

# WHEN PEOPLE MATTER

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# THE CHALLENGE

The concept of 'sustainable development' currently seems to be on everybody's lips. Here, a people-centred approach is adapted in order to argue that the shaping of future cities cannot rest on ecological, technological and economic factors alone. The human understanding of the past and the present, as well as desires for a better future, needs to be assessed. This is particularly true in the face of global urbanisation - a challenge which puts great demand on all who operate within the urban policy context.

For the first time in history over half of the world's population lives in cities and the process of urbanisation is increasing at an astonishing speed. However, as we stand at the threshold, looking into this urban century, it is not with the optimism and confidence of the industrial generations who

lived at the beginning of the last century - when the earth's resources seemed interminable - but with apprehension and perhaps even fear. We have realised that resources are limited and today the concept of sustainable development can not be perceived as merely a fashion but a creed which has spread to all policy areas in order to make sure that we minimise our footprint on the future. We are anxious not to compromise the lives of coming generations but at the same time we no longer seem to fully trust our abilities to style the future in a positive way. But what does this actually imply - is sustainability compatible with notions of welfare and prosperity? Is heritage a concept which development must leave out in order to gain the desirable label of sustainability? Or is it the other way around – that the legacy of knowledge and experience forms the basis for innovation and progress?

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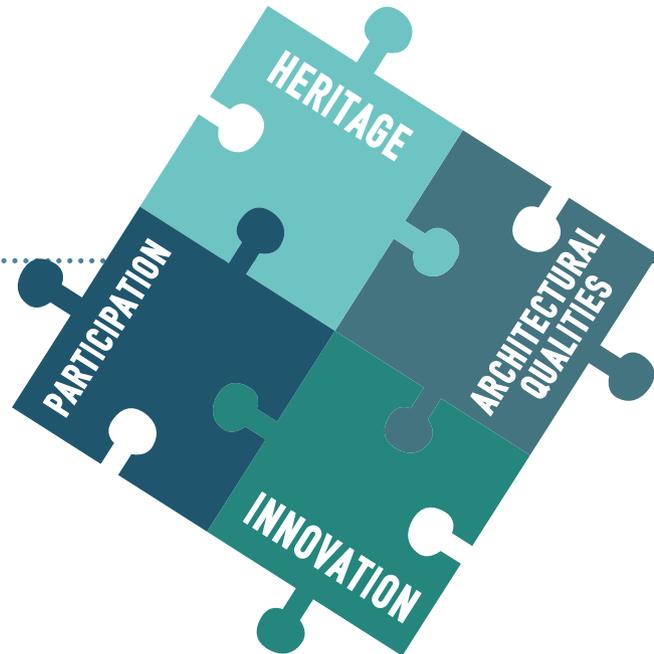
Grafisk form: Per Liedner, Sara Peny, Jonas Torsvall

Tryck: Lenanders Grafiska AB, 2010

# THE JOINT ASSIGNMENT

In order to meet the complex challenge of urban sustainability, the Swedish government has commissioned four national agencies within the field of environmental and cultural policies to explore the role of heritage, architecture, innovation and public participation in strengthening socio-cultural aspects of sustainable city development. The government stresses the unifying and innovative role of architecture, the potential for social mobilisation, the prospect of achieving a positive development with respect to social inclusion. The four agencies were also asked to include an international perspective by contributing to activities during World Urban Forum 5 and Expo 2010, respectively.

This publication considers the joint activities in these international contexts. The overall objective was to create platforms for dialogue across language and cultural barriers about central themes such as notions of time, place, public participation and innovation. This multifaceted task called for easily accessible, inclusive and transparent tools of communication, giving a voice and a value to people's experiences and ideas about their urban environment. These tools are vital in the shaping of sustainable, inclusive cities where people feel secure and enriched by numerous possibilities to orientate themselves in time and space.



# WHO

## SWEDISH NATIONAL BOARD OF HOUSING, BUILDING AND PLANNING

The central government authority for town and country planning, management of land and water resources, building and housing.

## THE SWEDISH RESEARCH COUNCIL FORMAS

Committed to excellence in research for sustainable development

## SWEDISH NATIONAL HERITAGE BOARD

Strengthens the position of cultural heritage as a resource in development towards a long-term sustainable society

## THE SWEDISH MUSEUM OF ARCHITECTURE

Offers an active platform for architecture, design and sustainable urban development.

# WHERE



WORLD URBAN FORUM 5  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil  
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WORLD EXPO 2010  
Shanghai, China  
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# WHEN

The activities carried out in the contexts of World Urban Forum 5 and Expo 2010 related to various themes and used more or less playful approaches depending on target groups. The proceedings were reported daily on the respective blog sites of the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning and the Swedish National Heritage Board.



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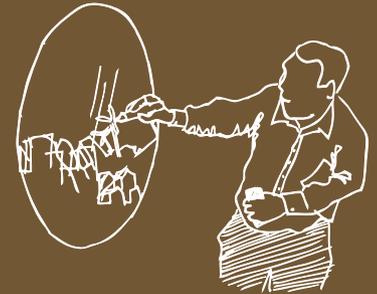
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*Bridging the gap between...  
...citizens, professionals and authorities*

*Bridging the gap between...  
...theory and practice*

*Bridging the gap between...  
...yesterday and tomorrow*

### **World Urban Forum 5**

The World Urban Forum was established by the United Nations to examine urbanisation and its impact on communities, cities, economies, climate change and policies. Today it is the world's premier conference on managing growing towns and cities. The fifth World Urban Forum was staged in Rio de Janeiro 22 to 26 March 2010 with the parole *The Right to the City - Bridging the Urban Divide* as central theme.

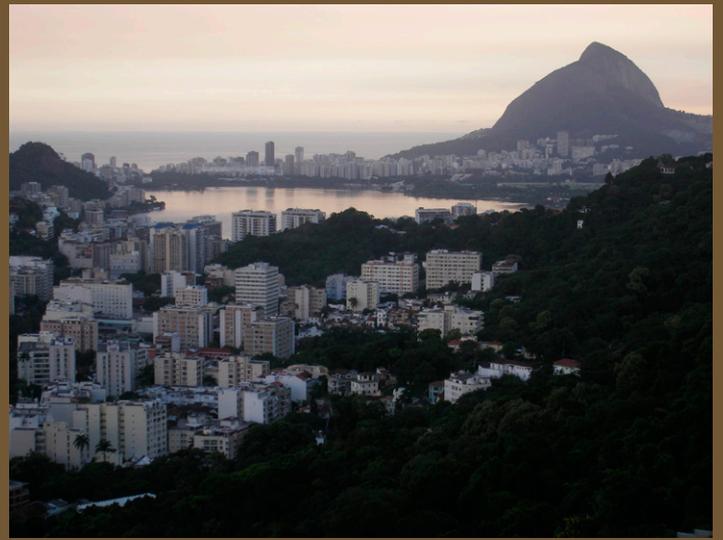


## **BRIDGING THE GAP**

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The activities within the framework of the Swedish exhibition encompassed a variety of events, for example the networking event Climate Change, Governance and Social Equity as well as the interactive games Move a city in ten minutes and SymbioCity scenarios. The primary target group was World Urban Forum 5 visitors, mostly politicians, government officials, planning and environmental professionals, non-governmental organisations and academics from all over the world.

Several visitors commented on how well the games Move a city in ten minutes and SymbioCity Scenarios complemented each other. The latter demands full attention of the user whereas the former is more playful and allows for discussion. Some visiting mayors and teachers saw the potential of using the two games to introduce complex planning issues to students on different educational levels. Move a city in ten minutes and SymbioCity scenarios also featured in a TV Brazil news story covering World Urban Forum 5 events.



*There are major differences between China and Sweden e.g. in demography, urban density, political system, culture and other aspects. These differences make the comparison between the two countries difficult and tentative. However, the seminar on 2 July, involving participants from the two countries, reflected the potential of the exchange of ideas and the sharing of best practise of relevant projects in both countries.*

Zhichang Cai, Workshop facilitator  
KTH, Stockholm and Southeast University, Nanjing

### **Expo 2010**

The first World Exposition, called the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations was held in London in 1851. Since then the World Expo has grown to an international event attracting around 70 million visitors. Expo 2010, with the title *Better City, Better Life*, was held in Shanghai from 1 May to 31 October. Expo 2010 centred on innovation and interaction with the aim to contribute to human-centred development, scientific and technological innovation and cultural diversity.

**2**  
JULY

## **WHEN PEOPLE MATTER SEMINAR**

When People Matter - Social and Cultural Aspects of Sustainable Urban Planning was one of several parallel seminars and workshops arranged at the Swedish pavilion within the framework of the Swedish government's 1-2 July initiative SymbioCity Forum.

The seminar was hosted by the four agencies and gathered some thirty Chinese and Swedish social scientists, architects and planners. The objective was to promote a Swedish-Chinese exchange of ideas on the role of people's commitment in the long-term transformation of the urban environment and how to turn socio-cultural capital and urban heritage into generators for sustainable development.

In order to fuel discussion, twelve of the seminar participants were invited

to make presentations providing either general perspectives on the concepts of sustainability, urban heritage and cultural planning or more specific considerations with respect to the current situations in the cities of Shanghai, Wuxi, Kiruna and Malmö. Each speaker was also asked to make a 'speech-bubble-statement' summarising the essence of their presentation. Finally, Professor Wang Jun Yang rounded off the discussions of the day by making some concluding remarks (reproduced in full in this publication).



A common visual identity was used during all *When people matter* activities at Expo 2010. Graphics inspired by the facade of the Swedish pavillion pictured both a tangram-like figure and a traditional city pattern.



## WHEN PEOPLE MATTER WORKSHOP - 1

3  
JULY

Visitors of all ages were invited to a workshop called *When People Matter*. Through a range of playful activities including the quadrogram, the futurograph, the fan and the speech bubbles the visitors were asked to be the creative architects of their own city landscapes. The visitors were faced with questions such as; Choose your dream home, high-rise or low-rise? Describe the neighbourhood you like, downtown or new developing area? Choose your favourite living environment, with family or with friends? Choose your favourite

mode of transportation, public transport or private cars? They were then asked to write a personal statement on a speech bubble and fold a fan illustrating change and continuity in Swedish and Chinese city landscapes.

By the end of the day, some 2000 visitors had engaged with the tasks posed by the workshop. The event featured in a news story on the Swedish pavillion's website - *Changes of the city, Shown on the fan.*



### City of my heart

A Chinese girl who took part in the 23 September workshop said that she had described the city of her heart. It could be argued that everyone has a city of their heart - a personal map consisting of memories, experiences and expectations which define our relationship with the surroundings. The map directs us to our favourite shortcuts, to a cup of coffee at the corner café or to our favourite seats on the bus. We read the messages of the city and at the same time we are messengers ourselves, creating the urban context.

How can this stimulating mass of interacting ideas, emotions and preferences be transformed into a firm foundation for decisions and policies with respect to cities and city planning? The first step requires new methods and contexts. Temporary initiatives such as workshops, hearings and seminars in real life or via the internet, offer great potential. Public spaces could develop into arenas for much needed dialogue and exchange of experiences and ideas.

Reflections by Pernilla Glaser,  
Workshop facilitator, Swedish Museum of Architecture



## WHEN PEOPLE MATTER – CHILDREN AT SCHOOL

23  
SEPT

Children at a local school in Shanghai explored their individual and shared perspectives on the city's geography, memories and traditions within the framework of a structured dialogue together with their teacher and parents; Children Talk. They then built a miniature city based on their perceptions of the local environment – Children Build.



### **Towards an inclusive architecture**

When children talk about cities you realise that their awareness of the urban environment differs from the adult perception. What can be learnt from this? For one thing children can remind us that a city is more than its composing buildings and streets. It is all the small things we see but do not usually reflect upon; litter in the street, graffiti on the walls, the irritating gum that sticks under the shoe and the smell of garbage. The city is above all the sum of its people!

When considering the impact of architecture on people's living conditions it becomes clear that a broad range of groups in society should be invited into the process of planning and building cities. If taken into account, the needs and preferences of adults as well as children would probably contribute to the shaping of urban environments. Responsibility, participation and initiative on a local level

are all expressions of engagement that affect the results of the planning process. According to Swedish legislation on planning, citizen participation is mandatory. But is this enough to ensure that participation really takes place?

If we agree that architecture influences our lives, the discussion of why, how, where and what we build must be introduced to a wider circle of stakeholders. Those who live and work in the cities must be offered the possibility of making their voices heard when it comes to shaping their neighborhoods. In this respect architecture could have a unifying and innovative role in the process of shaping sustainable cities, paving the way for Better Cities, Better Life...

Exerpt from speech by Lena Rahoult,  
Head of Swedish Museum of Architecture

## **WHEN PEOPLE MATTER WORKSHOP – 2**



Visitors of all ages were invited to take part in a workshop where they were encouraged to express their views, narratives and ideas about how the city is shaped, how it works and how it may develop. Approaches used were the Children build, quadrogram, futurograph, post-it questions and a task to fulfil on the way home.

The September activities were arranged within the framework of Sweden Architecture Week at the Swedish Pavilion of Expo 2010 and featured in a news story at the Swedish pavilions website covering the various events during the week.



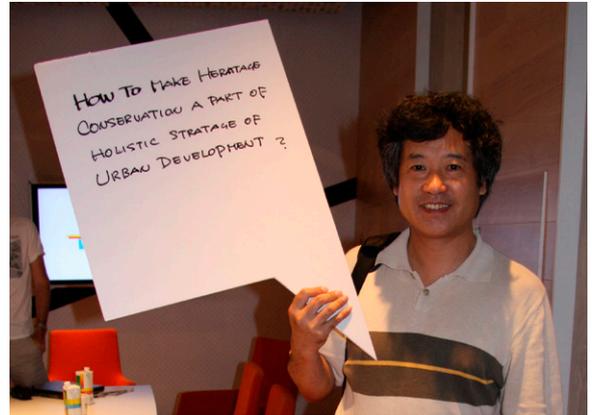
# WHEN PEOPLE MATTER SEMINAR: INVITED SPEAKERS

A cultural heritage needs its people and surrounding society to keep its value.

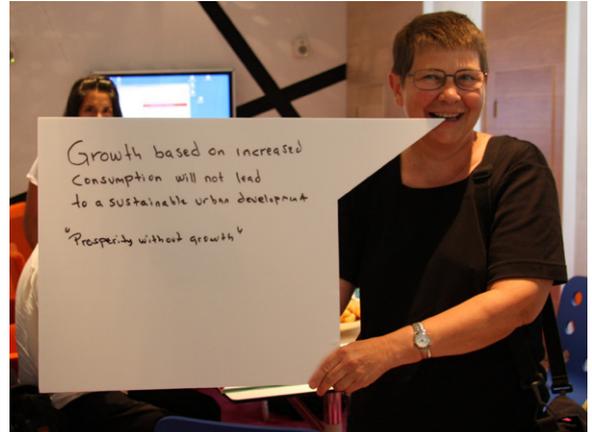


**Mrs. Ann-Catrin Fredriksson**  
Head of Environmental & Planning Dept.  
City of Kiruna

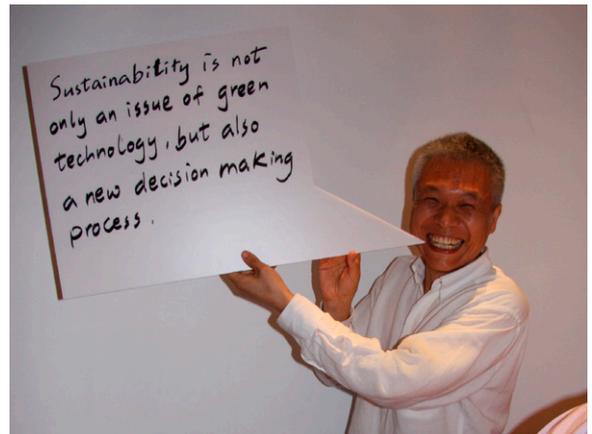
**Prof. Dong Wei**  
Southeast University Nanjing,  
School of architecture

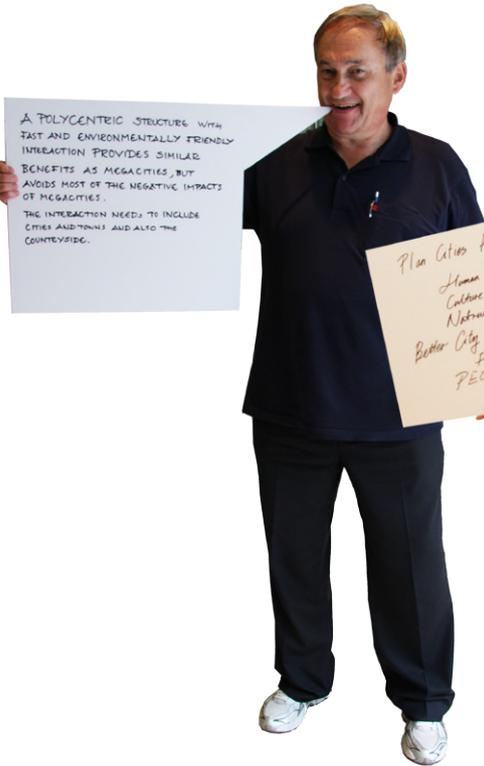


**Prof. Katarina Nylund**  
Dept. of Urban Studies.  
Malmö University

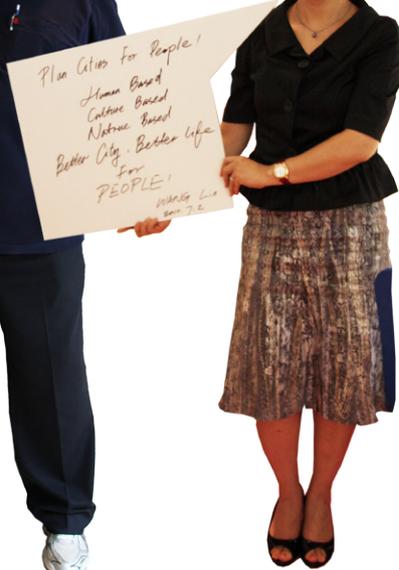


**Prof. Wang Jun-Yang**  
College of Architecture & Urban Planning,  
Tongji University Shanghai

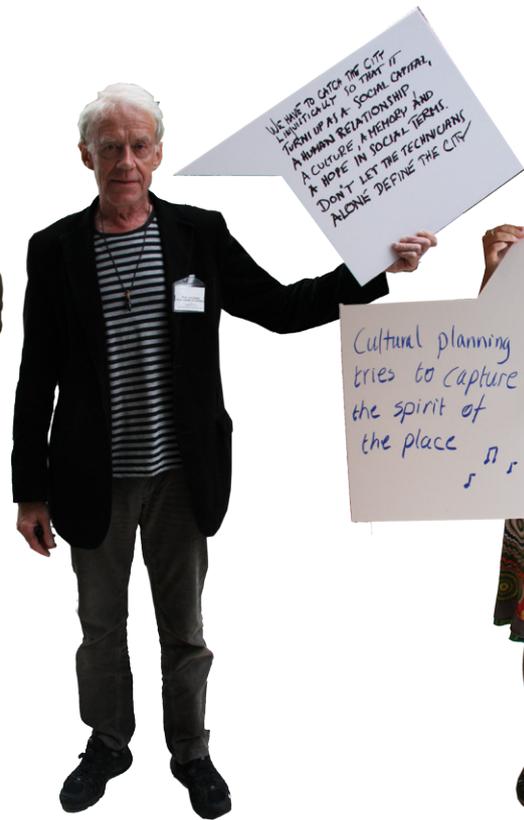




**Dr. Stellan Lundberg**  
 AF infraplan &  
 the Delegation for Sustainable Cities.



**Dr. Wang Lin**  
 Shanghai Planning and Land  
 Recourse Administration Bureau.



**Prof. Lars Orrskog**  
 Urban & Regional Studies,  
 Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm

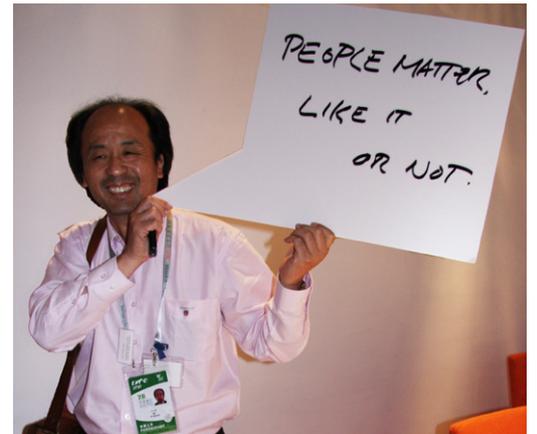


**Mrs. Erica Månsson**  
 Head of Smålands museum  
 CEO Kulturparken i Småland AB

**Mrs. Kerstin Åkervall**  
 Head of Planning Dept., City of Malmö

**Dr. Wenhui Shan**  
 UrbanDATA, Shanghai

**Prof. Bob Lee**  
 University of Arts, Crafts & Design, Stockholm



“...the objectives of the 1999 – 2020 master plan are among other things to make Shanghai a financial hub, to create the world's largest harbour and a mass railway system... all of these goals have already been achieved...”

“... keep the fabric of the streets... place new buildings within the old structures”



“A real urbanism is... a perspective to think critically upon our current mass urban transition... a vision of place making for authentic life space – a counter balance to the “disneyfication” of our city space... a strategy to design at every scale to accommodate diversity, improve porosity, and leave spaces for changes... an ideal to bridge the gap between urban public realm and individuals’ everyday life, facing the reality of the increasing social and spatial segregation, and atomization of our society...”



“Social sustainability is the challenge... the civil society needs to be strong... maybe the answer to democratic deficits in the late modern societies is not to be found in the search of a common good that often ends up being the smallest possible denominator, wanted by nobody, but instead by recognising as legitimate the particular collective needs expressed by self organised groups...”



## WHEN PEOPLE MATTER SE

Dr. Wenhui Shan

Prof. Katarina Nylund

Dr. Wang Lin

Dr. Stellan Lundberg

Mrs. Erica Mansson

“...a Regional Development Perspective of a Town in Spatial and Social Stress... The challenge: The city has to keep good function during all stages of the transition... Good recreational values are important for tourism and for quality of life...”



“...Cultural planning is about spotting hidden cultural resources and put them to use in a visionary, political discussion about the brand and the identities of cities and regions...”



"...Could the course of events have taken another direction? Money was not the problem, but people. People matter all the time..."

"...Steps toward a sustainable living: build attractive, exciting and surprising public spaces; attract visitor; less posh – wilder; carbon dioxide neutral; less cars – more people and more mixed use..."

"The transportation artery Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal has seen 1500 years of steady population growth. Today the surrounding region is the most densely populated in China, with the highest concentration of mega cities in Asia. The function of the canal is now being replaced by high-speed trains. Speed changes everything - the cities' historic patterns as well as future developments. Can these cities, and the region at large, absorb the pressure applied from today's rapid urbanization? Can rural economy be the counterpart of urbanization? Can increased urbanization preserve heritage? Culture-led planning could be a solution... urbanization for rural development"



"A society cannot be sustainable if its decision-making system is closed and exclusive. Even decision-making in technical issues such as renewable energy requires a more open and democratic procedure in order to overcome the Chinese way of swarming all over one thing or another which often leads to dilapidation of resources either in natural or social and economic terms".

Read professor Wang's full concluding remarks of the seminar on the following pages



## SEMINAR: DISCUSSION

Prof. Bob Lee

Mrs. Kerstin Åkervall

Prof. Dong Wei

Prof. Wang Jun-Yang

Mrs. Ann-Catrin Fredriksson

Prof. Lars Orrskog



"We are moving a town. Or, are we demolishing a town and building a new? Regardless of what it is we are doing, the dialogue with the inhabitants is first and last. In addition to the formal consultations required, we also asked the people of Kiruna what buildings meant the most to them, what areas they rated as most pleasant and why, what young people consider most important in the city. We asked the schools to launch projects around the changes we are facing ..."



"...All interpretations of sustainable development are - as all other political ambitions - controversial because human concepts and world views are socially constructed and always contain power relations to be questioned."



# WHEN PEOPLE MATTER SEMINAR: CONCLUDING REMARKS

## BY PROFESSOR WANG JUN-YANG

Sustainability, sustainable development, sustainable cities, these are the words that are undergoing great popularity all over the world as well as in China today. As an ideal, sustainable development is normally taken in terms of the Brundtland Commission of the United Nations from 1987, which is the “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

### **Beyond a technical understanding**

What does this really mean? Usually, and particularly so in China, sustainability is understood in technical terms, from more efficient use of energy to reduction of carbon dioxide emission, from development of renewable energy to electric car. And one should not forget in this regard Shanghai municipal government’s effort in developing public transportation system as well as the central government’s effort in developing MU trains systems all over China. All these are of course justified with regard to the environmental deterioration and ecological problems that are getting alarming as China is paying for its economic development extremely high prices in terms of damage of natural resources and ecosystem. And still great challenges are before us and we need to make even greater and sometimes painful efforts in these areas in order to tackle difficult environmental problems.

### **Transparent decision making needed**

However, as one might conclude from

Prof. Lars Orrskog’s speech, sustainability and sustainable development is more than doing technical things as such, rather it requires new planning paradigms and new decision process. In this respect social sustainability is important, and citizen participation is crucial. A society cannot be sustainable if its decision making system is closed and exclusive. Even decision making in technical issues such as renewable energy requires more open and democratic procedure in order to overcome Chinese way of swarming all over one thing or another which often leads to dilapidation of resources either in natural or social and economic terms. And in this conjunction, I cannot but see the extreme dilapidation of land resources all over China as a consequence of the opaque and for that reason arbitrary decision making process.

### **Meaningless without democracy**

It is therefore to the credit of the workshop today that it starts with brief introductions of both Chinese and Swedish planning and regulatory framework in order to achieve a better understanding of each other. The following presentations of Shanghai case by Dr. Shan Wenhui and Dr. Wang Lin further open the issue up, while Mrs. Ann-Catrin Fredriksson’s presentation of Kiruna Case demonstrates the crucial importance of citizen participation in a city of drastic change due to industrial development.

It is also to the credit of the organizers of the workshop to name it When People Matter – Social and Cultural Aspects of

Sustainable Urban Planning, stressing the need for more concern with social and cultural resources that should play a significant role in sustainable development.

In China, Sweden is known for its environmentally friendly thinking, its efforts in building up an ecologically adapted society and its achievements in sustainable development. Personally I lived in Sweden for nearly 15 years, and certainly I have got a lot of personal experience in this respect. Although there is no space to tell about this experience in details, what I would like to stress is that the Swedish efforts and achievements in ecological and sustainable development would be impossible and even meaningless without its democratic decision making process, without citizen participation, and without the support of its social and cultural resources.

### **Grass-root movements as alternatives**

Meanwhile, it may be argued that the Swedish model of democracy is far from perfect, and indeed the question whether Swedish democracy, similar to the major democracies in the world, is in crisis has been raised from time to time because of, among other things, the declining vitality of established political institutions. It is the point of Prof. Katarina Nylund’s presentation of her Malmö studies that more bottom-up participation is necessary in order to keep grass-roots movements as alternatives to the established political system, being able to compete not only with the economic and social power of

private enterprises, but also with the administrative power of the governments and the state administration in questions concerning environmental and social sustainability.

### **In between local and global**

By contrast, Mrs Kerstin Åkerwall's presentation of the Malmö case was very much focused on the construction and development of the West Harbor area during the last decade or so. Here, once again, I have some personal experience to say. I lived in Malmö for sometime more than 10 years ago, and I visited the city again in May this year. Over 13 or 14 years time, the city of Malmö has transformed from a flattened and in fact rather dull city into a dynamic one thanks to the construction of Öresunds Bridge which links Malmö to Copenhagen, just like the city of Wuxi is linked to Shanghai by high speed train and high way. It is an example showing how today's urban development should find its way between locally organized politics and global economy. Like the city of Wuxi, Malmö is also trying to establish itself as one of the most design oriented cities in Sweden, that is, letting design, not least architectural design, play important part in its urban development. When this been said, however, what I would like to learn more from Mrs Kerstin Åkerwall's presentation is, rather than a nice vision and planning, how the transformation of the West Harbor area has been really working, particularly from the social point of view.

### **Standard of living crucial**

To make today's dialogue between Sweden and China more complicated and nuanced, one needs to be aware that these two countries belong to two different stages of development, one is a relatively small part of the developed and affluent world, while the other is a huge developing country. In this respect, Prof. Katarina Nylund's call for "prosperity without growth" is worth elaborating. Since Tim Jackson's famous book on "prosperity without growth" published in 2009, this argument has remained the source for a new model of development within the ecological limits of a finite planet. Although the book argues against continued economic growth mainly in developed nations, it acknowledges at the same time that development, and that should include economic growth, is essential for poorer nations. To the topics of our workshop today, this position needs to be stressed because, with regard to social sustainability from a global perspective, raising people's living standard in developing nations is crucial, not only for the welfare of people in these nations, but also for the welfare of the globe as a whole. On the other hand, this kind of argument should not be the excuse for the ongoing development in China in which the improvement of the quality of people's life is often identified with higher and higher material standards. The idea of simple life in which social and cultural dimensions are more valued than material ones is much needed today, at least for those already relatively wealthier

groups of Chinese people. Promisingly, the so called low-carbon life is already an emerging idea among some young Chinese people, and I do hope that Shanghai Expo can be an opportunity for spreading the idea to other groups of the society.

### **Segregation - the biggest challenge**

Talking about social sustainability, one should not ignore the problem of social polarization and segregation that characterize the economic and urban development in China today. In particular, the problem is striking in the urban housing development where transformation of urban space is often followed by segregation of its social classes in more or less determined islands. From the point of view of social sustainability, I believe this should be one of the biggest challenges faced by Chinese urban planning in the future. It is true that over the last few years, the construction of affordable housing has been more or less put on agenda by the governments on different levels. However, what is missing, not least in this workshop, is the discussion of significance and strategies to encourage more socially integrated urban planning and development.

Despite of that, I am pleased to see that some of the issues related to social sustainability have been raised today, and I really hope that the workshop can give impetus to a more comprehensive understanding of sustainability and sustainable development.



## MOVE A CITY IN TEN MINUTES

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### WHY

The need to relocate cities is often triggered by factors such as mining, coastal erosion etc. One current example is the Swedish mining town of Kiruna. The process of relocating cities raises some pressing question of general socio-cultural nature: What makes people feel at home and comfortable in a city? What is necessary to bring from the old location to the new? Does heritage get the same meaning and value when moved from one place to another?

### HOW

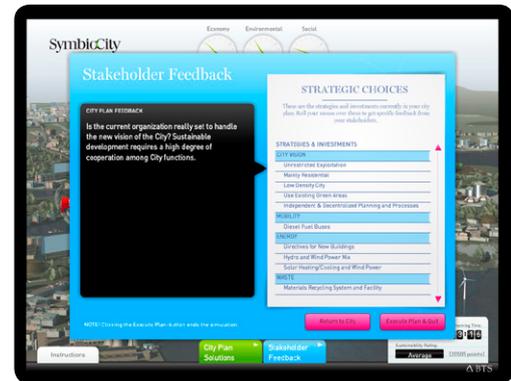
Departing from the current relocation of Kiruna, these questions were approached by a computer game specially designed by Patrik Qvist and Robert Brecevic. The user interface is built by two screens and a tactile keyboard with 30 keys, each representing a function or a quality in a city. When pressing a key the particular function or quality connected to it is moved from the present city location on the first screen to the new one on the second by an animated traverse crane. Each player

has five weighted choices, which means in your new city you get the most of your first choice, a little less of your second and so on. When completed, the computer prints out the city of your choice on a postcard.

### OUTCOME

The game Move a city in ten minutes proved to be particularly popular and lured people in to the Swedish Pavilion. Besides being an incentive for discussions, it also gave us the opportunity to direct people to other activities in the Swedish pavilion.





## SYMBIOCITY SCENARIOS

### WHY

Increase awareness of some of the numerous possibilities available to local governments to steer their cities towards a more sustainable development.

### HOW

A computer simulation which makes the player mayor of SymbioCity, a growing city with some 300 000 inhabitants. During the course of a twenty-minute game the player is faced with a number of challenging decision with respect to

urban development. With a restricted budget the player needs to find strategies and measures fit for the development of housing, parklands, transportation, air quality, waste management, energy and water supply. Each decision is immediately rated with respect to social, environmental and economic sustainability. To get good results the player needs to establish a close dialogue with the inhabitants. Stakeholder feedback is given all the way through the game.

### OUTCOME

The game puts the focus on the complexities of decision making and how different issues with respect to sustainable city development are interrelated. There is no way of gaining success if the problems are compartmentalised. Every solution needs to be considered in relation to the other problems and, of course, in relation to budgetary and public opinion restrictions.



## SPEECH BUBBLES

### WHY

Invite people to make a statement on what makes a city a good or bad one. All people have visions, ideas or suggestions on how to improve their environment. However, not everyone believes their opinion counts.

### HOW

A speech bubble is a well known form for cartoon readers worldwide, which in itself inspires edgy and clear-cut statements. We thought this particular form could

be a playful way of releasing people's wish to give voice to their opinions. The visitors were asked to make a statement in relation to the question 'which place makes you happy?'

### OUTCOME

The bubbles inspired both thoughtful and expressive statements encompassing the well-being of family, friends and joyful occasions in everyday life. A number of visitors took the opportunity to relay nice comments on how much they appreciated

the visit to the Swedish pavilion and the workshop. One could argue that this is an expected outcome in respect of the vague questions asked. A more distinct question, related to e.g. a certain place, probably would have generated statements of more use to a city planner. However, the bubble was an ice-breaker and the visitors made the most of the opportunity to state their views.



## FOLD-A-FAN

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### WHY

Invite people to a moment of good-humoured reflection upon the complex relation between time and space in urban development and the concepts of history, present, future, continuity and change.

### HOW

By using “snapshots” from the same place at different times, the fan appeals to the human curiosity to explore change. Both sides of the fan display different scenarios when viewed from different angles. From

one side it is a picture on Shanghai Expo area in 2008 before all the pavilions were constructed, from another it's the neon light night view of Expo 2010. Short as the two years are, the huge contrast of pre and pro expo is powerfully exposed. The flip side of the fan shows the different sceneries of Slussen area in Stockholm in 1945 and 2004. Although it is a difference of more than a half decade, the change visible on the fan is negligible compared to Shanghai.

### OUTCOME

The appearance of a fan attracted much attention. Besides the fact that it was the perfect tool to make a cool breeze in the scorching summer day, people were delighted to be given the opportunity to create something with their hands. The fan provides a simple and playful grammar to “talking about the city” beyond barriers of culture and language. It may seem banal but it proved to be an opener for further and deeper reflections regarding time and space in the urban landscape.



## THE FUTUROGRAPH

### WHY

Initiate an open-minded dialogue on our individual ability to take part in the city design.

### HOW

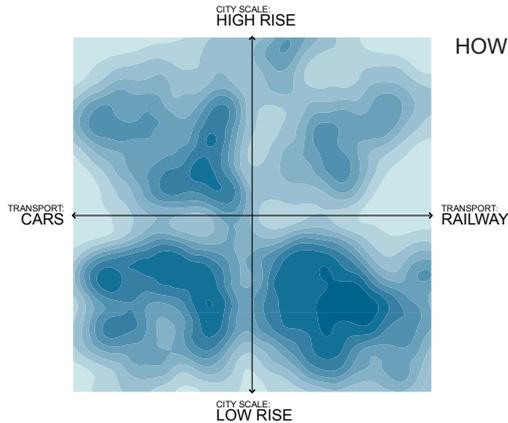
Under the parole “Draw a better city” visitors were faced with a panoramic image of the city of Shanghai and equipped with a white board pen. The idea was to make the visitors transform from passive consumers of the city to a creative urban designers. Their task was

to give full play to their initiative and make the city a better place to live in. Where do you want to live? What would you like to add? What would you like to remove?

This provided a hands-on way to let visitors articulate their visions without the use of a common spoken language. Furthermore, it functioned as an invitation to discuss these visions and how everyone has a role to play in the construction of our common cities.

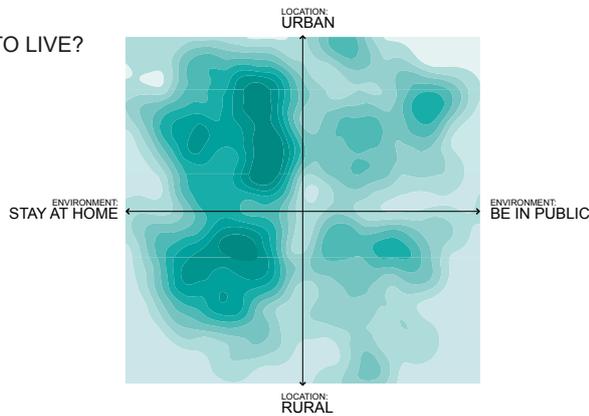
### OUTCOME

The easy-access activity appealed to a broad public. Visitors enjoyed drawing and writing on the image (behind glass). The help of an interpreter facilitated discussions. Some children took the task very seriously and needed to think more than twice before they approached the board. Others had a more relaxed and artistic attitude and inserted playful creations into the skyline of the city.



HOW DO YOU WANT THE CITY TO DEVELOP?

HOW DO YOU WANT TO LIVE?



*Concerning the scenario of **stay at home vs be in public, urban vs rural**, the theme was somehow mistranslated as live with your family vs live with friends, urban vs rural. Most Chinese visitors chose to live in cities with families. The word rural, like the word countryside, has really contrary meanings in Chinese and Swedish. In China, rural or countryside means less-developed, poverty, ugliness. This could explain that why most Chinese visitors would like to live in cities, while some western visitors would like to live in rural areas. Thus, it's also relevant and interesting to mention that the Chinese version of the Expo's theme - Better city, Better life - actually is City, makes life better! if more precisely translated.*

Zhichang Cai, Workshop facilitator  
KTH, Stockholm and Southeast  
University, Nanjing

## QUADROGRAMS

### WHY

Make people explore the relationship between their desired way of life and the properties of the city.

### HOW

Visitors were invited, within grid diagrams, to mark their preferences with respect to predefined questions. Each axis in the grids represented a choice and thus grids was constituted by four different combinations of preferences.

### OUTCOME

It took some explanation and control over the pen to make it work. In a conversation with one of the participants we discovered that it is a quite western way to pose a question. A Chinese way would be to put the questions as 1a. Do you want to live in a low-rise building with your family? 1b. Do you want to live in a high-rise building with your family? 1c... etc instead of making a quadrogram.

The outcome was that most of the participants wanted to live with their families in low-rise buildings and wanted to be able to walk or go by train. Some gave us additional information that they wanted to go by car but an environmentally good one and some added ways of transportation that wasn't on the board like bike or spaceship. A lot of the participants wanted to renovate instead of tearing down whereas an equal number of people wished for the change to come either quickly or slowly.



Concerning the scenario of **high rise vs low rise, car vs public transport**, most Chinese visitors showed their environmental awareness on the dwelling and transport forms, the most frequently heard answer was that 'I like low-rise villas and also like to have a private car, but it's not good because of huge population and scarce land of China, so that I will choose high-rise and public transport'. Some also suggested bicycle as their favorite transport method.

Zhichang Cai





## CHILDREN BUILD

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### WHY

To capture the children's perception of what a city is in a playful and three-dimensional way.

### HOW

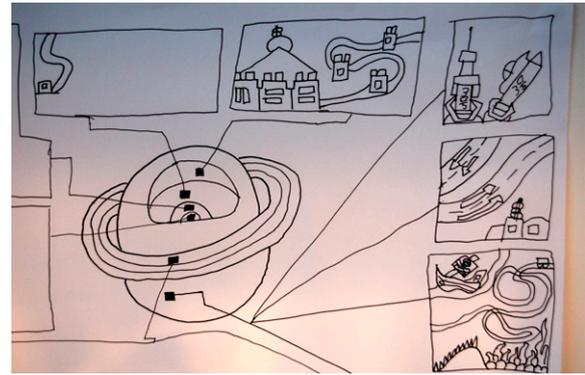
A construction exercise. The children were invited, together with their parents, to create a three-dimensional model of what a city might be. They were asked questions like: Where do you play? Where do you meet people? Where do you sit down? And then we asked them to build

these places. They were then asked to build these places based on inspirational inputs such as build through, under or over. They used glue guns, scotch, paper, arts taws and other simple material.

### OUTCOME

The children, who were between five and eleven years old, were very engaged and showed great creativity. At the beginning some of the children would just draw but after some encouragement they started to build and then there was no stopping

them. Their parents also got involved in the task. The city became bigger and bigger and there was space for trees, humans and animals, parks, playgrounds and water. The buildings were high, low, round, squared, pointed and long and had all the colours of the rainbow. While the children created the city their teachers and the Swedish visitors listened to their stories about where they lived and what was important about their city.



## CHILDREN TALK

### WHY

Inspire the children to think about what a city is, what places are important to them and finally what they would like their surroundings to look like.

### HOW

The children were given three tasks:

- 1 You meet an alien from outer space on your way to school. The alien asks "What is a city?" What would you answer?
- 2 Draw a personal map of the places that is important for you in your city. It's not supposed to look like a normal map.

- 3 Make a drawing of what you see outside your window or imagine that this view does not exist and draw what you would like in its place. Use transparent film and attach it to the window.

### OUTCOME

After a bit of hesitation the children realized that the exercises were playful and that they could use their imagination freely. Amongst the results were:

- 1 Answers like; red door mean shut, green door means open, a theme park, buildings have lifts, stairs and there are

gardens.

- 2 Looking at the maps it was clear that Expo 2010 was on their minds. They also thought about everything from sewage to parks, their own home, the telecom tower and the bus.

- 3 With great concentration and imagination they altered their surroundings by adding lifts, balconies and people – some removed buildings and replaced them with parks.



## POST-IT QUESTIONS

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### WHY

Encourage visitors to define the characteristic sounds and smells of a city in a simple way. A city is defined in more ways than just the physical. We use all our senses to experience the city but we rarely talk about it or define it.

### HOW

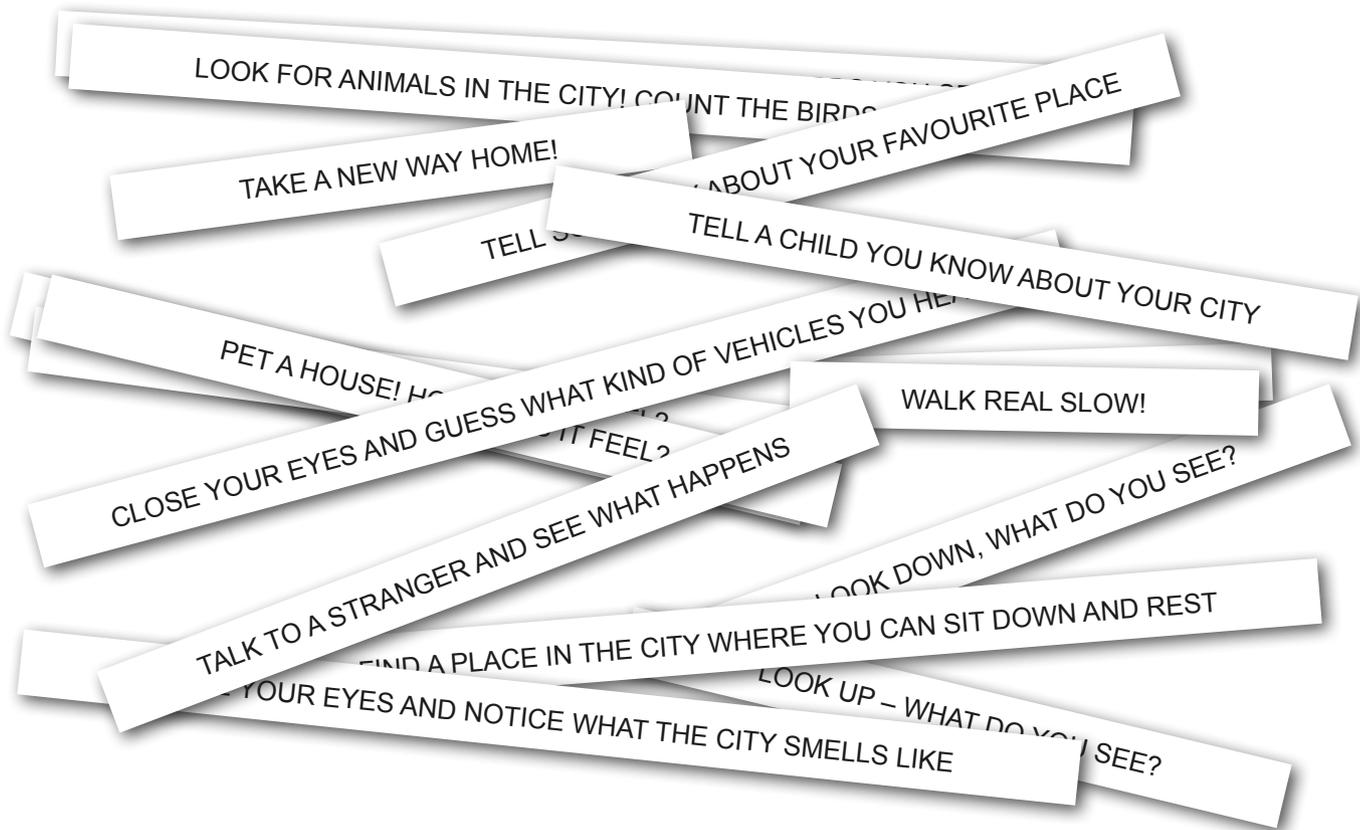
Two questions were put up on the wall. How does a city smell? And How does a city sound? We asked the visitors to write

down their answers on a post-it note and put it on the wall.

### OUTCOME

This was an exercise that worked by itself. It was easy to understand, attractive to look at and interesting to read. It was like a gigantic colourful quilt made out of hundreds of post-it notes. It made the participants reflect upon their perception of the city in ways they had not done before. Smells like car fumes, sweat, food and

baking were brought forward and sounds such as conversation between people as well as traffic noise was presented. The participants were eager to put their post-it notes as high up as possible on the wall and some put their notes up as quickly as possible to avoid anyone seeing what they had written.



## ON THE WAY HOME

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### WHY

To expand the workshop beyond the event in the Swedish pavillion and to inspire the visitors in finding new ways to explore their everyday surroundings.

### HOW

Each one of the visitors was given a message defining a task to carry out on his or her way home from the Expo. The tasks were supposed to challenge people to do things they would not normally do. They could for example be asked to stroke

a house, to tell a child about their city, to listen to certain sounds or to choose a different way home. The participants were encouraged to e-mail their reflections to the organisers.

### OUTCOME

The participants were curious about the tasks but thought them strange at fist. Some expressed positive feelings such as 'If I take a new way home I will experience a feeling of freedom'. A few wanted to swap their tasks and some wanted more than

one. An important part of the exercise was that each task was handed out personally in order to explain the idea and encourage the participant to carry out the challenge.

# SUSTAINABLE REVELOPMENT – A DISCUSSION

Society reflects life through time and the cultural heritage which is intrinsic in the urban framework offers significant potentials for solutions of the urban challenge. It is the inhabitants of the cities themselves – along with research and innovation, which hold the keys to empowerment, good governance and knowledge-based improvement. A few approaches of different character can be singled out to describe how heritage, architecture and social mobilisation connect with a sustainable urban development.

## Place

Memories, both collective and individual, are crucial for the understanding of whom and what we are. The sense of a past consolidates our existence in the present and forms the basis of our identity and social wellbeing. Even though memories are within our minds, the physical environment and the architecture have a key role in creating and sustaining them. The urban heritage is the soul of the city and it is created in the conjunction of memories and space, merging with the physical environment into what we usually refer to as place.

A city is constantly changing. Without references in time and space, the urban landscape would be an endless and unintelligible maze. Fortunately, every city and town contains fragments of historical landscapes intertwined with its current spatial configuration. When decoding these layers of time, the city becomes legible and place makes sense.

Hence, place, landscape and architecture are inseparable parts of the urban consciousness that we employ in our everyday lives, whether we are aware of it or not.

## Investment

Over generations, society has invested materials, energy and ideas in the physical shape of the city. Thus, a city embodies hundreds or even thousands of years of investments of resources, both in terms of materials and ideas. This claim is particularly interesting from a climate perspective, as existing buildings and constructions have an additional high value as carbon storage and energy repositories. The longer a building is standing and the longer it is used, the smaller its carbon and energy footprint. All around the world, a great deal of resources are currently invested into planning for new CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral neighbourhoods and energy efficient housing in order to meet new carbon emission standards. But what if the most efficient climate strategy is to use or reuse what is already there?

Preservation will probably never be a hot political issue and it is often perceived as the opposite of action. Nevertheless, studies indicate that it takes approximately between 25 and 60 years to recover the energy used in the demolition and new construction of a building. While new construction may offer carbon savings in the longer term, perhaps 30-50 year, the current climate crisis requires immediate action to reduce global warming. Regarding this fact, reuse and retrofits

of existing buildings offer a strategic and pragmatic way of reducing carbon emissions in the short term perspective.

## Mentality

A sustainable development is not, and will never be, a fixed target or a given state. It is rather an explicit ambition to move towards a better and more just society, whatever that holds in terms of social ambitions and environmental claims. The criteria of sustainability are dependent on the way we perceive our past and present society and how we envisage the challenges for the future.

Our heritage is an inescapable part of our existence. It serves as an intangible structure, encompassing our behavioural patterns and conceptions, enabling some actions while making others unimaginable. To grasp the full scope of the complex environmental challenges of our contemporary society we need historical and critical social perspectives going beyond ingrained views. Albert Einstein once concluded that; "You can't solve a problem with the same mind-set that got you in to the problem in the first place". The only way to deliver a new mind-set is to get to know the present, and the key to un-locking the present is the past.

## Sustainable revelopment

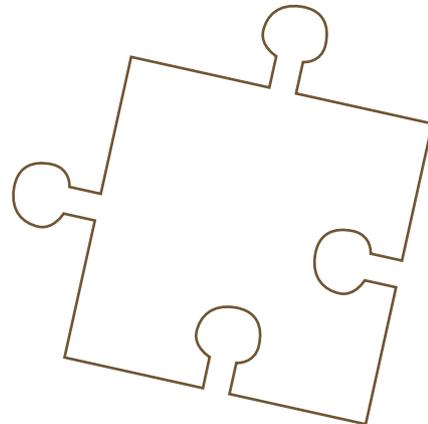
If we consult the 1987 Brundtland Commission report, delivering the very root definition of "sustainable development", we'll find that "need" is a central theme. Humanity has the ability to

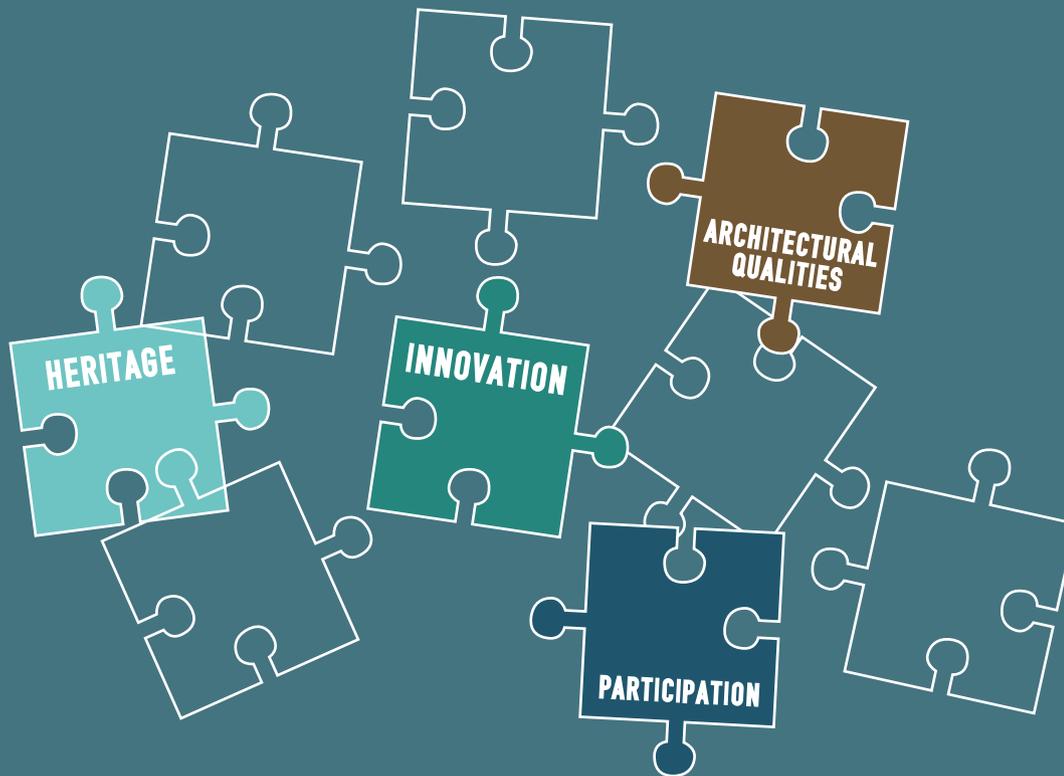
make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. “Needs” can be interpreted in terms of basic prerequisites for survival, such as foodstuffs, clean water and shelter but these principles also constitute social conditions. The social interpretation of “needs” go beyond survival, dealing with people’s desire to mature as social creatures and to settle into a good life. Every generation has a right to a past and to the opportunity to take an active part in shaping the spatial and ideological groundwork of contemporary society. These aspirations leave planning with a set of serious challenges. How can we make planning more inclusive and the cities we create more adjustable? How can we reinvent the city without starting over from scratch?

Throughout the 20th century, in the western world, development seemed synonymous with a history of linear progress. Ever rising energy consumption was the key to a better life enabling higher living standards, more spacious dwellings and increased mobility. “Oil” was inseparable from the post-war vision of the good society. The makers of prosperity in previous centuries did not have to worry about the carrying capacity of the planet.

But time has changed; we are currently facing the challenge of combining an overall ambition to consume less, phase out fossil fuels and decrease use of energy and other resources, with a wish

to improve the human condition and make people find their places in a rapidly urbanising global society. It is a true challenge to decouple development from the idea of linear progression. But perhaps it is now time to re-launch the good old concept of recycling, with a wider scope to include not only materials but also ideas, memories, places and structures. Perhaps sustainable development would be a proper word for a process when people matter?





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