

Planning Times

Issue 03 • October 2022



PEOPLE, PLACES AND POLICIES

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Planning Times

PEOPLE, PLACES AND POLICIES







Issue 03 • October 2022

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From the Editor

Save the earth to save yourself!

The last few weeks of August and the first few weeks of September were painful in India. Bengaluru, the Silicon Valley of India, had flooded homes and offices. Many people succumbed to bad weather and lightning strikes in the capital city of New Delhi. Cities came to a standstill with a shower of disasters. The news is not unknown to us. India has been a victim of disasters throughout the past two decades. Many lives were lost, and damage was dealt with.

Despite this grim image, I believe there is a way to rise above it. We live in an era where a lot of research and technological advancement is at their peak. There are more solutions than problems. The answers to seemingly ever-lasting issues like disasters and climate change lie within nature. If we want to save our lives, we have to save our dear earth.

There are many ways individuals can contribute towards saving the earth. It all starts with a change in mindset. We can make small and conscious choices like conserving water, using less private transport, recycling, using less power, eating sustainable and healthy food, planting trees, or giving up plastic. That is how we save ourselves, and gift a lovely earth for future generations.

We hope you enjoy the October edition of the Planning Times magazine! The Planning Times Team has covered nature-based solutions and stories of change from the world, and addressed growing informality within our Indian cities. We also wanted to join in the craze for AI-based text-to-image creation (DALL•E), which inspired our cover image for this edition. Thanks for reading, and we hope you have an inspirational moment or two.



*Here's to the creativity you'll
craft from our magazine!*

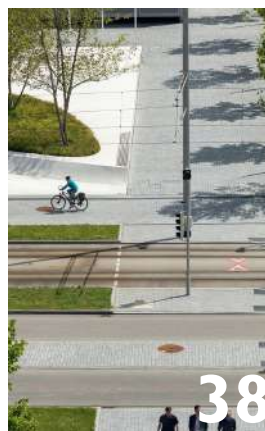
Karthik Girish
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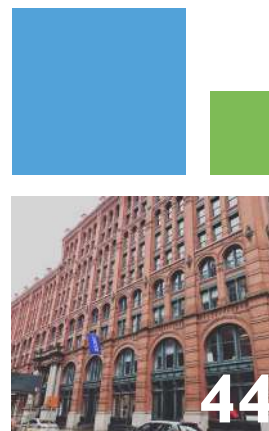
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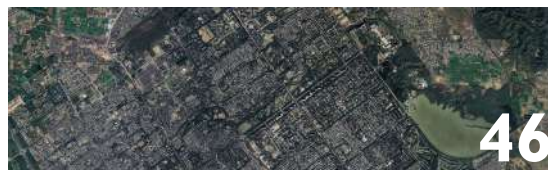
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SHELTER

A Roof for Informal Settlers

Alternate solutions to target informal settlements

BY AAKRITI

SHELTER PROVISION, by large, is a very challenging aspect in the Indian planning systems. The mere conceptualization and allocation of housing units does not solve the problem in the larger context. Irrespective of the numerous missions and schemes that are operable in the country, the homeless sprawl across the cities in informal settlements, slums, etc. Not to mention the grave concern our cities face with people living on the streets, the pavement dwellers, and the ones residing in their own make-shift squatter settlements. However, the problem is graver than what meets the eye. It's not just the existence of these people living informally, but rather the lack of opportunities and options they face such that they are forced to lead their lifestyles the way they do. The situation leads to mismanagement in identifying the beneficiaries, allocating the resources, and also a general disfunction of city governance. There seems to be a cycle formed with interventions that are taken upon such settlements. These never cease to exist despite countless efforts- ranging from eviction, addressing the neglect of facilities, and even providing government housing to the people in question.

THE INFORMAL settlements are marked with inadequacy of public services, proper sanitary conditions, and easy access to amenities. However, these issues have come up due to the existence of such settlements in the first place. Hence, before we dig deeper, we need to stop for a moment and raise a question whether we would want to go forward making the services available for these dwellers. A long-term, future-oriented approach is necessary to tackle the informal settlements such that it takes into account the basic needs of the people involved and tries to identify the core challenges that refrains them from moving to the housing that government provides them. The approach needs focus on empowerment rather than just formulating the policies for people and treating them simply as beneficiaries.

TO TRANSLATE the idea to reality, a series of case studies can be of help. These will highlight ways that can help improve the situation in the existing paradigm of plans or policies in the country. The motive is to look at the situation with a wide lens, and comprehensively solve the problems associated with the existence of such settlements, without denying the choices of these people.





TRANSFORMATION OF SLUM AND SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS: A WAY OF SUSTAINABLE LIVING IN CONTEXT OF 21ST CENTURY CITIES (INDIA AND BANGLADESH)

This case study is unique in terms of approach to tackle the issue of squatter settlements. It is more design-oriented in nature. It highlights the ideas of self-help housing, security of tenure, self-involvement in design and construction, creating a sense of belonging through design, housing solution through design, use of prefabricated structures, etc. (Ibrahim and Taher, 2014).

A MODEL FOR SOLVING INFORMAL SETTLEMENT ISSUES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES—(CASE STUDY: TURKEY)

This case study brings forth the solutions that are based on interventions of various schemes and policies, specifically the Land pooling method. It helps in understanding the process of formalization, translating the key driving factor of formation of settlements that could be targeted to tackle the issue, and highlighted the role of self-help groups. High-rise public housing comes in removing squatters (Bayram and Mehmet, 2004). The whole process is on-site, and hence does not deny the space and identity that people associate with living there.

LESSONS FROM THE GROUND UP: APPROACHES TO SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS (CASE STUDY: LATIN AMERICA)

Lessons from the case study were very broad in nature. But they have an idea about physical, social, and environmental integration, involving actors of civil society, basic infrastructure and urban services, social networks, security of tenure and property rights, participation and democratization, income generation and safety from violence. (Cockburn, 2014).





THE INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN INDIA: ALTERNATE SOLUTIONS

Basis the case studies, certain lines of action can be defined as we move forward. These lines take their essence from planning and remain under the paradigm of current policy state of the country. They, however, in no capacity supersede any government intervention that focus on enhancing quality of life of people through housing and facilities provision. These, in fact, supplement those interventions, while laying out a futuristic vision where people have choices in housing rather than just settle down at the mercy of provided space.

Survey and Policing

The major objectives of the survey and policing is not just to take into account the state of informal settlements and authorise eviction. It will help the Urban Local bodies to take stock of the existing situation of informal settlements, bring the illegal occupation of land to a standstill, and to make an appropriate choice for elimination of informal settlements. To reiterate, this process can help gain the insights from the present situation, while keeping a check that cyclic process of re-establishment of such settlements does not happen (this, while other measures of empowerment are in play).

APPROACH FOR SURVEY AND POLICING

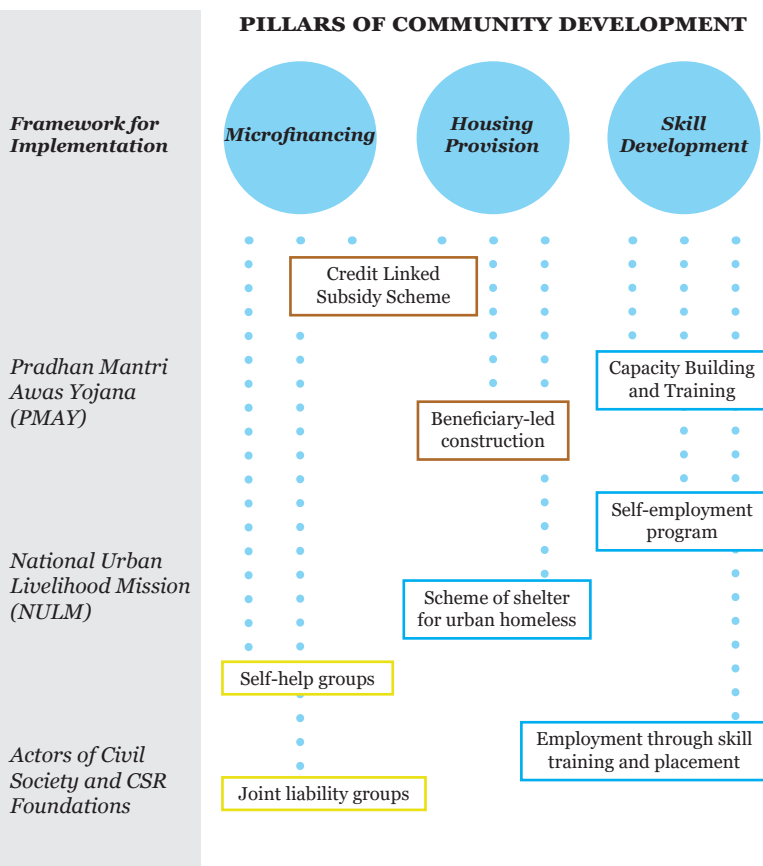
S.No	Strategy	Methodology
1	Registration of dwellings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical survey of the area • House numbering • Registration of occupants • Mapping of the settlements
2	Policing of unauthorized construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eviction of unauthorized occupants with notice • Demolition of unauthorized construction
3	Periodic Check	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular Control • Citizen Awareness Drives

Source: Compiled by author, 2021

Management Information System

Measures to create a Management Information system, or the MIS for every city can be a key step in tackling the issues caused due to informal settlements. The idea comes with a view to bring in technology to solve the problem. With Smart City Mission in full play, and Integrated Command and Control Centres in every Smart city, this initiative can be a flag bearer of solving all the shelter-related problems. And moving forward, a strong MIS would further facilitate the issues that pertain to other aspects- like environment, transportation, infrastructure, etc.

MIS is targeted towards tackling of squatter settlements in the Indian cities - zone by zone and it is important for decision-making, coordination, control, analysis, and simple visualization of information of squatter settlements in the city. An MIS can be brought in through creating an integrated database that smartly links GIS map data to the socio-economic data through linkages of common attributes. The Special Purpose Vehicle of Smart City for the cities with the help of the SCM fund allocation can take forward creating MIS. An estimated time can be stipulated, including the period of Survey and Policing through the Zones of the City, that would bring the MIS to function.



Community Development

“Community Development” is a very strong word in itself. It brings forth the notions of empowerment, strong ecosystem, and a sense of belongingness. Through the pillars of microfinancing, housing provision, and skills development, we can lead the development of people in question and help the Urban Local Bodies to take control of this particular situation. To give a fair understanding of the idea, these three pillars are inter-related and co-dependent on each other.

Credit linked subsidy and beneficiary led development are two verticals of PMAY that are relevant for informal settlements and associated people. They can be targeted under the policy through these verticals. These will help solve the issues of housing provision while also catering to micro-financing. Secondly, the interventions of capacity building and training, self-employment program, scheme of shelter for urban homeless, employment through skills training and placement are the verticals of NULM. Targeting these would in some ways be harmonious across all three ideated pillars. And lastly, self-help groups and joint liability groups are taken forward by various actors of civil society and CSR Foundations. With them working in tandem with the government, the communities can be empowered- majorly in their notions of microfinancing. This way, the goals of microfinancing, shelter provision, and skill development could be brought under one umbrella through a comprehensive approach that keeps community development at the central stage.



WAY FORWARD

The primary notion that pertains to informal settlements in Indian cities is very upfront. These are a bit clearer through the issue illustration, understanding the essence of benchmark studies, and ideating the approaches. The primary idea needs to empower these dwellers so that they can make informed decisions towards enhancing their quality of life. We need to stop seeing them as mere beneficiaries, and rather involve them in the decision-making process. As we move forward, we need to involve these people and enhance public participation. With more people coming under this umbrella, the aspect of resource mobilization will also get tapped. The issues that rise from housing would be a propellor for stronger communities giving people more choices about the place they live and work, while being economically self-sufficient. This whole idea will ensure tenure security, employment, and quality of life for all the people we currently see as mere beneficiaries.



CLIMATE CHANGE

Solving Nature's Issues

Here are some nature-based solutions for mitigating climate change issues

BY NANCY GROVER

THE FOOTPRINT of climate change can already be seen in every corner of the planet. Erratic weather patterns, melting glaciers and rising sea levels due to climate change are reshaping societies across the globe. But in the case of India, these vulnerabilities come with another unique set of challenges. Home to nearly twenty percent of the world's population, the country is amongst the most vulnerable nations to climate change. The latest UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report has painted a bleak picture for India, warning that the South Asian country could face multiple climate change-induced disasters in the next two decades.

While cities worldwide are facing challenges related to climate risks, the difficulty surges further when these challenges interact with other issues such as urbanisation, loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, poverty, and rising socio-economic inequality. Over time, urban resilience challenges are expected to grow even more, driven by processes such as urbanization, land use change and so on. Whilst climate change is expected to increase the frequency and intensity of some natural hazards, urbanization can also lead to higher exposure of people and assets in cities.



THE IMPACT of climate change is not only limited to human lives, livelihoods and human well-being. Ecosystems are rapidly changing in response to climate change and other global change drivers, which includes not only temperature changes but also associated changes in precipitation, atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration, water balance, ocean chemistry, and the frequency and magnitude of extreme events. Ecosystems vary in their sensitivity and response to climate change because of complex interactions among organisms, disturbance and other stressors. Thus, in addition to the threat posed by gradually increasing temperatures, biodiversity also faces risks from increases in the intensity

and frequency of extreme weather events. Thus, both climate change and biodiversity loss are already causing severe impacts for people.

Nature based solutions or **NbS** is a tool which has the potential to tackle the issue of climate change and mitigate hazards and amplifying effects of urban areas on those hazards. It addresses the societal challenges through delivery of ‘ecosystem services.’ This concept constitutes an approach where nature is seen as a source of solutions. Rather than being framed as a victim of climate change, biodiversity is a key ally in dealing with climate change as per the idea.

NbS have a multi-functional role, which provides them great potential to address social, environmental

and economic dimensions of global challenges. This is the most important characteristic of **NbS** as compared to the so-called hard or grey infrastructure. The benefits are often interrelated. For instance, **NbS** can improve air quality (environmental benefit), which allows a decline in diseases related to air pollution (health benefit), which allows savings in healthcare (economic benefit). **NbS** also provide local benefits for disaster risk reduction and increasing resilience. Healthy ecosystems are important for hazard prevention and post-disaster recovery. They provide local benefits for climate change adaptation and regional-global benefits for climate change mitigation.

Following is a list of urban nature-based solutions which can be considered to tackle issues related to climate change in the urban areas as per the geographic location, availability of resources and other related factors.

URBAN FORESTS Urban forests can be defined as networks or systems comprising all woodlands, group of trees, and individual trees located in urban and peri-urban areas; they include forests, street



trees, trees in parks and gardens, and trees in derelict corners.

TERRACES AND SLOPES Civilizations across the globe have been building landscape terraces to stabilize slopes for centuries and protect urbanized areas with steep slopes and loose soils, often exposed to a variety of hazards.

RIVER AND STREAM RENATURATION Several nature-based solutions have been developed to restore the natural dynamics of the watercourses. Renaturation—



stream daylighting, reestablishment of riparian corridors, removal of concrete embankments, and river or stream bed and bank revegetation—is gaining momentum.

BUILDING SOLUTIONS Building solutions include adding green surfaces to building roofs and facades, creating opportunities to capture, store, and reuse stormwater, improve air quality, which eventually lead to temperature reduction.

OPEN GREEN SPACES Parks, unpaved, and biologically active green areas of every size can help cities adapt to climate change by cooling and enhancing the quality of air, providing shade, and offsetting the urban heat island effect.

GREEN CORRIDORS Green corridors are an essential part of the urban landscape ecology as these strips of trees, plants, or vegetation can be found at a range of scales, and typically connect green spaces in a city, creating a green urban infrastructure network.

URBAN FARMING Urban farming is a way for people to grow crops for personal consumption or to sell locally and beyond. The most important incentive for urban farming is to increase food security for urban livelihoods.

BIORETENTION AREAS Bioretention is a nature-based solution used to supplement traditional grey stormwater and sewerage infrastructure.

NATURAL INLAND WETLANDS Natural inland wetlands are highly biodiverse and productive ecosystems that form an interface of land and water, and deliver valuable ecosystem services.

CONSTRUCTED INLAND WETLANDS Constructed inland wetlands are engineered systems that have been designed and constructed to utilize the natural processes involving wetland vegetation, soils and their associated microbial assemblages to assist in







treating wastewater and to provide other supplementary functions.

RIVER FLOODPLAINS As development continued, the incidence of flooding increased in urban areas leading to growing concerns around flood risk management. With better understanding of the effects of climate change, communities require more sustainable and multifunctional solutions.

MANGROVE FORESTS Mangroves, also known as the blue forest, are a unique coastal ecosystem of salt tolerant trees and shrubs that live in the coastal intertidal zone. They thrive in highly dynamic areas such as deltas and coastal environments.

SALT MARSHES Salt marshes are transitional coastal wetland ecosystems with high level of biodiversity. Tidal marshes occur along low wave energy coastlines as a result of fine sediment accumulation and colonization by halophytic or salt tolerant plants.

SANDY SHORES Sandy shores represents the interphase between ocean and land. They act as a first line of defence for many coastal cities globally from wave, storm and wind impact.



Nature-based solutions have a vital role to play in mitigating climate change, while simultaneously strengthening both ecosystems and communities' resilience to climate change, promoting biodiversity conservation and reducing the risk of climate change feedbacks and impacts. While they address specific demands or challenges, at the same time they seek to maximise other environmental, social and economic co-benefits. They can represent an effective, improving human health and well-being and the natural environment. They can improve resilience to natural disasters and offer cost-effective options for adapting to climate change. Inspiration and support from nature can stimulate scientific innovations and strengthen the economy while providing environmental benefits.

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
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ENVIRONMENT

Solving Water Woes By Combining Traditional Knowledge and Unique Innovations

BY NIDHI ROY

(Reposted from *The Stories of Change*)

Ayyappa Masagi was just three years old when he first witnessed the water scarcity in his village. He would accompany his mother and dig several pits to fetch water every day. This hardship inspired him to solve the country's water crisis. Today, he is known as the "Water Magician" and has developed several successful innovations to solve the water woes.





“**“Mismanagement of our water resources has brought us to this state of water crisis, against which we have waged many battles, but seldom won,” he said.**

With a vision of a water-efficient world, our very own water doctor, in Bangalore, is on a mission to solve the water crisis of the world. He works 18 hours a day, traveling at least 70 kilometers everyday for a passion that's been aflame in his heart since he was three.

Ayyappa Masagi believes that the water crisis, today, is not due to water scarcity but, due to the ignorance of the people of the society.

After working for Larsen & Toubro (L&T) for 23 years, Mr. Masagi decided to quit his job in 2002 and follow his dream of water conservation by bringing forth new innovations and techniques.

Mr. Masagi, through his organisation, the Water Literacy Foundation (WLF), has organised more than 5,000 programmes on water awareness, that include,



campaigns, workshops, rallies, and demo projects.

With his for-profit company, Rain Water Concepts (I) Pvt. Ltd., he has implemented projects in over 8,000 locations including industries, agriculture, rural, and urban sectors.

Some of his indigenous systems and techniques to enhance water are patta bunding, trench and pit systems, earthen dams, tree based agriculture, grey-water harvesting, and online filters.

Scanty and unexpected rains such as those that frequently happen in monsoons often don't moisten the soil enough. To retain the moisture in the soil, the land is split into a number of compartments, around which burrows are dug, turning the whole land into an earthen tank. This implementation enables the soil to retain moisture even from the scantiest rains, inherently enriching the soil.

The trench and pit system uses an alternating row of pits and trenches to obstruct the runoff in large volumes and charge the subsoil and eventually the groundwater table.

Ayyappa Masagi is also called the Water Magician.

The pits are dug out in suitable sizes varying with the slope and materials available to fill the pits.

Earthen dams are water management constructions. They are built against streams to aggregate the surface runoff but can be complemented with lakes, too. They are built out of excavated soil with a supporting wall on the load-bearing end. Earthen dams encourage the replenishment of groundwater in a direct and indirect fashion.

Tree-based agriculture can be practiced in arid or semi-arid areas and require very less investment and maintenance. This method focuses on planting trees at definite intervals, with 125 pits dug out per hectare to increase the water infiltration capacity that in turn increases the soil moisture, aiding in quick and healthy growth of the trees.

Grey-water is an important, possible, source of water for water



▲ Masagi has developed several successful innovations to solve the water woes.



harvesting. Thereby it is important to differentiate between grey-water and sewage. Grey-water only contains small amounts of soap, fats and organic matter. Grey-water is around 90% of the water we flush out as sewage. If it can be separated and filtered, it can then be injected into an soak pit or an infiltration well, from where it percolates into the ground.

Rainwater is collected on roofs and flows through rainwater pipes to the online filter, where the suspended particles are removed. The filtered water is then collected in a sump and can be used by the household.

As a child, Masagi had faced a lot of water problems himself. That is why he hopes for a world, where issues like these won't come up.

"Every morning, my mother and I, used to walk for kilometers to fetch water. We used to dig the ground on the banks of a stream and collect

▲ Earthen Dams created by Masagi

water by going into the pit. It was very dangerous, but there was no other way. That is when, at the age of three, I decided I will work towards water conservation and harvesting," Masagi said.

It was while working in L&T that Masagi decided to take up his water conservation work full time. He first bought land in Gadag in Karnataka, where he started implementing his innovative ideas.

"I planted a few seeds on my three-acre land to start with my experiments. It was a completely barren area. Now, after so many years and new agricultural methods, it is flourishing with trees and has become a natural miniforest," he said. After seeing the results of Masagi's water harvesting techniques on his land, the neighboring farmers too took up his ideas. Slowly, his ideas and techniques reached people from different regions and created a ripple effect.

“**I planted a few seeds on my three-acre land to start with my experiments. It was a completely barren area. Now, after so many years and new agricultural methods, it is flourishing with trees and has become a natural mini forest,” he said.**

Masagi is a recipient of many awards like Karnataka Rajyotsava Award, Jamnalal Bajaj National Award for application of Science and Technology in Rural Development, and many more.

He is also a Limca Book record holder for the highest number of lakes constructed and highest number of borewells recharged in India.

Ayyappa firmly believes: “India doesn’t need any big projects to concur its water crisis. The people just need to be educated about the different ways of water conservation and also why water conservation is important in the first place”.

Ayyappa has written a book named Bhageeratha- A war on water crisis. The book explains his journey as well as gives a glimpse of his innovations. He now plans to produce a movie on the same to give the audience a little more perspective about his work.

“I always say, give me two years and the liberty to handle all the water related issues in the country. I can guarantee, the water and food crisis of India will be gone. It is not because of me but, because of my innovative techniques, inspired from the age old ones, that will prove to be fruitful,” he said.

Ayyappa is now looking forward to educate more individuals, whom he calls his water warriors, so that his water harvesting techniques can reach every part of the globe.



**RECHARGE BOREWELL
WATER TABLE DATA AS ON MARCH-2013**

BEFORE RECHARGE MARCH-2011

AFTER RECHARGE MARCH-2013

1.BOREWELL WATER LEVEL AT 100 ft
(BELOW GROUND LEVEL)

1.BOREWELL WATER LEVEL AT 80 ft
(BELOW GROUND LEVEL)

2.BOREWELL OUT PUT
3 KL/HR

2.BOREWELL OUT PUT
5 KL/HR

WATER DAY 2014

'kanthari – Change from within': Stories of visionaries creating a change

BY PLANNING TIMES TEAM

'You don't find many. Now and again, you can find them in the backyards of the society, but also far away from any civilisation. Even when they are small and hardly visible, they have energy and fire. Sometimes they are also unpredictably spicy, even pungent. Many try to avoid them. Not always but whenever changes are required. They are called kantharis and we are looking for them.'

- Sabriye Tenberken in 'Change from within'

'KANTHARI - CHANGE FROM WITHIN' is directed by Marijn Poels, a Dutch documentary and filmmaker. Known for his extraordinary film stories that address social and economic issues at an international scale, he focuses on stories concentrated on human rights, such as this one.

Released in 2015, the documentary presents a road trip in Africa by the kanthari founders: Sabriye Tenberken, a Nobel Peace Prize nominee who is visually impaired, and Paul Kronenberg, who comes from a technical background but is a passionate social worker (He also likes to call himself a "Changineer"). The two go around various parts of East Africa to meet four courageous visionaries, who overcame their own adversities and transformed their challenges into groundbreaking social projects. The documentary presents four major stories of these visionaries, along with snippets of kanthari and narratives of Sabriye and Paul on their personal journey.



Sabriye and Monicah in
Kenya among the Maasai.



Story One: Female Genital Mutilation

The duo first visited Monicah Kaguithia, a resident of Olepolos village in Kenya. Daughter of a Maasai, she escaped from female genital mutilation (circumcision), a common practice in her village. She explained the process of circumcision in females, which involves using the thorns of the acacia trees to sew up girls, and then their legs are tied for approximately 40 days.

In this process, several girls develop life-risking infections, which end up taking the lives of many. Monicah has been advocating the dangers of female genital mutilation by training the women of her village and developing an alternative passage for girls in her community without circumcision. In the documentary, she shares her experience of difficulties she faces while conducting the workshops, because of the social stigma and negativity from the community. However, she expresses that it is kanthari that gave her a life motive to move forward and work towards the betterment of her society.



Paul and Sabriye on the back of a picku truck in Gulu, Uganda.



Marijn Poels



Sabriye Tenberken



Paul Kronenberg

Story Two: Albinism

Following this, Sabriye and Paul go to Nairobi to meet Jayne White. Jane is living with albinism and a partial loss of vision. She mentions that the killing of albinos is a common practice in Kenya, and she has been advocating for their right to live a normal life. The documentary presents how people with albinism are under constant threat of being killed. Their body parts are sold for high prices in the black markets, as it is used for witchcraft activities and people have a misconception that it brings good luck. People with albinism in Africa generally go through a lot of social stigmas in their daily lives, but the threat to survival is what concerns the people more than anything. Even the police tend to ignore the constant complaints they receive from them on the threats they receive. Jayne explains the societal pressure every woman suffers from in the rural areas where she grew up. It was this very reason



Documentary Cover for 'kanthari - Change from within.'

that drove her to start a network of women who have children with albinism to come together, raise awareness, and empower them with skills for entrepreneurship.

Story Three: HIV-AIDs

Next, they travel to Kitale and Seme Kisumu, Kenya. Here they are accompanied by Stephen Onyang, founder of Kisumu Hope Restoration. He supports children who have become orphans because their parents died due to AIDS. In his school, he provides daily food and education, empowering and imparting them with the necessary

skills. He explains how most people in his community have been suffering from the adversities of HIV-AIDS and are neglected by their families.

Story Four: Blindness

The final stop is Gulu, located in rural Northern Uganda where they are accompanied by Ojok Simon, who is the founder of Hive Uganda Limited. Ojok trains blind people to become beekeepers. He explains how visually impaired people are good at learning beekeeping due to their keen senses of touch, smell, and taste. He recalls how his loss of sight was due to a militant who hit him on the head with a rifle

during his childhood. Due to his loss of sight, Ojok was restrained from the natural honey hunting process he used to take part in, but this encouraged him to start rearing bees on his own to collect honey. He went ahead with it as a new project, and this started to generate good income. It encouraged him to teach this skill to other visually impaired people, thereby helping numerous people to overcome certain challenges and change the status quo of marginalized people.

Ojok in front of the HIVE UGANDA office in Gulu.



Stephen Onyang with a few of
the orphans of his school.



This documentary tells us how most of the social ills have caused suffering to many people, especially the marginalized groups, and the leadership for such social change came from the ones who have been part of this very suffering. In between the four stories, Sabriye and Paul also share bits of their personal stories and about what inspired them to start kanthari. Sabriye narrates her story of losing her sight at the age of 9. But this had only made her push her vision for stronger imagination, gaining focus and motivation to steer her life on a better route, by herself. She recalls the time when she visited places around Lhasa, and Tibet on horseback rides in 1997. She came across the social humiliation that people with blindness suffered in Tibet. She met Tenzin, an 8-year-old blind boy. Due to an encouraging headman of his village, Tenzin was given the task of herding yaks and goats, as well as doing daily chores, thereby, never making him feel inferior in society.

Being inspired by the little boy, Sabriye decided to return to Tibet to start the first preparatory school for the blind. She had met Paul in 1997 and he had asked her to keep him informed. In May 1998 she called Paul, who, to her surprise quit his job the next day and joined her on the journey ahead. They started the organisation Braille Without Borders, which aimed to prepare blind children with braille and mobility skills, leadership, and governance qualities. In 2005, this led them to also start 'kanthari' in Trivandrum, Kerala, with the sole

motive to empower change-makers by providing skills and tools that are required to start and sustainably run organizations that positively impact their own communities. Sabriye states, 'a Kanthari is a small, but a very spicy chili. So, it looks very harmless from the outside, but it's fiery from within'.

The documentary beautifully captured the natural flora and fauna throughout the journey along with the unique landscape, both physical and emotional bits of each story. There are several poignant moments in the film that give an understanding of the deep underlying issues embedded in the communities across East Africa. It gives the viewers an eye to the grassroots and presents the visionaries advocating the need for a change even as they stressed it as tradition or a social stigma, that has been going on for ages.

Drawing upon the stories of a variety of ambitious social influencers, Director Marijn Poels takes viewers on the initial thought behind the formation of kanthari as an organization. And these stories reflect their dreams transforming into reality. Bit by bit, the kantharis are accomplishing the milestones set by their mentor of working on real social issues rooted in the communities. Giving one of the best insights into the objectives of kanthari, this documentary takes you on a journey to experience original stories of local communities in Africa and even particularly the individuals who have been survivors of social ills. Each story in the documentary, like that of Monicah

(Female Genital Mutilation), Jayne White (Albinism), Stephen Onyang (HIV-AIDS), and Ojok Simon (Blindness and Beekeepers), shows the deeply rooted issues they have faced their whole life. kanthari, therefore, gave them an opportunity to work on their issues and trained them to go back and become pioneers and realize a change from within, in their communities.

According to the kanthari's website, till 2021, 242 change makers from 50 countries have been trained at kanthari campus in Kerala. And this has resulted in more than 150 social initiatives and organisations creating a positive impact within their communities. Following the brave initiatives of the visionaries, the documentary provides an insight in the exceptional experience of kanthari and their mission of building resilient societies.



kanthari is a scholarship based leadership training centre in Trivandrum, Kerala, India. It offers programs for visionaries who have been affected by adversities and standing up to drive the social change required in their communities.

The documentary kanthari – Change from within can be viewed on:
<https://www.kanthari.org/documentary/>

More information about the kanthari course is available at: www.kanthari.org

Industrial Informality

The case of Anand Parbat

Encouraging discourse about supply chains and informality within the industrial sector.

BY SIDDHESH R. KUDALE





The idea of housing informality in India is well studied in numerous discussions and literature across the world. We shall not be looking at informality in housing, but rather informality within the supply chains and informality within the industrial sector.

Many theorists in the United States like to talk about this idea as well, for literature and scholarly discourse. Since they evidence that the single-family residential use is the most stringently protected, the literature in the United States on Indian informality has also primarily relied upon milking the same. Of these, Ghertner's and Roy's work stands out well. While Roy has worked on explaining urban informality as an introductory concept, Ghertner's work has relied more on understanding and critically analysing the systems that have made the informality function within the given context.

Diving into the commercial/ industrial sectors, the city of Delhi has extensive informality in both of these sectors. While the presence of street vending is moderately recognised in Indian literature and people in general, planners tend to side-line their presence, leading vendors to directly deal with implementation systems governed by non-planning law, such as The

Street Vendors (Protection of livelihood and regulation of street vending) Bill, 2013, which became an act in 2014.

Yet, vendors still have some sort of a recognition. The same hardly applies to industrial informality. While industrial work in residential informal housing (slums or squatters for short) is somewhat recognized, there are some other nuances to the industrial informality that are not detailed out either in literature or law. Some examples of such cases would be Anand Parbat, Samaypur-Badli, Firozabad, Seelampur, Nangloi, Gandhinagar and Shahdara areas of Delhi. For other such areas, more research shall be required, but for now we could go into the details of one of these areas that has widespread industrial informality.

While Anand Parbat was initially designed to be a transit camp, a phenomenon where informal dwellers from the city were resettled in new areas, but temporarily housed in a third area known as a transit camp: it eventually turned out to become a settlement in its own right. While a newly independent India, and Delhi under the 1961 Master Plan did not have the manpower or the resources to resettle these informal settlements, Anand Parbat ended up becoming a permanent settlement from a mere transit camp.



Work spaces utilised by the informal industries

mentioned. The only risk that the residents of Anand Parbat now face in the lens of legal evacuation is the court case of Ramjas v. Residents of Anand Parbat, where the Ramjas Foundation claims that their land was used as the Transit Camp. Ramjas Foundation also has a school on this property that looks after the education and nutrition needs of the students in the area.

Nevertheless, coming back to the versatility of the industrial use in the area, there are multiple “industries” that are housed in this area, which range from heavy metal works to something as simple as dyeing, packaging or real estate sales agencies, and the most ‘informal’ characteristic of these being the space required for conducting this work: something ranging from as small as 10ft x 10ft to 10ft x 15ft, whatever is available and spacious enough to carry out the work.

If not, multiples of these spaces are used to satisfy various steps of the same process: For instance, paint-making needs the following steps (carried out in the area): Resin Making, Pigmentation, Thinning,

Some of the reasons why Anand Parbat ended up being a successful settlement was its location: Anand Parbat fell on the direct Amritsar-Kolkata Grand Trunk road, which is a well-established supply chain since the days of the silk trade, built by Chandragupta Maurya and further refurbished by Sher Shah Suri. If the location is this crucial, and with no possibility of being relocated as promised is on the horizon, the residents started to find easy work to feed their families. What also worked in their favour was the Indian railways Rewari-Delhi supply chain. This confluence of supply routes made the location perfect for large-scale industrial development, and then supported by informal industrial growth.

While Anand Parbat does have many industries and storage houses (colloquially known as go-downs or godaams), those are a view as of today. The actual informal industrial work is still carried out in the informal settlements of the Anand Parbat and Daya Basti areas, and governed by the New Rohtak Road Merchant's Association (NRRMA). But what exactly does happen here in the name of industrial informality?

Calling this area an industrial informal development is a misnomer in itself: the Delhi master

Plan 2021 revised its terminologies and called such areas household industries, while the Government of India passed another act known as the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development act of 2006, that governs such businesses. The best possible thing that both of these legal governance mechanisms do is to offer immunity from any changes prescribed to settlements/ areas developed before the passing of the act/plan, unless specifically

Character of the area, also supplemented by informal vending





and finally Canning/Packaging. All of these are carried out by multiple “household”/ “micro” industries, which further compete for monopoly over the supply of their material in the area for that particular step, or if not, become a part of a new supply chain altogether; dyeing for instance, which also is one of the industries in the area.

We as planners tend to theoreticize phenomena and put them into understandable boxes that we are used to, where in reality in practice, the variety in human settlements is humongous. In context to the same, it is but easy to label this area as an informal settlement and leaving it at that, where in reality, this is no settlement at all, but just a work station for micro industries, the living quarters of whose workers are unclassifiable: some may live right above where they work, some may live right where

Garbage accumulation around industries

Effluents leaking from informal industries

they work, while some may live miles away from where they work. What is constant in such areas is the location, the functionality of the area, and the importance of this area in the largescale industrial supply chain, on which a huge portion of the Indian economy rests. And for the latter part, all we can do is recognise these areas and give them the resources that they require, and most importantly the respect that they deserve.



Natural capital valuation through the lens of behavioural economics

BY ANN ROCHYNE THOMAS

Urban planning and design have an impact on how people perceive, value, and utilize space. It influences their perception of natural capital or the benefits they derive from nature.

The failure to recognize and properly account for the value of natural capital stocks and ecosystem services is the root cause of environmental deterioration.

Urban planning and design have an impact on how people perceive, value, and utilize space. It influences their perception of natural capital or the benefits they derive from nature. The failure to recognize and properly account for the value of natural capital stocks and ecosystem services is the root cause of environmental deterioration.

Ecosystem services include the provisioning of goods, regulatory services that maintain the natural world's balance, supporting services to assist other ecosystem components, and cultural services that provide 'meaning' through spiritual, therapeutic, or recreational experiences.

Blue-green infrastructure (BGI), or structuring elements of water and vegetation in cities, can assist with a wide range of urban needs, including improving local microclimates and ensuring food and water security. Urban vegetation, in addition to increasing



◀ Urban vegetation in a neighbourhood in downtown Kochi, Kerala.

soil fertility and biodiversity, contributes to neighborhood cooling via evapo-transpiration. Permeable surfaces in urban areas, such as porous pavers or vegetated soil, allow water to percolate, reducing surface runoff and increasing groundwater recharge. It also improves a city's liveability by expanding and distributing recreational opportunities more equitably, resulting in improved public health and well-being as well as a strong sense of collective public identity among its residents.

There are known limits to economic growth because of the complex linkages between the ecological and economic systems. The decline in natural capital manifests itself as resource scarcity, biodiversity loss, and pollution. This reduction in the quantity and quality of natural capital will have a significant impact on future economic growth.

ACKNOWLEDGING VALUE PLURALISM FOR EQUITABLE PLANNING

Natural capital is valued by assigning a monetary, bio-physical, or socio-cultural value to an ecosystem or its components. It enables governments to quantify the benefits derived from nature for economic growth and human well-being. The public and private sectors also stand to gain from factoring their impacts and reliance on natural capital into their decision-making processes.

The term 'value' in natural capital valuation does not refer to an intrinsic property of a natural capital asset. Value is determined by plurality and context, depending on who is measuring it, who receives and uses the benefits, and under what spatio-temporal conditions it is valued. A natural capital asset's price

is determined by inter-temporal exchange. Sustainability aims to meet the needs of future generations by providing natural capital assets of equal or greater value.

How much a person or community is willing to give up in order to obtain a natural capital stock or ecosystem service determines its net benefit, which is benefit minus cost. Another way to describe natural capital is by its relational value, which is the cost that reflects a 'meaningful difference' between its attributes and those of another. When natural capital is defined ethically, its value depends on not just what is desirable but also what is morally correct.

Markets never fully appreciate the true worth of natural capital. The low perceived value of ecosystem services as a result of poor accounting leads to irresponsible, perverse, unintended, and even irreversible actions that harm the environment. In municipal budgets, the true costs of declining ecosystem services are frequently ignored. As a result, natural capital is further depleted as urban ecosystems are incentivized to be transformed into built infrastructure. Even though not all aspects of nature can be economically valued, estimating the value of natural capital is still necessary to prevent policy assessments from undervaluing it. Improperly managed natural capital endangers the economy, society, and environment.

Valuation tools are designed to aid in the development of blue-green infrastructure from both a bio-physical and socio-economic perspective. Valuation languages may prioritize economic costs or socio-cultural values to capture different value dimensions of urban ecosystem services.

A natural capital asset's price is determined by inter-temporal exchange. Sustainability aims to meet the needs of future generations by providing natural capital assets of equal or greater value.

A comprehensive evaluation of the costs and benefits of natural capital in the specific context of urban planning is required to select the most appropriate valuation tool to support decision-making.

A single number represents value in many cost-benefit accounting methods. However, in the valuation of natural capital, values are a multi-dimensional expression of a range of preferences and beliefs held by multiple stakeholders about a 'place', and they are non-linear, synergistic, and occasionally irreconcilable. There is a risk of valuation discrepancy and incommensurability when there are unresolved ecological conflicts arising from a variety of legitimate perspectives and interests. Value plurality makes it possible to engage in negotiation processes that generate relative values, which can be helpful in contexts where rights

Natural capital should not be valued as merely an asset class that produces stocks and services for people and provides returns on investment.

and ethics are in conflict.

When stakeholders' expressed preferences are determined by contingent valuation, their willingness to pay (WTP) for the preservation of the ecosystem services or willingness to accept (WTA) monetary compensation for foregone services is investigated. WTP rewards the environment and is enjoyed by all, in contrast to WTA, which rewards an entity while compromising natural capital.

Even though economic valuation is insufficient in and of itself to achieve greater societal objectives such as ecological sustainability or distributive justice, it provides vital information for determining resource efficiency. Natural capital investments have significant social and environmental benefits because they complement and, in some cases, outperform conventional grey infrastructure. However, its limited adoption is a result of ignorance regarding its real costs and benefits. The conservation, restoration, and development of BGI must be integrated into spatial planning not only as a last resort, but as a standard, in order to reduce cities' ecological footprints while improving urban resilience and quality of life for their inhabitants. Mainstreaming BGI necessitates

changes not only in urban design but also in urban budgeting and governance structures.

To successfully integrate ecosystem services into policy making processes, an integrated, multi-dimensional valuation approach that incorporates multiple metrics and valuation techniques, both monetary and non-monetary, and takes into account theoretical and practical valuation issues is required.

TO VALUE OR NOT TO VALUE

Nature has intrinsic value that is distinct from its contribution to human services. Any natural capital approach should take this intrinsic value into account even though it is challenging to quantify it in a meaningful way. Natural capital should not be valued as merely an asset class that produces stocks and services for people and provides returns on investment. This will result in perverse and unexpected outcomes. The valuation must not be used to turn opportunities for responsible stewardship into justifications for the destruction of natural capital for profit. Natural capital assets should not be undervalued simply because they are unlikely to yield immediate returns. The valuation of natural capital must never seek to commodify nature.

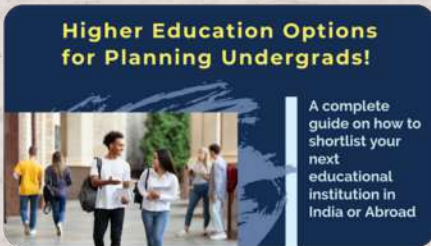
However, failing to assign a value to natural capital in ways that policymakers and markets can comprehend will only ensure that nature remains at the bottom of their priority list. In a finite world, it is impossible to achieve sustainability through resource efficiency without developing value structures that at least attempt to reflect the true value of natural capital.



◀ A mangrove wetland near a high-footfall beach in Kochi, Kerala.



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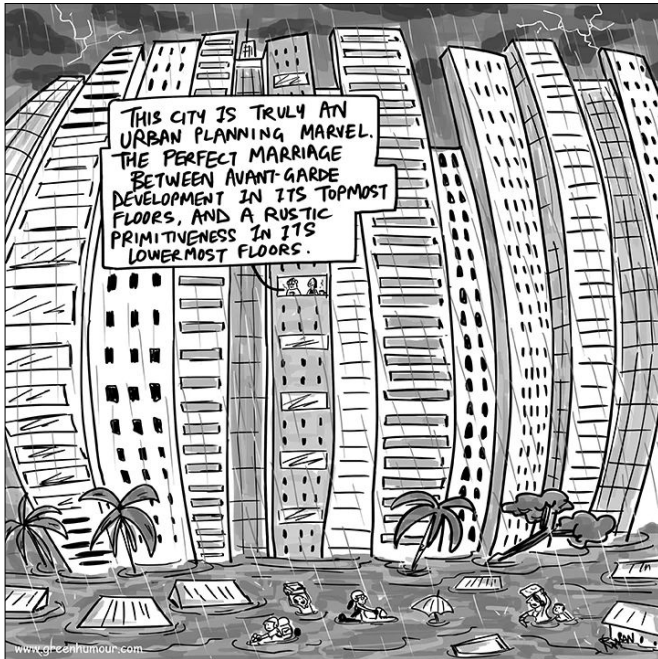
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#ItsTimeToPlan



@green_humour exposes the cracks in urban planning and social hierarchies using a marvelous example of urban flooding.



@natgeo gives us an aerial view of the designated new capital city of Indonesia, Nusantara



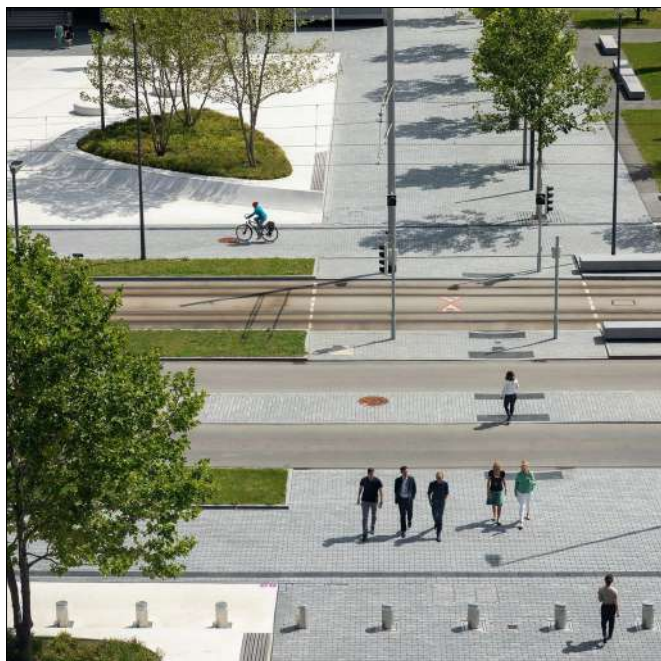
@penangsters shows us a tangled beauty of the Penang Bridge in Penang, Malaysia



@shanime sheds light on the reality of being called a planner in India (not an architect!)

Want to get featured here?

Share your pictures, tag us @planningtimesdotcom, and get noticed here!



@topotek1 shows a seamless connection between an existing company site and public spaces at the Emanuel Merck Square.



@haakankales provides an interesting take on creating safe spaces for children and a child-friendly community.



@urbanpie.in talks about how yearly urban floods cause massive damage to Indian cities and citizens



@_archistudent_ visualizes the impact that technology has on urban planning.

What's your 9 to 5 like?

We will be conducting short interviews of planners currently working in the field, and asking them about what they actually do in their offices. It is dedicated to understanding the works of planners and creating awareness on the answering the age old question, 'What does a planner do?'

BY KARTHIK GIRISH



For our first interview, we have **Harkaran Lakhotra**. He is currently working as a **Planning Officer in the Department of Urban Planning, UT Chandigarh Administration**.

Tell us a little bit about your education and your job profile.

I did my Bachelors of Planning (B. Plan) from School of Planning & Architecture, New Delhi (2017-21). I have not done my masters yet. But I am willing to do it after 2-3 years of service. I am currently working as a Planning Officer (Group-A Non-Ministerial General Civil Services, Pay Scale – Rs. 10300-34800 + 5000/- Grade Pay, subject to further revision) in the department of Urban planning in the UT of Chandigarh. It's a government job and I'm a regular employee till retirement.

How long have you been working here?

Four months so far. I joined the office in May 2022. This is the first job which I have taken up after 1 year of being voluntarily unemployed,

thus explaining the gap since I graduated.

What are the roles and responsibilities of your job?

As per Publication of Information regarding items specified in Rule 4(1)(b)(ii) of the RTI Act, 2005 (The powers and duties of the officers and employees), the official powers and duties of a Planning Officer is "Supervise the work of the drawing staff and prepare sketch drawings, give guidance to the drawing staff in preparation of drawings of different land uses for physical planning of the Town/Periphery areas. Assist the Assistant Town Planner in technical work."

To simplify, we assist the Assistant Town Planners with technical inputs, required drawings and other necessary work as desired to peruse

to higher authorities. I have a team of hierarchy of draftsmen under my guidance to help with land use planning. At my level, we coordinate with other stakeholders such as Engineering, State Transport, Police, RWAs, Councillors, civil society and bureaucrats to complete various requests and give inputs/comments/suggestions related to Urban Planning keeping the vision of Chandigarh Masterplan 2031 in a broader framework for further process of work.

I personally deal exclusively with all Traffic & Transportation related aspects related to Chandigarh as per the work distribution. We prepare and issue letters to escalate work and communicate with other departments and keep a record of it. I also represent my department in

various meetings & site inspections throughout my day in the office.

What projects are you working on, or have you worked on?

We work in a myriad of projects. Daily we deal with multiple files regarding various trivial issues/requests such as providing a slip road, junction improvement, installation of rotaries/ATC Light point, road widening, CTU Depots, EV Charging Stations, etc. relating to Traffic & Transportation only. We deal with these requests on piecemeal basis and move on.

However, we are tied up with some bigger projects as well. Some of them to name are Utility Management Services, Bus Queue Shelters, Public Bike Sharing, Comprehensive Mobility Plan 2022, NMT Policy, Green Corridors, TOD Policy, Integrated Village Development Plans, Implementing Parking Policy, etc. for the whole city of Chandigarh.

I've also dealt with various Court Cases, dispose RTI Applications & Address Grievances from the public.

What is your overall experience?

It's overwhelming. With the limited time I've spent here, this experience has changed me as a person. I was exposed to multiple facets of my own hometown. We realized the full potential and power of what a Planner can be and how they act as a crucial gear in the Engine that runs the city i.e. The Chandigarh Administration. I feel proud to be a Town Planner in India's most well-planned city. This gratitude will always stay with me throughout my career.

“

Being a planner is overwhelming. With the limited time I've spent here, this experience has changed me as a person.

Did the job meet your expectations and to what extent?

Being my first job, there weren't expectations but assumptions on what it's actually like to work in real life. This job fulfilled most of it. There is a limited pressure, seniors are understanding, work-life balance is great. I've made networks with multiple authorities and promotions are fixed & on time, with decent a salary and benefits.

Although the job has its perks, there is still a lot of scope to improve the efficiency of the department and make it more productive with latest tools and technological interventions. There is a lot of communication gap inter-

We planners work in a myriad of projects...regarding trivial issues like junction improvements and road widening, to bigger projects like Public Bike Sharing, TOD Policy, NMT Policy, etc. for the city of Chandigarh.

department which can be bridged with more transparent data sharing and centralized collaboration systems.

Bureaucratic delays and red-taping are a serious concern that eats away the credibility of the office. It feels bad to be a victim of it, but it's even worse to be the perpetrator of the same. The workload is so extensive with little manpower, the officer feels helpless even if they want to fast-track the work and enable efficient public service.

Do you recommend working here, and why?

Who in this age doesn't want a "Sarkari Naukri"? Jokes apart, working here has its own benefits & downsides. It's always better to work here as a full-time employee to enjoy all the benefits this office has to offer. But from another perspective, I would not recommend this for people who are looking to always be on their toes and want exponential growth in their life in terms of gaining knowledge & expertise. If you can dedicate 30-35 years of your service and serve in one office till retirement, there is no better choice than this. Otherwise, there are a lot of other opportunities for job-hoppers. I would however definitely NOT recommend it for internships.

Were you able to grow your professional network?

You can expect a decent network building working with professionals who've have experience of a lifetime working here. Most officials are alumni of SPAD, CCA & GNDU in general. Various vacancies are filled through deputation as well as on consultation basis. This has helped me make contacts with other authorities such as DMRC and IUT too. Also, as planning takes multiple organizations coming together for a goal, my network also includes personnel from engineering, forest, police, railways, and the airport deptt. of Chandigarh.

What are your future career plans?

After 2-3 years of service, I can opt for a 2-year casual leave to undertake an M. Plan course in the domain I wish to go for. May look at this option in the future. Other competitive examinations, although now a distant dream, are still on the menu. If not, retiring as a Senior Town Planner would be a career good enough.



For our second interview, we have **Anushka Maheswari**. She is currently working as a **Consultant at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW)**

“

Working here has broadened my vision of various opportunities that are available for my future.

Tell us a little bit about your education and your job profile.

I did my Bachelors of Planning (B. Plan) from School of Planning & Architecture, New Delhi (2018-22). I am currently working as a consultant at the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW). CEEW is one of Asia's leading not-for-profit policy research institutions. We use data, integrated analysis, and strategic outreach to explain – and change – the use,

reuse, and misuse of resources.

How long have you been working here?

I started as an intern for two months in the middle of my final semester and after I completed my degree I joined as a consultant and working for two and a half months now. So, a total of four months.

What are the roles and responsibilities of your job?

Initially, my work started with data collection and organization at

a pan-India level for multi-criteria analysis regarding green hydrogen production. I primarily do spatial analysis for the project that I have been working on and help my team with GIS. In the immediate future after being done with my analysis, we will be studying policies.

What projects are you working on, or have you worked on?

I am working on a land suitability project for setting up green hydrogen plants in India and what are the challenges faced on increasing capacity.

What is your overall experience?

My overall experience has been good so far. There is a lot of learning to be done as my prior work experience in internships was limited. Some of my colleagues who started in a similar pattern, as I, have helped me learn more, and ways to stay updated. Weekly meetings happening in the whole organization updates you on what they are doing and current practices.

Did the job meet your expectations and to what extent?

My work yet is more about GIS and I am using very less from traditional planning that is taught in college. It took me a good 1 month to be adjusted to it. It's a relatively new path and I constantly feel like I have to be on my toes because most of the time I have less knowledge of what and how things are done. It is a good thing because I am a fresher and I get to learn a lot, in fields of policy research and climate change.

Do you recommend working here, and why?

I would 100 percent recommend working here because the work culture is healthy. One might have to work hard but is equally appreciated for their contribution. Moreover,

they provide many facilities for employee wellbeing. What I love about the organization is that they do just not talk about sustainability but implement it as well. Also, the office premise is beautiful.

Were you able to grow your professional network?

Most definitely. I have interacted with so many people and know

about their backgrounds. This has broadened my vision of various opportunities that are available for my future education.

What are your future career plans?

As of now, I have not thought much about the future but I am focusing on being updated and aware of what I am currently working on.



POST GRADUATE EDUCATION

PLANNING OVERSEAS

Your guide to Masters programmes outside India

Planning Overseas is focused on generating awareness of Masters courses offered by countries outside India for urban planning and allied fields. The information that you see here has been collected from official university websites, and the calculations are based on approximations and rounding-off of values sourced from the respective college/university websites. We hope this brings clarity to your choice of opting for planning and allied courses outside India.



University of Michigan

Location: Ann Arbor, Michigan

Course: Masters in Urban Planning (STEM)

Duration: 2 years

Total expense*: ₹ 1.15 crores

Ranked No. 9 for urban and regional planning graduate programs by Planetizen, the Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) degree prepares students to become leaders who plan for and engage with communities for the greater good.

*Tuition and application fees + Average living expense + Average travel cost



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University of Illinois

Location: Champaign, Illinois

Course: Masters in Urban Planning (MUP)

Duration: 2 years

Total expense*: ₹ 1.1 crores

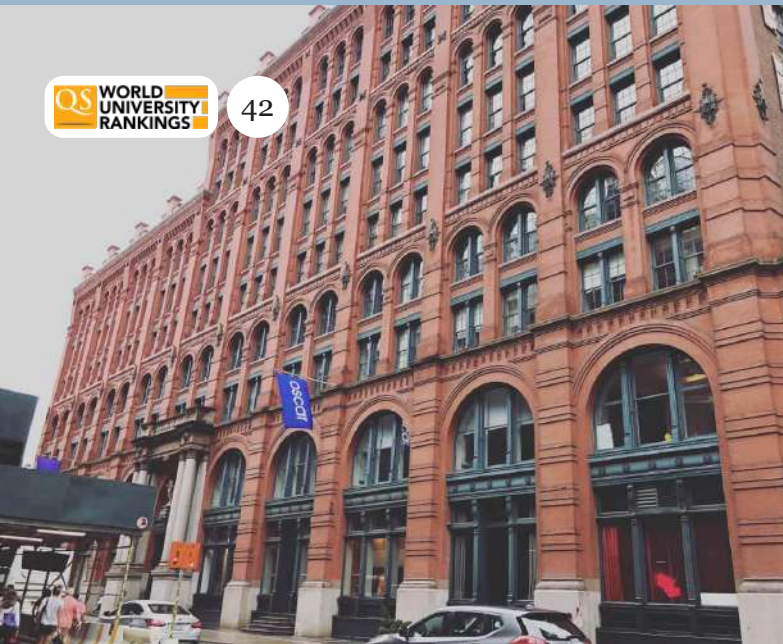
The MUP is a 2-year, professional degree program. MUP students work with our faculty who are leading innovative research in planning. Together, we discover creative and multidisciplinary solutions to growing urban problems.



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42



New York University

Location: New York City

Course: Master in Urban Planning (M.Plan)

Duration: 2 years

Total expense*: ₹ 1.2 crores

NYU Wagner gives you the unique opportunity to study urban planning in the context of these issues, within a school of public service. Students can interact with people from other disciplines who are grappling with these real-world social, cultural, and economic issues.



University of Pennsylvania

Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Course: Master in City Planning (MCP)

Duration: 2 years

Total expense*: ₹ 1.17 crores

At PennPlanning, students gain the knowledge and quantitative, qualitative and digital skills required to take on challenges in analyzing complex problems and visualizing alternative futures for communities.



13



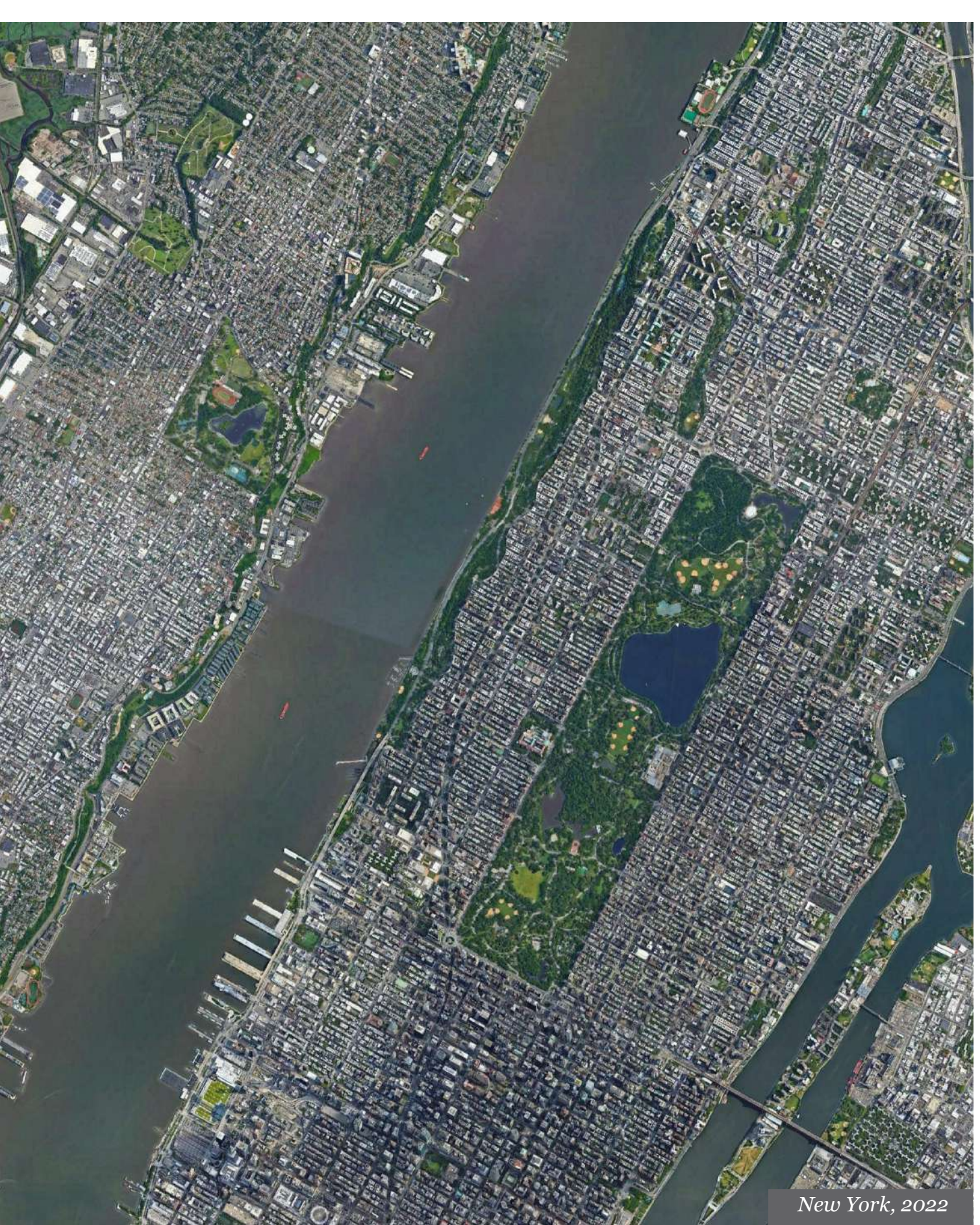
*Tuition and application fees + Average living expense + Average travel cost

A high-resolution satellite image of a city, likely Seattle, showing a dense urban core with a grid-like street pattern. A large river, the Duwamish River, flows through the city, with several bridges crossing it. The surrounding areas include industrial zones with large buildings and parking lots, as well as green spaces and parks. The image is taken from a high angle, providing a comprehensive view of the city's layout and its relationship with the river and surrounding landscape.

IMAGERY

Satellite Watch

It is interesting to see how basic elements like buildings, public spaces, streets, and natural features interact to give different urban forms. Let's appreciate our beautiful cities for what they are through the lens of a satellite.

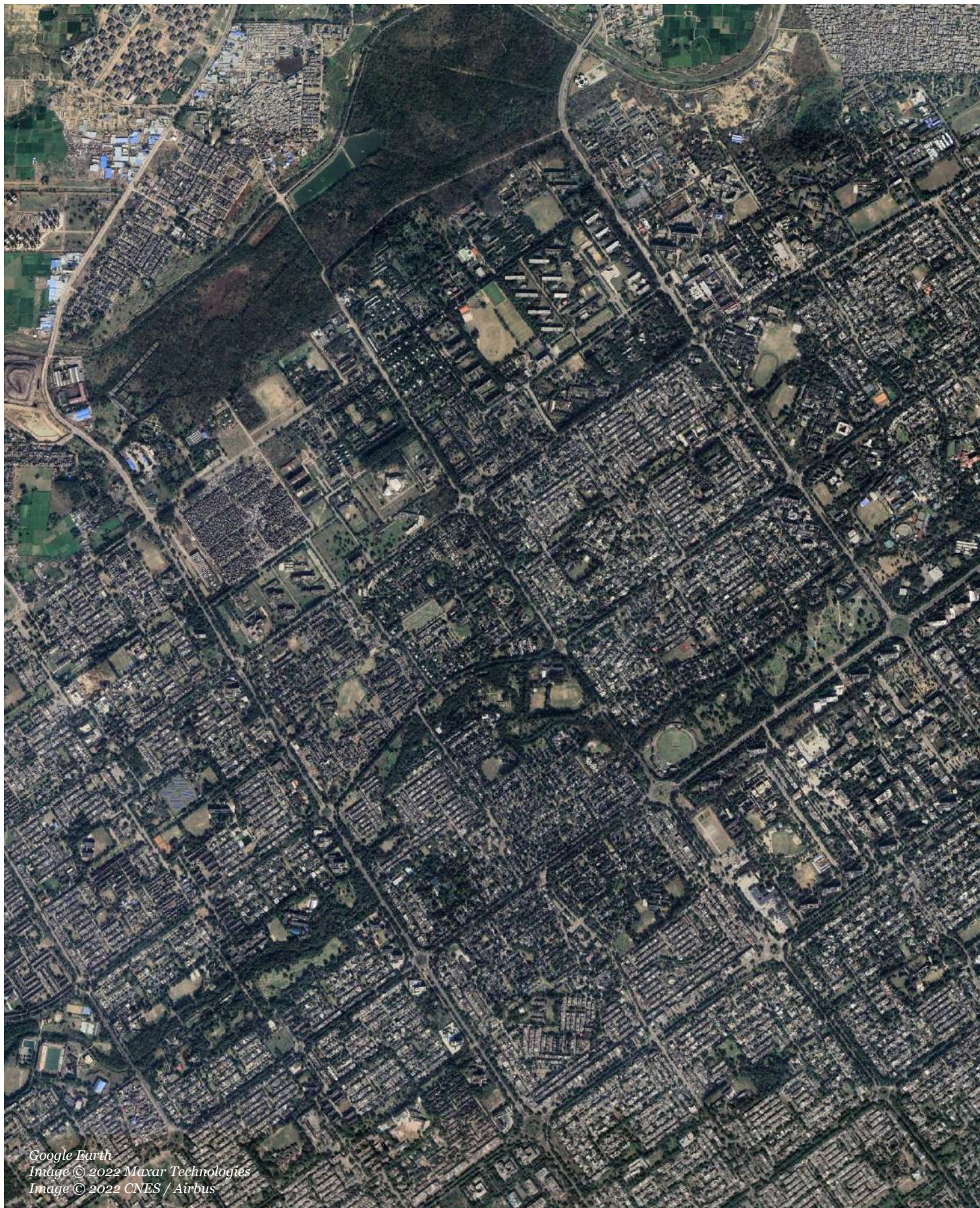


New York, 2022





Giza, 2022





Chandigarh, 2022



◀ Grand Canal in Venice - A Spectacular Canal City

Water as an element and urban planning has a very close association between cities, and it is inherent over the history of civilization. It played a very important role in strategic positioning and / or origin of the city, development of trade and commerce and city's development.

From ancient Babylon and Alexandria to Varanasi in India, and from Byzantine Constantinople to Aztec's Tenochtitlan, areas nearby rivers, lakes or naturally protected bays were the first choice to be inhabited by settlers of all civilizations and used to be the cradle of trade and commerce, and society's development. Over the years, many waterfront areas within or nearby the cities have been developed through large-scale interventions to serve as port zones and industrial areas.

A significant shift has occurred over the last two decades, from visualizing the waterfront as a component of an urban area



accommodating numerous activities to getting evolved under a highly influenced notion of livability and lifestyle. Constructing a totally new waterfront is emerging as a new trend for real estate to compete. In United Arab Emirates (UAE), the waterside communities are favored among the elite, holiday home buyers and investors who desire for a sense of seclusion in their luxury waterfront homes and yet have all the amenities of comfort and lavish living.

WATER

A Drop of Development

A case study from the United Arab Emirates of waterfront development

BY DEEPTHI SURI

DUBAI WATER CANAL

One of the recent city-scale interventions expanding on the thought of artificial water canal developments is the Dubai Water Canal, a 12 km long landmark connecting Dubai Creek to the Gulf Sea. The brainchild of the ruler of Dubai, the development's secure and socially inclusive transit and mobility improvements, along with its high-value waterfront property, is attracting new residents and investors worldwide. Dubai Creek,

which spans from Al Shindagha in downtown Bur Dubai to Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary, is now expanded to the Gulf, improving the water quality and offering possibilities for marine transport, real estate and tourism.

The Dubai Water Canal (DWC) is envisioned as an important element in Dubai's growth as well as city's image and identity. It is a large-scale urban intervention used to regenerate already existing mix use neighbourhoods. Its proximity to the downtown has helped in its emergence as an outstanding hotspot in attracting residents and tourists. The scheme of development around DWC is predominantly a mixed-use development with an elaborated public realm towards the canal side.

The adoption of this scheme helps the city in the distribution of its public spaces and promotes decentralization by accommodating high-rise mixed-use buildings. Furthermore, it adds to the publicly accessible waterfront of the Emirates. The DWC stretch is expected to accommodate 9 marine stations with a vision to expand the existing marine-based public transport network connecting Dubai Creek to the rest of the city. The canal could be crossed through numerous pedestrian bridges enhancing on pedestrian connectivity across both waterfronts.

Part of the development plan for DWC (currently published) is expected to accommodate 5,000 residential units with 5 marinas in addition to over 900 hotel rooms. While little is known about the economics of FRC, the projects of this scale are of huge benefit to the local economy and will assist in maintaining economic vibrancy with its commercial, marina and residential real estate.

The Waterfront feature is one of the key factors for DWC that enhances its retention ability for development, in addition to the locational advantage and the connectivity alternatives provided (major roads, marine transport, pedestrian and cycling networks). With the increase in mixed-use marina developments, Dubai is positioning itself as one of the leading maritime destinations in the Middle East.

The master planner for DWC states that this development is an intervention to provide a natural solution to clean existing Dubai Creek, which is too deep to be cleaned naturally. In addition, this canal is believed to improve the quality of the entire waterway by 33%, with the entire system being turned over every quarter. Dubai canal has increased flushing and an estimated 20% reduction in retention times inside Creek.

The DWC plan is an intervention to provide a natural solution to clean existing Dubai Creek, which is too deep to be cleaned naturally.

Dubai Water Canal

Source: Google Images





◀ Sharjah Waterfront City

A mechanical waterfall part of the development, is powered by 80 water pumps and assists with water turnover in addition to acting as a tourist attraction. However, detailed studies are needed to understand the development intervention and its impact on the marine ecosystem.

SHARJAH WATERFRONT CITY

Sharjah Waterfront City (SWC) is being developed in the Emirate of Sharjah on the northeast coast with a vision to be established as a mixed-use waterfront project, covering an area of about 5.6 million square meters along 36 kilometres of waterfront. This modern nature-inspired city is a natural land where channels were dug to operate 8 islands. These channels are at a distance between 100 to 400 meters, creating a long coastal land. It essentially consists of multi-use residential development catering to around 200 towers for residential and commercial purposes, apartment buildings, hotels and service apartments, around 1,100 water-front and park-side villas, marine clubs, water theme parks, shopping mall, entertainment centres, community facilities like

mosques, schools, banks, stores, restaurants and cafeterias.

Situated on the north-eastern coast of Sharjah, the waterfront development overlooks the Arabian gulf on its western border. The maritime character of the SWC is generated by the canal development that runs through all the eight island - communities. This development provides housing opportunities ranging from high-rise apartment housing to private villa plots. SWC master plan reflects a mixed-use development accommodating various types of land uses other than residential along with provision for ancillary facilities.

SWC developer states that the development is environmentally friendly and it is based on hydro mechanic design. The clean seawater in the channels is renewed every 12 hours in line with the natural tide of the Arabian Gulf. The channels and foundations in the development have been covered in geotextiles, which will help absorb pollutants from the water, as well as shore up and strengthen the piling and foundations around the project and prevent soil erosion.

The literature review of the sustainability of the artificial waterfront and canal developments has illustrated that the presence of water in the urban fabric spotlights a positive implication on the developments around it. Environmentally managed waterfront areas presented opportunities for social activities casting a positive impact on the community. The presence of water provides scope for a healthier living environment and visual comfort and could enhance the existing urban environment; these facts are reflected in the case studies as “luxury: that create high land values of the real estates and the main drivers behind the state initiatives in diversifying the urban environment while strengthening the city’s economic activities.

Based on the study, we can also understand the implication of water by using other indicators like understanding the target groups and their experience with waterfront developments, identifying the economic capacity, and by analysing the different existing ecosystems and microclimate patterns.

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SMART CITY

Make It In The City!

BY TSOMO WANGCHUK

All you need to know about Akon's six billion dollars futuristic City of Africa

AKON CITY is a futuristic smart, high styled and solar -powered city proposed on an area of 2000 acres in Senegal, Africa. Inspired by Marvel's movie, Black Panther, and its fictional city of Wakanda, the Senegalese Singer and entrepreneur, Akon, perpetuated the idea of a technologically advanced city and flexible infrastructure. The project of Akon City was announced in 2018 by Akon along with the Senegal Minister of Tourism, Alioune Sarrin. With a smart city approach and vibrant community development, the project vision is to create a business district and high-rise residential area with focus on education, healthcare, technology, media, entertainment and sports facilities.

According to Akon, the Akon City will be the future city of African Societies and will have pretty much everything from luxury resorts to high condos, a stadium, eco-friendly tourist centres, and shopping malls. The artist says, "If it works, we will scale it out to all the other countries in Africa so all the cities are connected". For the project in Senegal, a 10-year deadline has been proposed for the building of the city. The cost of the project for building and executing the city amounts to 6 billion dollars, which has been awarded to a US-based Consulting and Engineering firm, KE International. The architectural designs will be led by a Dubai-based consultancy, Bakri & Associates Development Consultants, under the guidance of KE International.



TO ATTRACT BUSINESSES, the Government of Senegal has offered tax exemptions to companies investing in Akon City. However, this exemption is only valid if they invest more than 1 billion dollars. In addition, the state will provide free electricity and water supply to new businesses.

Further, the city will be built around a blockchain platform and will be powered by its own cryptocurrency, AKOIN. As per sources, AKOIN will allow citizens to be more independent during the fluctuating African monetary systems.

The location of the city is at the heart of Dakar, which is one of the largest cities in West Africa. It has a population of about 4 million people. The main road that connects Dakar to other major towns is called National Route 1 (Route de la Mer) and runs through the middle of the city. The city is connected to all parts of Senegal via national roads.

There are two airports: Senegalese Airports Authority (ASDS) and the Dakar International

Airport. The latter is the only international airport in the country.

Akon City will be located near the port of Dakar, which means that it will be easily accessible for tourists and investors. Moreover, there are plans to connect the city to the capital of neighboring Mauritania via a bridge over the River Gambia.

AKON CITY will have several features that make it different from other cities in the world. All utilities such as electricity, water, and gas will be provided by the city itself. There will be no need for centralized providers. The city will be powered entirely by renewable energy sources including wind, solar, geothermal, hydroelectricity, biomass, and biogas. It runs entirely on renewable energy through Akon's own solar-power project, Akon Lightning Africa. The blockchain technology will be used to manage the city's data and transactions.

Akon is a Senegalese-American singer, record producer, and entrepreneur.

A schematic render of Akon city

“
You’re gonna wanna visit Africa in 2026 and actually live in Akon City



This is further explained below. The city will feature smart technologies like artificial intelligence, robotics, the internet of things, and autonomous vehicles. The residents of Akon City will also enjoy unlimited Internet access at zero cost. A special emphasis will be placed on educating the youth of the region. Thus, enabling various educational institutions like universities, colleges, schools, and training centers.

THE CITY will also feature well-equipped hospitals and clinics, media and entertainment outlets, and sports facilities. The city will be a hub for tourism in the region. It is designed to accommodate visitors who want to experience nature and culture. Every person who lives in Akon City will receive a digital ID card. It will contain information about the user, his family members, and his property. This data will be stored in a distributed ledger system. All decisions regarding the development of the city will be made

through consensus voting. Each citizen will vote for the projects he wants to see implemented. Akon City will focus on community development and social inclusion.

Senegal's plan for development will be a mixed-use development, catering to both the country's growing economy as well as its neighboring countries. The design of the futuristic city will be based on an informed understanding of the past with strong community-based culture, local traditions, and heritage. In addition, open spaces will be surrounded by native trees and plants, which will merge into the surrounding landscape. According to the Akon City website, 'the pathways linking the buildings will be a reinterpretation of the human geometry of communication.' Moreover, the city will be built around three main principles of awareness, inclusiveness and sustainability.

AKOIN will be the official currency of Akon City. Its value was





pegged to the US dollar in 2018. The coin can be used to pay taxes and fees, buy goods and services, and make payments online. AKOIN will be backed up by gold reserves stored in Swiss vaults. Further, the reserve amount will be equivalent to 10 per cent of the total circulating coins. According to the project team, AKOIN will be fully decentralized and will not require any intermediaries or central authorities. Therefore, it will be impossible to manipulate the market price. Above all, the city will have its own blockchain platform, which will allow users to access their wallets from anywhere.

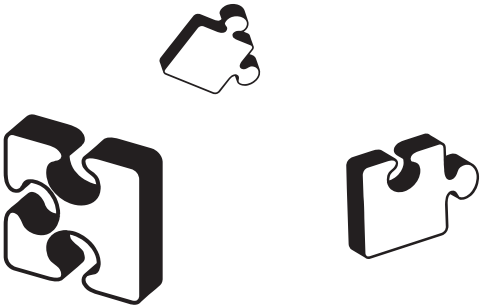
THE IDEA of Akon City as a technologically advanced city was conceptualized for the people of Senegal, where most people are living in extreme poverty. Therefore he wanted to create cities for everybody, and at the same time, improve the economy and promote development, especially for the youths, by creating thousands of jobs. Some experts believe that

the project has potential and that it should be supported. Others are concerned that the city will be expensive to maintain, and the infrastructure will quickly collapse if there aren't enough resources available. Some critics believe that the project does not provide enough details about how the city will function. Moreover, they argue that there are no real plans to implement all the features mentioned in the whitepaper.

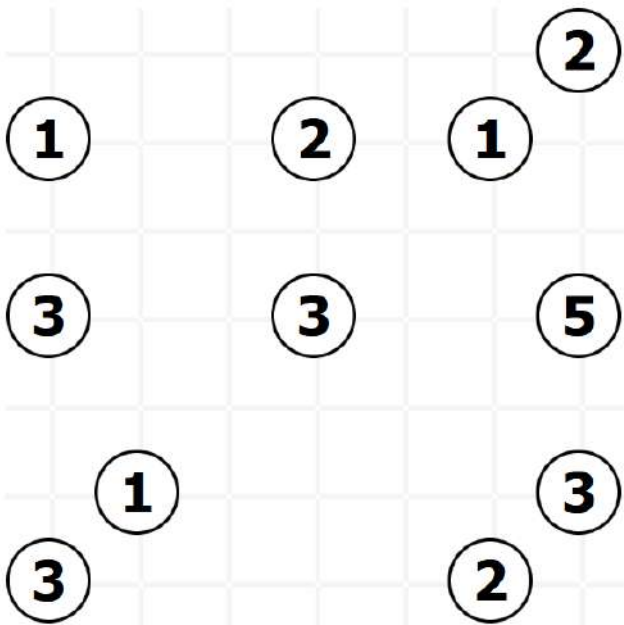
In one of the interviews, Ola Uduku, an Associate Professor in Architecture and Dean for Africa at the University of Edinburgh, also stated that West Africa has a rich architecture, and reflections of African Modernism have been talked about in various books. He believed that instead of offering a project to an entire new entity, Akon could have worked together with the local planners and architects from West Africa to bring about more democratic plans and proposals for the futuristic city of Senegal.



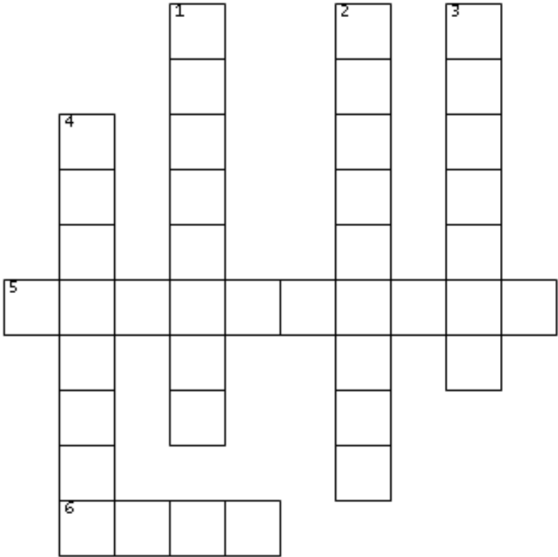
PUZZLE



Difficulty ●○○○○○



Difficulty ●●○○○○



Crossword

Use the clues to fill in the words above.

ACROSS

- 5. The study of the form of human settlements and the process of their formation and transformation.
- 6. One of the tangible factor of production; a state subject in Indian constitution

DOWN

- 1. The city in Madhya Pradesh famous for waste to energy initiative
- 2. The First city in India to issue municipal bonds in 1997.
- 3. Sludge removed from a septic tank
- 4. A landfill intended for one type of waste only

Crossword by: **Mayank Dubey**
(mayankdubey1990@gmail.com)

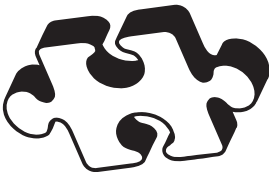
Metro Hashi

Create one single metro line through all stations.

The goal is to connect all of the metro stations into a single connected group by drawing a series of lines between the stations.

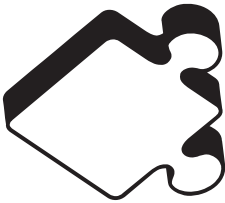
The lines must follow certain criteria:

- They must begin and end at distinct stations, travelling a straight line in between.
- They must not cross any other lines or stations.
- They may only run orthogonally.
- At most two lines can connect a pair of stations.
- The number of lines connected to each station must match the number on that station.

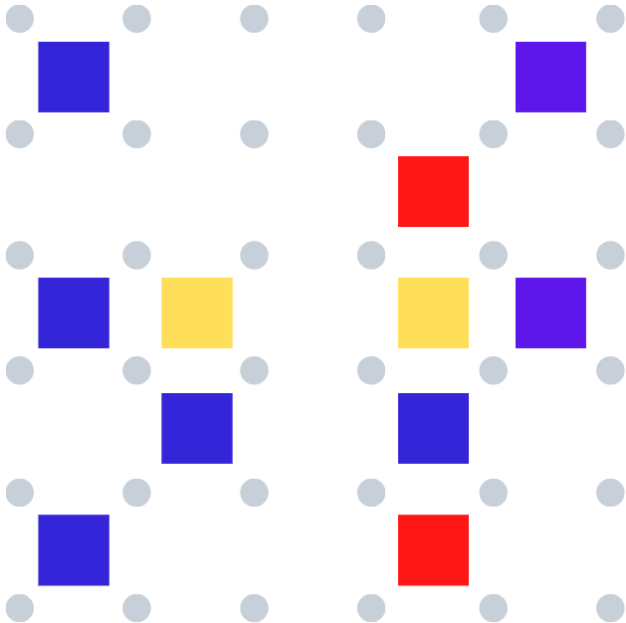


Think again!

TIME



Difficulty ○○○○○○



Stuck in a puzzle?
Scan this QR code to find solutions to all the puzzles below

Difficulty ○○○○○○

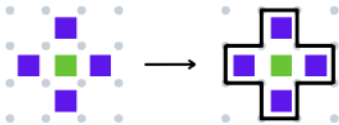
S L A T I P A C G W E B I A C S H T M B
M M I A S N O K Q I S X B L O E P Z U A
S A O R S A T S I E Z E V G M N K I Z Z
F V X E Y C L E S F N A T M M E P A Y P
K G C E J H N U R C B L S T U G A G L V
R E T T A U Q S H V N T N Q N A M Q N B
T P I A R N R M Q Z E E X Q I L E V E U
N A P G G D A E J D M N A C T T H T H O
O D U M L R K R L E D E T V Y B N Z X V
R K F S K U M B L X P L M I Y T U S I A
F W B I O R E T E N T I O N O Q I S J N
R U E F N A T U R E B A S E D N I P U A
E W O A J E D L N Y J V B D V O S C Q N
T K Y J S E F F L U E N T E N J Z R M D
A A P S V H M V Z I X F S A S Y K H K P
W Z K N P I P M N E I T R B L J H N T A
K N H E L H R J R Z M I I F V P G D U R
A U K L H K Y P A E E G X P S C Q S Q B
G Y X M J J I F N S C K N Y C C E W Q A
W L S Y O D J T H R A G I D N A H C U T

Loop the Landuse

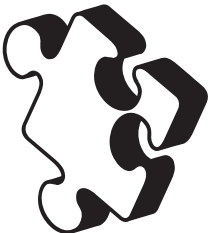


Make a single loop around the landuse colours.

Make one single loop around all the landuse colours. There are no crossings or loose ends. There is only one line which is continuous.



Each landuse colour indicates exactly how many lines should be drawn around it. Cells which do not have any colour inside can be surrounded by any number of lines.



Here's a key for the landuse colours
Industrial - surrounded by 3
Commercial - surrounded by 2
Residential - surrounded by 1
Recreational - surrounded by 0

Word Search



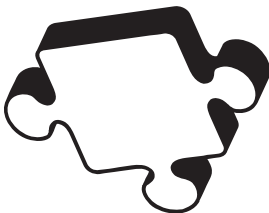
Find the words in the puzzle.


Words can go in any direction.
Words can share letters as they cross over each other.

Anand Parbat
Benchmark
Bioretention
Capital
Chandigarh
Community

Effluent
Giza
Intervention
Investment
Nature-based

Senegal
Settlement
Squatter
Visionaries
Waterfront





**Growth for the sake of growth, is the
ideology of the cancer cell**

Edward Abbey

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