

Concept Note

Affordable Housing Side Event, ICLEI Congress

About CityNet

CityNet is the largest association of urban stakeholders committed to sustainable development in the Asia Pacific region. Established in 1987 with the support of UNESCAP, UNDP and UN-Habitat, the Network has grown to include 135 municipalities, NGOs, private companies and research centers. We *connect* actors, *exchange* knowledge and *build* commitment to more sustainable and resilient cities. Through capacity building, city-to-city cooperation and tangible projects, we help our members respond to Climate Change, Disaster, the Millennium Development Goals and rising Infrastructure demands.

Summary

CityNet regularly hosts workshops and capacity building activities aimed at training city leaders and promoting best practices in the Asia Pacific region. In 2015, CityNet programming is being driven by the theme of *Asian Perspectives on Sustainable Urbanization*. This idea will shape programming and capacity building activities by promoting best practices, case studies and methodologies that have emerged from Asia to address cities' urban development challenges. As part of this theme, we will hold a three day workshop on Affordable Housing at the Kuala Lumpur Regional Training Center in May. At the ICLEI Congress, CityNet proposes to host an Affordable Housing Seminar which will serve as an opening to the training program. We anticipate that the seminar would be 2-3 hours in the form of a side event.

Background/Context

It is now common knowledge that the Asia Pacific region is one of the world's most rapidly urbanizing areas in the world, with accelerated economic growth accompanying serious social challenges. One such challenge is that of affordable housing. Housing is one of the most central parts of citizens' daily lives and one of the primary forms of asset accumulation for the poor. The location of housing is critical to ensure access to employment, healthcare, transport, and educational opportunities. However, the Asia Pacific region faces a major challenge in ensuring adequate, safe and affordable housing for the poor. Because of this, many urban poor seek shelter in informal settlements where access to sanitation services, safe spaces and stability are jeopardized. The challenge for local governments in the Asia Pacific region is how to respond to affordable housing issues in their cities, acknowledge the social challenges that accompany the need for shelter, and form policies that address future demand in the housing market.

The short seminar on affordable housing will cover the following topics:

- Protecting property rights by regulating home prices, land use, and integrating housing development into existing urban services.
- Expanding urban tenure choices by increasing the ratio of rented/owned property to the international standard of 30% and increase regulations concerning tenant/landlord contracts.
- The role of local governments in promoting affordable housing through flexible land use policies, transfers of development rights, mixed-use development schemes, and land readjustment projects.
- Improving local-level financial institutions (include civil society and community-based mortgage schemes) to improve housing affordability and open more options for consumer housing finance.
- The challenges of gathering accurate housing data and the importance of improving data collection, dissemination, and use.

Objectives

- 1) Contribute to the ICLEI Congress theme of *Sustainable Solutions for an Urban Future* by providing voices of successful case studies in the area of sustainable urban housing
- 2) Present an Asian Perspective on Affordable Housing in the Asia Pacific region to a global audience
- 3) Build a closer partnership with the ICLEI programs in Korea

Anticipated Schedule

Time	Activity	Responsible Person
10:00-10:10	Welcome and Introduction to CityNet	Youngmin Chang, CityNet Director of Programs
10:10-10:30	Affordable Housing Development in Seoul	Seoul Metropolitan Government Official (TBA)
10:30-11:30	Challenges of Affordable Housing in the Asia Pacific Region	Mr. Kirtee Shah, Ahmedabad Study Action Group Honorary Director
11:30-11:45	Break	Marina Brenden
11:45-12:45	Case Studies and Best Practices of Affordable Housing in the Asia Pacific Region	Mr. Kirtee Shah, Ahmedabad Study Action Group Honorary Director
12:30-12:55	Discussion and Q & A	Participants
12:55-1:00	Closing	Youngmin Chang, CityNet Director of Programs

Speaker's Biography



Kirtee Shah: Kirtee Shah studied architecture at the School of Architecture at CEPT. He is a practicing Architect and Chairman of KSA Design Planning Services P. Ltd. Early in his career he worked as the coordinator of a project designed to rehabilitate Mandva village in South Gujarat which was destroyed by floods in the river Narmada. His responsibilities included design and construction of 365 low-cost houses for the village poor; demonstration houses for the non-poor; community consultation and coordination of self-help activities by the village community and voluntary work by student volunteers from schools and colleges of Gujarat

To build on the experience gained in village Mandva; to work for an 'alternative' and a 'non-conventional' client (primarily the poor and disadvantaged groups in villages and cities); to provide new avenue of involvement and a different professional challenge to the young professionals launched, with likeminded professionals, he formed a non-profit organization Ahmedabad Study Action Group (ASAG).

ASAG is a non-government, non-commercial, organization run by concerned professionals committed to utilizing their skills for public causes in general and the poor and the disadvantaged sections in particular. Besides being the founder trustee, he is also ASAG's Director (Hon Director since 1985).

Handling multiple assignments in varying capacities, he has been a member of the "Research and Advisory Committee" of Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO), " Working Group on Housing" set up by the Planning Commission, GOI for the Seventh Five Year Plan, Planning Commission "Working Group on

Housing Finance” and the “Working Group on Rural Housing” for the 9th Five Year Plan (1996-97). He was also a member of the advisory committee of “Social Housing Foundation” established by National Housing Finance Corporation Limited (NHFCL) of South Africa, member of the empowered committee of the National Mission on Rural Housing and Habitat, set up by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India and the working group on rural poverty alleviation programmes for the 10th Five Year Plan (2001-2002).

He has written several papers on people’s rights on housing, earthquake policy and riverfront development in Ahmedabad. He has been a consultant to many projects and institutions, such as Gujarat Rural Housing Agency UNICEF, royal Government of Bhutan, NHDA, Sri Lanka World Bank, KFW, Germany and Government of Orissa. He has also provided assistance to MEA, Government of India in developing an approach to programme development and strategy for implementation for 50,000 rural houses for the conflict affected families in the Northern and the Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka.

CityNet Contact Points

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