts that this new spatial proximity is having on processes of social integration. At the same time, the question is posed as to how municipal housing policy, which is based on neoliberal economic models, can respond to processes of socio-spatial differentiation and create sustainable living conditions.

### **Violence Prevention Through Upgrading of the Urban Environment (South Africa)**

Khayelitsha is a dormitory town for Cape Town with between 600,000 and 800,000 inhabitants. It is dominated by crime, poverty, unemployment and a high rate of HIV infection. The residents of the district describe robbery, murder, rape and burglary as being the biggest problems. Not only are the victims often women – in public areas and in their own homes too – but both the victims and perpetrators mainly belong to the young generation.

With support from German development cooperation, the city of Cape Town is implementing a programme designed to improve security in public spaces. The programme is specifically targeted at young people in the belief that this cycle of violence can only be broken if the young people are given prospects for the future.

One fundamental element of the concept involves establishing small neighbourhood centres run by local groups with support from the city. The effect is that public areas in a particular location that have previously been seen as dangerous are now occupied by a positive force. In future, small centres of this kind are to be situated every 500 metres along the most important pedestrian routes. Volunteers there will guarantee public order. The centres offer a broad range of activities, such as sport, youth programmes and barter exchanges, depending on the local context. The presence of caretaker flats means that the people concerned are able to make use of the centres around the clock.