

## **Equity and social inclusion, means for urban prosperous housing developments in Mexican cities**

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While sustainable urban development has been the goal of urban authorities since the publication of the World Commission on Environment and Development report *Our common future*; clarification of goals of sustainable cities is still in order. UN-Habitat launched in 2012 the City Prosperity Index (CPI); in the aftermath UN-Habitat has conducted various studies all over the world, among them one for Guadalajara Metropolitan Area (GMA), the second most populated urban area in Mexico. In GMA national housing policies have strongly influenced growth in the last 15 years, in an unsustainable fashion, but this could change.

This paper discusses the relationship between housing development policies in Mexico and the United Nations' Cities Prosperity Index (CPI). By assessing GMA as a case study, this paper also proposes pragmatic ways to translate CPI's indicators into development requirements for new and existing housing developments in Mexican Cities.

Housing development policies have focused on quantitative rather than qualitative issues, in particular for low income citizens since the year 2000; whereas CPI measures multiple dimensions of prosperity in 6 components: productivity, infrastructure development, quality of life, environmental sustainability, governance and legislation as well as equity and social inclusion. Productivity means basic economics for cities, quality of life considers social services of education, health and public space, infrastructure development refers to physical networks supporting economic development, equity and social inclusion strives for a fair share of wealth in cities, environmental sustainability considers sensitive areas protection, and urban governance looks for citizen involvement in decision making processes. This rich approach to sustainable prosperity poses conceptual and methodology challenges.

Although the analysis includes the six dimensions of prosperity, it emphasizes on the equity and social inclusion component. Equity and social inclusion have usually played a secondary role on urban housing national policies. Since equity aims at achieving a balanced economic growth, and eradicate poverty in urban areas, should be an important issue in decision making for new housing developments.

Equity and Social Inclusion Index (ESI) combines Gini coefficients with other indicators such as gender and social inclusion as well as urban diversity.

Equity has been an important issue for planners; it belongs to procedural planning theories since it is oriented towards the process of planning and the role played by the actors involved. It is a result of a bottom-up process initiated most of the time at the grassroots groups' level. Individuals want to plan an active role in the process. All members of society want to be able to sit at the table with decision-makers on an equal basis and sharing the same rights. This is not always true because actual circumstances are not equal for everyone, resulting in a permanent struggle among the stakeholders. In addition, people in our contemporary societies are only participating in contingency situations instead of having a permanent involvement. The reasons are that democratic processes consume time and most of the participants are not economically rewarded and they don't have the economic resources to devote their time to citizen participation instead of working.

The paper compares CPI's outcomes from GMA to housing national policies in Mexico concluding with an array of possibilities to improve new and existing housing developments in the urban region.

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