

# Urban Age Conference | Developing Urban Futures

Summary by Tjark Gall

From the 29 to 20 November, researchers, policy makers, politicians, and entrepreneur came together in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, with the common goal to explore ways of developing the urban futures. Despite side events, social gatherings, and informal get togethers, two days were packed with a variety of presentations, discussions and comments, leading to one of the most diverse but simultaneously most focused discussions about the current and upcoming trends of urban planning and development in Africa, and the World. The Urban Age Conference was organised by The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), and the Alfred Herrhausen Gesellschaft in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa; the Ministry of Urban Development of Addis Ababa; EiABC, University of Addis Ababa; Forum for Social Studies, Addis Ababa; and the Ethiopian Civil Service University.

As Ricky Burdett, Professor of Urban Studies, LSE, and Director, LSE Cities and Urban Age, highlighted in the introduction, the conference focused partially on the African but also included various inputs from other places around the world. The objective was not to say that something is either bad or good, but to show that urban challenges are different but at the same time quite similar, and many things can be learned from each other – despite geographical, political, or temporal differences.

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# 1 | AFRICA'S CORE CHALLENGES

The first session aimed at framing the conference's topic by highlighting some of Africa's principal challenges. The panel was chaired by Joachim Fritz, Head of Department Governance and Conflict, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ, German Society for International Cooperation), Germany, and Ricky Burdett, Director, LSE Cities and Urban Age

## 1.1 Mpho Parks Tau – Governing Urban Change

Mpho Parks Tau, President of the UCLG, Barcelona and Mayor of Johannesburg (2011-16) started the conference with a reference to two previous events – the Africities Summit in Marrakech and the Africa Invest Forum. The main topics of those, but also of the Urban Age conference, centred around investment, housing, infrastructure, and technology, as well as the interplay of them. Two major statements were that power and governance are dispersed, happening always between the formal and informal. Investment and creating platforms for collaboration are central in the urban realm. At the same time, Tau highlighted inequality of access to property is mainly felt in cities and ended with the statement that governance is collective practice, which brings together land management, basic services, mobility, among many others, and needs to be understood as a whole.

## 1.2 Edgar Pieterse – Defining African Urbanism

Edgar Pieterse, Director of the African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town, and Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow, Robert Bosch Academy, Berlin, zoomed a bit out from the particular challenges and mentioned the “confronting African Urbanism”; meaning that urbanisation is dramatic and mundane at the same time. Furthermore, he highlighted that most urbanisation occurs nowadays in smaller centres, and that urban growth not only need to be seen at the national level, but also from a trans-border perspective; with many urban areas forming functional entities despite its administrative delineation. Furthermore, he emphasised the emergent policy nexus between an infrastructure deficit, the growth and employment imperative, as well as sustainability, with structural transformation being the centrepiece of the interconnected elements of present urbanisation patterns.

## 1.3 Abebaw Alemayehu – Africa's Economic Potential

Afterwards, Abebaw Alemayehu, Senior Urban Development Specialist at the World Bank in Addis Ababa, discussed the importance of GDP growth, the access thereof, and the strong link to urbanisation. One of the major challenges for economic prosperity seems to be the fact that African cities are costly. Households and firms lack investment; are crowded and disconnected and develop as disconnected fragments. He therefore argues, that African cities must “open [their] doors to the world” and create credible institutions to govern transfers of land, banks, Infrastructure, and take care of the gap with the land market.

## 1.4 Alcinda Honwana – Challenges for Young Africa / How to involve the Youth?

Lastly, Alcinda Honwana, the Inter-Regional Adviser on Social Development Policy, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), focused on the challenges of the African Youth, starting with some numbers. Currently, around 430 M Africans are between 15 and 35 years old, with the predictions of 263 M lacking their economic stake by 2025. Despite the current challenges, by 2050 the young population is expected to nearly double to 830 M. This transitional period of life, accompanied by endless challenges, she terms as “Waithood”, the prolonged and difficult transition from being a child to becoming an adult. The majority of the current youth lacks opportunities and is marginalised in various ways. However, the next generation is not waiting, neither unorganised or without agency. Instead, many become entrepreneurs, organise activities, and are becoming actors in the political spheres. Instead of waiting for adulthood, they are still trying to be heard, to survive and prosper, but are often excluded from the institutional and economic system. Referring to some recent developments in Mozambique and South Africa, she highlights the urgency to develop new models, which are however difficult to reach. Another term she introduces are the “Youthmen”, a term from Sierra Leone describing the population under 35, which is still not grown to adulthood. Additional to the age, gender continues to play another significant role. While the education of females on average improves, getting married and having children are still perceived as the predominant steps to adulthood. The same phenomenon as “Waithood” or “Youthmen” is known in South Africa as the frequently used terms of “Just getting by” or “making do”. As simplified and complexity-reducing these terms sound, the implied meaning is far from it. In this long and transitional

phase, many come up with creative solutions, coping strategies and inventions. Some are turning towards or utilising the creative sectors through art, blogs, new media or technology, other turn towards searching for “sugar-mommies” and “sugar-daddies”, or drift towards crime and smuggling. She highlights the limited access to politics and free speech as one of the major barriers of a progressive development. However, through paying attention to art, music, and social media, one can start understanding their struggle; which seems to be a fundamental new element of identity, agency, as well as global or cross-continental sharing and collaboration.

## 1.5 Discussion

In the discussion, some of the key challenges are brought up (by whom? Video needed). Three types of urbanism are mentioned: 1) High-end urbanism (ex. La Gare, Addis Ababa); 2) Bottom-up (good) urbanism); and 3) Activism. While there seems to be no perspective of what a robust solution can be, an important statement highlights that neither of these three types by itself is able to solve everything. Instead, they need to go along and benefit from each other. An issue, further complicated through the problem, that often reforms (e.g. of the land markets) attract and allow for the wrong kind of capital and speculations. Additionally, a few critiques are presented, supported by the central anticipated outcomes of diversity and complexity, which should mainly get reached through meaningful work, ecological regeneration, spatial justice, and cultural fulfilment. And these can only be achieved if a societal strong democracy is in place. Along those lines, various times the need for an African Vision was emphasised. A vision which steers developments into a common direction.

Based upon the four presentations and the discussion, a few summarising statements were made. The first is the access to financing structures – who can how access what types of financing? Related to that arises the question what money generally will be invested in and who decides so? A central element could be city managers, which, however, also heavily rely on their political, institutional, and societal environment. Pieterse finished the session on a more positive note, highlighting that transparency as a start can lead towards more accountability, and therefore create better environments.

## 2 | URBAN GROWTH, PRODUCTIVITY AND INNOVATION

The second session zoomed in to the economic perspective of growing cities and ways to get there. Chaired by Geci Karuri-Sebina, Associate at the South African Cities Network, Johannesburg, and Edgar Pieterse, Director of the African Centre for Cities, University of Cape Town and Richard von Weizsäcker Fellow, Robert Bosch Academy, Berlin, the panel was constituted of a variety of stakeholders who work in the urban field and looked at the economic growth challenge from different angles.

### 2.1 J. Vernon Henderson – Building Productive and liveable Cities

J. Vernon Henderson, School Professor of Economic Geography (LSE) started with a framing presentation about building productive and liveable cities? Asking the fundamental question of what a city can do? Firstly, he highlighted two overall different types of African cities – traditional and modern cities. Traditional cities being those who act as regional centres and still have a predominant rural-urban character and function more as administrative and agricultural trading centres. The latter focus more on services, technology, provision of education and global businesses. While some cities are already more focusing on the latter (e.g., Kigali), nearly all are a combination of both, and most are in a transitional period. This being a crucial ingredient of the broader environment, the question is how to make cities competitive? A number of elements Henderson mentioned are the available skills, education, training in technology, however partly limited by the existing high degree of informality, enforced through the poor access to capital and restricting regulations of accessing the formal sector. Another fundamental element is the transport sector and the access to markets, with rails, ports, and highways being crucial for strong economies. Lastly, he brings up the Chinese investments – a highly prominent and controversial topic during the conference – which always need to be balanced between the accumulated debt versus the need and desire to build, e.g., infrastructure.

A second central limitation is the economic density which Henderson sees as absolutely critical. First, it is needed to lead to positive externalities, but is made more difficult through the urban-rural divide, which emphasise the differences between the less and more economically dense settlements as well as the impacts on the economic prosperity. Therefore, he asks how economic density can be achieved or strengthened. The central elements for him are the internal city transport, as well as building density, which according to Henderson require to build high. However, to achieve this private property rights need to be

enabling for this (many property right laws do currently not allow for different owners of vertical stacked property), dealing with the risk of expropriation, and ensuring the financing and insurance. The aspect of liveability also requires a functional transport system and housing stock, which are critical for productivity. However, the associated housing market can lead to more inequality. Many "slums" are situated on prime and highly valued land in the inner cities; one which the residents mostly cannot guarantee and therefore are often resettled or even simply removed. Regardless of housing programmes being public or private, this often leads to further densification of existing "slums" or new formal housing in the peripheral areas which have lower land prices but lead to decreased access to the economic centres of the city and employment, as well as decreasing the economic density which pre-existed.

## **2.2 Kate Meagher**

Kate Meagher, Associate Professor in Development Studies at the LSE, commented first, highlighting the importance of considering the informal economy, but also the role of new technology. A problem of the formal sector is, that it often "cherry-picks lucrative niches of the informal system" and leaves many behind. She emphasises, that the majority, 77%, of the economy of the non-agrarian sector are not integrated in the formal sector and leave a huge portion of the population being employed in the mainly unregulated working environment.

## **2.3 Emanuel Admassu**

Emanuel Admassu, Founding Partner of AD-WO, and Assistant Professor at the Rhode Island School of Design extends on the discussion of the informal sector, and argues, that the smaller scale businesses and its market places are the best predictors of the future. He provides the example of the Mercato, the main market in Addis Ababa, which is largely build upon the concept collective ownership where several business owners come together to combine and improve their stores and replace the previous small-store structures. However, Admassu also highlights that the settlements are still highly fragmented due to the colonial African/Asian/European division, leading to various types of segregation. Many previously residential places are now transformed to storage because its higher potential revenue, leading to a change of the functional urban patterns. Therefore, he argues that it is the most important to understand the existing and executed ownership systems and providing more possibilities for leverage.

## **2.4 Abdellah Mallek**

Abdellah Mallek, who founded Sylabs in Algiers, works in the field of enabling tech-based entrepreneurship. His main argument is that the potential of technology in business goes much further than just using social media and websites. Instead, or mostly additionally, it can create more value. The central aspect of Sylabs which relates to the urban development is their emphasis on the location, which is constituted of accessibility (e.g., the location in downtown), the available transport, as well as an inclusionary approach.

## **2.5 Bikhado D Ofungi**

Ofungi, an investor at Dero Capital, Kampala, criticises the "consumerist dominance of capital investment" which currently rules most investments in Africa. For him, this is no long-term solution. It should be less about consumption and more towards production. However, that requires more enabling environments and a different approach. Ofungi mentions for example the consideration of pension funds, as well as the strengthening of vocational training. Furthermore, he stresses the importance to balance the attractiveness between FDI and local capital; always considering the informal economy, a better distinction between the ability to produce versus the ability to consume in order to create more productive urban economies.

## **2.6 Irene Sun**

Irene Sun, an Author and Associate Partner at McKinsey & Company, Washington DC, looks at aspects of Chinese investments and presents the findings of various large-scale studies thereof. First, she emphasises that it is the fastest growing and already biggest investor in Africa, with one third of the companies in manufacturing, and the impact of modernisation (50% of manufacturing firms introduced new products; one third new technologies). Additionally, she highlights that Chinese investment constitutes the largest financing of infrastructure and brings up the topic of the special economic areas, which arose in Africa mainly in the last decade and provide particular tax and regulatory benefits for foreign investment. However, while Sun argues that they are incredibly mixed, there are more failures, and no long-term success or effects on global economies; leading to the necessity to question their role in Africa's economic future.

## 2.7 Brenda Katwesigye

Brenda Katwesigye, the Founder and CEP of WAZI Vision, Kampala, works in the recycling or upcycling sector. WAZI Vision works on a small scale and collects and recycles mainly plastics, and produces, e.g., frames for glasses but also interlocking blocks. She criticises that most local investments do not understand their ideas and do not see the potential, and that therefore most of her capital comes from outside Uganda. While some governmental institutions see opportunities for legacy businesses, she argues that they do not listen to new ideas.

## 2.8 Philipp Misselwitz

Zooming again out to the global investment scale, Philipp Misselwitz, Chair of International Urbanism and Design, Habitat Unit of TU Berlin, asks if the existing structures and assumption in regard to FDI are still valid? He mentions the example of Addis Ababa being the new location of textile companies. However, there is a major company which moved first from Turkey to Addis Ababa to save money. However, now they are moving again to Burkina Faso, due to the rising wages in Addis Ababa. He is worried about this kind of "impatient capital" and "predatory behaviour" which is leaving a fragile and highly subsidised system behind, which is not really anchored in the city or economic systems and leaves significant gaps behind. Misselwitz instead asks for more local resource-based actions. These shall be achieved by creating more density for particular parts of the population in exterior enclaves far outside; in the satellite cities. He suggests an urban pattern of polycentric cities (following the European paradigm); and to work more with the cities instead of creating even more external and unrealistic visions.

## 2.9 Discussion

After this variety of perspectives and scales in contemplating the possible answer how urban growth can be accompanied by economic prosperity, the discussion started with the question on what the speakers would suggest for driving an innovation-driven economy? What would enable a better governance and policy environment? Should it move towards more activities with and in the informal sector, or more in the city than outside? What could be specific enabling actions?

First Admassu criticised the lack of imagination; with stakeholders always resorting to the same pie charts. In his view, too many invisible structures exist. The first step would be to come up with a more robust language to develop a common vision and structure, and simultaneously steer further in the direction of more collective ownership.

Ofungi highlighted that education is key. In the past (and present) the focus was always on the quantitative approach, providing education to as many people as possible. However, there should be a stronger focus on the quality of education; a system which is not only built for "checking the boxes". He criticises, that there is still a huge need to import skills, but that there is the necessity of creating new entrepreneurial potential by combination the public and private sector and using, e.g., institutions like universities as key stakeholders in this process.

Katwesigye supports the need for better technology-related and manufacturing skills. Furthermore, she stresses the importance of dealing also with intrinsic challenges and incorporate local characteristics more strongly. She argues, that just copy-pasting (ex. cable car of Columbia) is not a solution for everything and that the change must be come from within and with suitable solutions.

Sun disagrees with the previous call for more high-quality education and sees the other way around as the more promising approach: There should be first industries which can employ undereducated population, "plugging-in in the productive systems", and through that allow the next generation to be more formally education. She also criticises the strong emphasis on technology as the solution for everything. Instead, she calls for "innovation with a small i", the "unsexy forms of innovation", making the economies more productive and efficient; but do not always require "fancy technology".

Pieterse suggests combining the special economic zones with poly-centric urbanism; and asks if the Chinese approach can be transformed into a model for Africa?

Meagher argues against a too strong impact of the Chinese involvement in the economic system: "People coming from schools do not want to be simple workers in special zones", instead they want to move to higher-level education (e.g., in the technology and innovation-sector, and more formalised systems). On the other hand, there is the group of highly skilled informal sector workers with all kind of skills who want to work in the manufacturing sector. And their integration should be further supported instead replacing it

or simply prioritising new technologies and innovation. Meagher asks for "not just flashy start-ups" because they do not employ large parts of the unemployed section. More specific about China, she agrees that it has a big role, but sees a big problem in Chinese companies replacing the small-scale businesses, a phenomenon happening across nearly all African countries. She ends her comment with the strong statement that "it is clear that China has a strong plan for Africa, but it is critical that Africa has a clear plan for China." A comment which receives a lot of support from the audience.

Sun responds by asking how manufacturing systems are built? Where did they move over the last two centuries? It requires having a cheap labour-force plus foreign investment, knowing how to run it. And Africa is far from being a frontier in productivity. The existing structures are generally not competitive for export. A better labour pool is needed, but also requires a "sea of investments". In her opinion the question is, if Africa can compete with other areas of interest for Chinese investments? 95% of workers in Chinese factories in Africa are currently local; but how can enabling circumstances be ensured which allow for a second wave of investment?

Karuri-Sebina ends the panel with an adaptation of the previous question from Meagher: "Maybe Africa first needs a plan for itself?"

### 3 | PLANNING FUNDAMENTALS

In the third session, chaired by Susan Parnell from the Global Challenges Chair at University of Bristol, and Emeritus Professor at the University of Cape Town, and Rahul Mehrotra, Principal, RMA Architects, Mumbai, and Professor of Urban Design and Planning at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, a variety of planners, politicians and academics came together to discuss global urban challenges and what fundamental planning approaches and policies can assist in tackling them.

#### 3.1 Jean-Louis Missika

Jean-Louis Missika, the Deputy Mayor of Paris, France, started with a brief overview of Paris' planning challenges and the developments which mostly influenced its urban development. He focused on the negative impact of the ring road, which acts still today as a historical and psychological barrier, leads to increased inner-city pollution, and is bordered by social housing. An example for its importance is the price difference between both sides, with the inner part being up to twice as high as on the other side. Additionally, Missika provides a quick overview of different plans and developments which largely influenced Paris. Starting with the Haussmann Plan, the "grand ensembles" of Corbusier in the outskirts, Habitation à bon marché, and the newer, but typical red brick housing. Various movements of different types which all influenced the architectural identity of Paris and form today an integral part.

Furthermore, he mentioned the strong inequality between East and West, with significant differences between the incomes of its residents. In order to minimise these differences, he present three strategies which they are using: 1) Raising the share of social housing by mixing social and private housing; 2) Giving incentives to create private projects of general interest, which is achieved e.g., through the fact that the "rule changed for who get lands, not the highest bidder but the best projects", supported further by "reinventer.paris", a competition for 23 locations searching for innovative, architectural solutions, with locations ranging from "anti-sites to existing buildings" and including a broad diversity of functions. 3) The last strategy is to create commons for all, which was, however, not detailed further.

#### 3.2 Alejandro Echeverri

Alejandro Echeverri, Director of the URBAM Center for urban and environmental studies of the Universidad EAFIT, Medellín, provided some insights from another context, where violence was (and still is) one of the most defining challenges. Despite (and due to) the violence, strong patterns of social segregation exist, which are in the case of Medellín further strengthened by the topography of its environment. Echeverri highlights some of the solutions and approaches, focusing mainly on the political environment. He emphasises that politics need to change and create more opportunities. Additionally, there need to be more transparency, partnership, and a stronger focus on the capacity of the people.

#### 3.3 Hyungmin Pai

Another and again quite different perspective is provided Hyungmin Pai, Professor of Architecture at the University of Seoul. He describes Seoul as being between plan and project, with a systematic culture of bureaucracy. A different set is also arising due to Seoul's demographic characteristics. The population is



large at about 10 million, mainly stable but slightly shrinking, but most importantly growing old. This development asks for different plans and requires shifting the focus. However, Pai argues that planning in Seoul is mainly defined by large scale projects, not land use plans or other planning instruments, just lately extended by some cases of “urban acupuncture”.

### **3.4 Fasil Giorghis**

Bringing the focus back to the location of the conference, Fasil Giorghis, the Chair of Conservation of Urban & Architectural Heritage from the EiABC, Addis Ababa University, focused on how Addis Ababa is struggling to preserve the vibrancy of its multi-layered street life. He started with Addis Ababa’s multi-centricity with the former camps, and everything built on hills, with its three central nodes of the palace, market (merkato), and railway station. During the Italian occupation, Mussolini wanted to locate “hundreds of thousands of Italians to exploit the fertile lands”, and initiated a new rigid grid, leading towards a masterplan which was superimposed on the organic, existing city. Furthermore, Giorghis highlighted that the rigid structures stayed and can still be seen today, and eventually lead to a mixed, but also segregated city. Lastly, he talks about Addis Ababa’s grand housing project which started in 2005, which was by far the biggest so far and included the renewal of slum areas, densification against the horizontal expansion, and lead to the creation of hundreds of jobs. However, Giorghis wants to put a stronger emphasis on the heritage, conserving the remaining history, which does not only include the preservation of architecture but also of the multi-layered inclusive buildings which are particular to Addis Ababa.

### **3.5 Christian Benimana**

Christian Benimana, the Principal and Managing Director of the MASS Design Group and Director, African Design Centre in Kigali, starts similar to his previous speakers with a historical perspective. However, in his case of Kigali a quite particular one. The city was founded in 1907 founded and 65 years later handed over to the local government but was completely changed and destroyed through the 1994 genocide. Despite the dark history, since then Rwanda quintupled its GDP in 25 years and aims at becoming a middle-income country by 2050, and even more attractive for public and private investors as it is already today. To achieve that, the City of Kigali developed a masterplan (which Benimana is not very fond of) and its Vision 2050, which is constituted of a political, social, and economic agenda. The political dimension mainly focuses on further restoring the country’s and capital’s credibility and make Kigali act as a manifestation of the country's identity: “Kigali is more than the genocide” and “can be a better place for the world”. Economically, they want to attract more global investments and expand the consumer market, while the social perspective focuses on fostering a more integrated city. In order to achieve this, the masterplan is supplemented by sub-area plans (5 smaller structural plans), and a variety of smaller scale ambitions. These include car-free days, expanding the pedestrian access, and creating a clean city. The main goal is to change the perspective of what an African city is. While there is also a national policy of urbanisation, the local ownership is still emerging in Kigali and can be similarly seen in many African cities. Benimana argues, that the upcoming generation of Kigali residents offers an opportunity to develop a unique urban identity for African cities and make Kigali a lighthouse city for African cities.

### **3.6 Discussion**

Mehrotra starts the rather short discussion highlighting the great diversity and variety of best practices and approaches to urban challenges of the presenter’s cities. To sum up the main points, the speakers highlight the central functional approaches which work in their cities. Giorghis starts with the “making of cities” in between the discussion of densification versus high-rise urbanism. Furthermore, he mentions that more contractors are able to build the small-scale buildings, contributing towards a more equal and distributed job creation. In his opinion, jobs and the city should always be seen together as they heavily influence each other. Echeverri focuses instead mainly on governance as the key element, mentioning patronage as an old model which shouldn’t be in the centre anymore. Furthermore, he asks how politics can be changed and highlights that sometimes conflicts can lead to new solutions, and that individuals can and should have an impact. Lastly, Benimana finishes the session with raising the difficulty of physically manifesting societal values and structures in spatial ways. He asks, what tools can be used and what processes can work, highlighting the insufficiency of a master plan by itself.

## 4 | DELIVERING HOUSING FOR ALL

Highlighted as one of the major challenges in urban development in the previous sessions, the first day ends with the question how housing can be provided. Chaired by Ricky Burdett, the Director of LSE Cities and Urban Age, and Tau Tavengwa, Co-Founder & Editor at Cityscapes Magazine, Cape Town and Visiting Associate, LSE Cities, seven scholars present the struggles and strategies from their countries and cities.

### 4.1 Gautam Bhan

Gautam Bhan, Lead of Academics and Research at the Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Bangalore, starts with the framing presentation. He highlights, that a solution for housing cannot be found through the government alone, but by focusing on governance instead. Additionally, he states that housing is always a process, and that the ones who actually build are mostly not “sitting at the table” where the strategies are made. Furthermore, it is important to build in alignment with people’s growth – incremental housing – and shift from talking about units only, but housing. Housing requires much more than simply providing a physical space. There needs to be tenure security (not necessarily through titles), provision of services, and an access to the city. In regard to the accessibility, Bhan further states that the decision of houses should be based on the economic potential (access to job market) and not the quality of housing.

A transition he sees in India in regard to the role of cities in people’s lives, is the change of perception and identification with urbanism. Several years ago, nobody “was from a city”. Instead, the home was always located where the origin, or the family came from originally. Concluding, Bhan asks for more differentiated perspectives. For example, upgrading is not always good, or vertical urbanisation always bad, but it is about a good combination of them. He ends with repeating that houses do not equal housing and conceptualises housing as a combination of 1) Affordability (cost within reach), 2) Adequacy (Secure Tenure, Access to Services, Adequate Dwelling Unit), and 3) Viability (Proximity to Livelihoods, Mixed Use, Accessibility to Transport).

### 4.2 Jose Castillo

The second presentation, held by Jose Castillo, Principal of a911, Mexico City, described Mexico City’s past and current housing strategies. Castillo starts highlighted the high level of urbanisation in Mexico (76.5 %) and the sheer population size Mexico City itself, with today around 21.1 M. However, the population was in 1950 like it is in Addis Ababa today. He therefore states, that there are many things which can be learnt from the mistakes Mexico did in the past 6 decades in regard to housing.

His starting point is the importance of finding an answer to what should be done with the urban poor, the forgotten ones. Many of them were, and are, living in informal settlements, with Tlatelolco, Ciudad Neza, being the paradigm of informality in Mexico. To cope with this, affordable housing schemes were set up, which however characterised “housing as institutionalised finance”. In the beginning, the regulations lead to problems, which caused a reregulation in Mexico. This, however, started the transitions towards “massive” housing projects with more built houses and more focus on ownership, but at the same time lead to large peripheral expansions. On the long term, many buildings were abandoned, private companies went bankrupt. This development, combined with increasing spatial needs of the residents, resulted in an on-going massive spatial expansion which is faster than the population growth itself.

However, since 2012 the direction in Mexico City changed from massive housing to more quality and urban relevance. Perimeters (polygons) were defined, where no financial support is available outside of these boundaries. Furthermore, the program “one more room” started which assists in the process of self-building, collects best practices, informs the housing production ecosystems, connects stakeholders, and lastly improves housing estate.

He ends with five “possible lessons for African cities”: It is crucial to redefine what housing in cities means on an individual basis. Furthermore, differentiation of, e.g., scale, typology and material, matters. Castillo also states that affordability goes beyond housing ownership, and that it should not be seen separately but combined in an expanded urban agenda, which includes mobility, economic development, etc. Lastly, he asks for more “leapfrogging” – there is a grammar of success and failures and African cities should not repeat mistakes made by many other countries and cities before.

### 4.3 Kecia Rust

Kecia Rust, the Executive Director and Founder of the Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa, Johannesburg, gives the last presentation about the relation of housing and finance.

She starts with a quote of Bertrand Renaud that “cities are built the way they are financed” (1984), and extends the point by highlighting the various types of finance which are part of the housing challenge. These range from construction and mortgage finance, household savings, or subsidies from the government. While there are many types already existing, the anticipated outcome is mostly not reached. Rust blames mainly the poor targeting and the insufficient scale. The capacity for building in bigger scales is limited, and the existing finance structures and developers cannot work in sufficiently large scales to keep up with the housing demand. Additionally, another question is who delivers, maintains, manages, and what market is targeted with the projects, which she considers not sufficiently planned. Lastly, Rust criticises the current housing pragmatics, which for example do not enable the existing entrepreneurial flair of housing provision, where the small-scale landlordism is often the dominant supplier of affordable accommodation.

Concluding, she argues that solving the housing issue relies mostly on a functional value chain, where not every segment should be grouped together but seen as separate issues to solve. The seven main constituents are 1) Land assembly/Acquisition; 2) Title/tenure; 3) Built Infrastructure; 4) House construction; 5) Sales & Transfer; 6) Maintenance & ongoing improvements; 7) Social and economic infrastructure. To emphasise the potential of innovation along the value chain, she highlights a variety of African examples, e.g., the progressive land adjustment strategies in Maputo, blockchain registration approaches in Ghana, private and public partnerships and utilising pension capital (highlighted as dangerous approach) to support infrastructure delivery in Zimbabwe, to mobile platform for connecting and enabling larger scale projects in various countries, guarantees to allow lending to informal entities in Morocco, the platform iBuild which connects investors, builders, and owners. In Khayelitsha, one of the largest and in the past most underserved settlements outside Cape Town, the combination of many innovations of different aspects initiated the transformation from a simply residential area in the hinterland towards a centre in itself with continuously increasing services and economic activities within. Burdett commented her talk with an adaptation of the famous statement “Form follows Function” to “Form follows Money”, while Bhan highlighted, that self-built housing should not be romanticised and is just one part of a solution

### 4.4 Elias Yitbarek Alemayehu

In the second part of the session on mass housing models, Elias Yitbarek Alemayehu, Architect and Urban Planner, EiABC, Addis Ababa University, starts with describing the current situation of Addis Ababa, its grand housing scheme, the lessons learnt, and what comes next. Generally, the most typical form is the Kebele housing, which is informally built and often includes home-based enterprises and is mainly in the central urban areas. Additionally, there is the peripheral, semi-rural informal housing, which can be seen as a transitional zone between the agriculture-based rural typology and the service-and employment-based pattern of the city. However, a large housing deficit existed (and still exists) which lead to the grand housing scheme, which is part of a larger plan to renew Addis Ababa’s core, upgrade existing areas, and build new houses in the peripheral areas. Through the program, 250,000 units were already built, housing more than 800,000 people. These units can be accessed through a lottery-system, and have different financing systems (10/90, 20/80, 40/60; individual saved/contribution by Ethiopian bank). However, the major problems are that 40 % of the population can still not afford the units, there is no financial sustainability of the program itself, and a significant targeting mismatch. In order to solve the housing challenges, Alemayehu states that it should “Housing for all, but also by all”, and that there needs to be a “housing ladder”, where instead of moving directly from Kebele to IHDP, various smaller steps and improvements are more goal-orientated and would allow more people to improve their situation of housing.

### 4.5 Belinda Yuen

Moving from several cities which still have a big task in front of them, Belinda Yuen, Professional Fellow and Research Director, Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities, Singapore University of Technology and Design, tells the success story of Singapore in providing housing in an immense scale. She starts with highlighting that more than 90% of Singaporeans live in high-rise buildings, and 80% in public housing. However, in 1959, more than 50% were still living in slums, in conditions which was stated as a “disgrace to civilised community” (British Housing Report 1947). In the 1960s after the independence, the emphasis was first on quantity in order to create as many buildings in the shortest time and with the lowest cost possible. In the following decade, more comprehensive planning followed, including new towns and more

detailed neighbourhood planning. In the 1990s these were further extended by focusing on the identity, creating unique spaces and design more with the nature. Today, the Singaporean program wants to fulfil three central needs: On the one hand, the housing demand must be met, while at the same time minimising the required land and still create high-quality spaces. Furthermore, it is not only about housing but includes the provision of a range of services and builds upon a total living concept “Live-work-play-learn” with only about 50% of the space is housing. This ambition is achieved by limiting the standard walking distances to maximum 400 m, early integrating the land use and transport planning, and creating two level of transport hubs/nodes with a focus on the convenience and comfort, mostly for the first and last mile.

For Yuen, some additional procedural elements are crucial, like the clear and open regulations for eligibility, and systems for rental assistance if the household does not have sufficient income. However, Singapore faced also a variety of challenges during the process. One was to understand the different people who moved into the projects, which lead to various studies to make the buildings suit the needs of the residents better. Mostly in the early phases, many times animals were kept in buildings or people were scared of looking down due to the heights, which required time to adjust but also finding solutions for them to keep people in the buildings. Yuen therefore emphasises the importance of research and development, with researchers being always involved in the process. She ends her presentation with five things, cities could learn from Singapore: 1) Setting a clear vision, objectives and policies; 2) setting the institutional, legal, financial framework; 3) starting long-term planning; 4) Starting from the people and their needs; and 5) starting from the fundamental issue and then refine it over time.

#### **4.6 Asif Hasan**

Asif Hasan, the Director of the Urban Resource Centre in Karachi, starts with the huge housing backlog in Pakistan, with “more money needed than in any way possible” to collect. He questions the current definition of the meaning of housing and its backlog and argues that “if we redefine the factors that constitute the backlog, it will be considerably reduced”, which will in return lead to a very different housing policy. Currently, backlog is considered as houses built from temporary materials, which however can become permanent, or houses without a kitchen or sanitation, which can be changed as well. Therefore, the definition needs to change, and security of tenure should be provided to all households, which would allow for different kind of approaches and upgrading of the existing housing stock. Furthermore, the policies should be more locally specific, distinguishing between formally and informally grown areas. The formal shall be densified, while the informal should be regularised, advised, and upgraded. The very few areas which cannot be upgraded, are actually a part of the backlog and need to be relocated. Additionally, loans and technical advice for improvements must be made accessible. According to Hasan, the most important ingredient of his proposal is the creation of social units that can provide technical assistance and managerial guidance to self-help house improvement and to informal developers; a process in which the universities can be the key stakeholders.

#### **4.7 Joseph Muturi**

Joseph Muturi, the National Coordinator of the Kenyan Slum Dwellers Federation; and the Coordinator for East and West Africa of SDI (Slum Dwellers International), started the third part of the panel about community-led initiatives as third part of panel. Starting with the context of Kenya, where 56% are living in informal settlements, he talks about the aim to provide improved services and housing while keeping the population in the same location, as well as some incremental housing upgrades he worked on. For example, his work ensured that 10,000 people did not need to be relocated as part of a project which created a safer area along the railways in Nairobi. Muturi mentions the quote of Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi which says that “A new narrative is needed for African cities that is not romantic but realistic”, and argues, that a paradigm shift from housing as an economic good to housing as a social good is needed. Local agency and community led practices, especially cooperatives and in-situ upgrading, must be recognised as one possible approach, and flexible urban planning frameworks are needed, accommodating local exigencies and realities. Furthermore, housing shall be made by all. While this was previously an often-romanticised idea where with some saving schemes and everyone can build their own house, this is not always true for everyone. In Muturi’s opinion, special planning areas need to be declared, which allow for new types of planning. Another central challenge he highlights is the “poverty penalty”, which is the high cost of living in unfortunate environments (e.g., residents without formal tenure, pay more money to bribe schools to accept their children despite the missing address). He focuses on eight thematic area which are fundamental in providing a better livelihood: Health, housing, sanitation, legality, environment, education, finance/economy, coordination/communication/community participation. Ending the presentation, the question how the

community can be mobilised arises. Some of his approaches are the recruitment of the community at cluster level, household level training on data collection, numbering and mapping to improve the inclusive planning process, training of skills for a better representation, as well as the formation of cells in the community to create more agency.

#### **4.8 Taibat Lawanson**

Lastly, Taibat Lawanson, Associate Professor of Urban Planning at the University of Lagos, talks about the housing challenge (housing deficit of 3 M) in Lagos, which is in his perspective not limited to the urban poor, but impedes the lives of many. For Lawanson, the availability, affordability, accessibility, and quality (69% informal in Lagos) are crucial, as well as better catering for the contextualised needs. He argues that the housing market targets mainly the medium and high-income groups, mentioning the project of the Eko Atlantic City, Lagos, with prices of 710,000 \$ for a two-bedroom-apartment, which he comments with “The plan is beautiful, the new city is good, but who are they for? Where are normal people going to sleep tonight?” Despite the wrong targeting, a collective approach in the housing challenge is central for him.

## **5 | TRANSPORT TRANSITIONS & TECHNOLOGY**

The first session on Friday, 30 November 2018, is chaired by Elleni Ashebir, Cities and Urban Mobility Manager, WRI Africa, Addis Ababa, and Philipp Rode, Co-Director of the Executive MSc in Cities, LSE and Executive Director, LSE Cities and Urban Age, and discusses the transitions in transport and the role of technology within. They introduce the panel by highlighting that there is a significant movement towards using more technology, with new and disruptive forms of transport approaches coming up. In order to better understand the present and future of transport planning in Africa, the panel consists of three parts. It starts with “Transit Futures and Infrastructure”, followed by “Popular Transit”, and rounds off with “Virtual Platforms and Real Cities”.

#### **5.1 Ladi Lawanson**

The first section is initiated by Ladi Lawanson, Honourable Commissioner for Transportation of the Lagos State Government. He introduces the case of Lagos, with around 23 million inhabitants and a continuous fast growth and strong migration patterns. In order to cope with the growth, the Lagos Strategic Transport Master Plan exists, focusing on the construction of rails, bus reforms, and introducing water-based transport to reduce the pressure on the road-infrastructure. The main argument for the latter is according to Lawanson mainly the necessity to diversify the means of transport, and to accept that there is no general solution for each urban area. Instead, the particularities of cities need to be taken into consideration. In the case of Lagos, with having one of the biggest ports, with already a significant amount of cargo and passenger traffic on the water, he sees it as a logical next step. The already ongoing implementation concentrates on in-land water-based transport solutions, the building of eight ferry terminals, and usage of 30 jetties, as well as investment in the third “super-structural element” – a vessel.

#### **5.2 Solomon Kidane**

Salomon Kidane, the Deputy Mayor of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, gives a brief overview of the transport situation of the host city. Currently, the main transport means are about 54% walking, 31% public transport, 15% car-based. Their goal is to increase the public transport to 54% while keeping the car-use to 15% for car and creating a sustainable modal share. The main objective is to avoid more people switching to using an individual car but providing attractive public transport instead. To achieve this, it shall become more reliable, accessible, affordable, comfortable and safe for its users. In order to fulfil their goal, the city is moving in six strategic directions: Infrastructure development, supply, capacity development, sustained finance, coordination, partnership. Lastly, Kidane brings up self-driving vehicles as another part of the solution, without further defining how.

#### **5.3 Discussion “Transit Futures and Infrastructure”**

In the first round of discussion, Missika pleads for more space for people than cars, to avoid making the same mistake as Paris did in the past. Furthermore, it is highlighted to not simply replace existing systems (minibus) but integrate them, e.g., for the last mile approach. Possibly in hindsight to the self-driving car section, it is argued that “not everything that is shiny is good”, generally referencing to the easily overstated role of solving large scale problems simply through the use technology. Responding to the question why the LRT of Addis Ababa did not appear in the presentation, Kidane criticises that it is not build in an adapted

way and has faced problems with its infrastructure, the continuous provision of electricity (which can be a problem in Addis Ababa), as well as that it is not used at full capacity. One bus company has, for example, 300 buses and transports 160,000 passengers per day, while the LRT moves around 150,000 people per day. The LRT however had an investment of \$13 for each \$1 which the bus system costed. He therefore states that building buses and using them is “more Ethiopian”, and importantly, can be operated and maintained in-house instead of depending on other countries or international companies. Lawsonson comments on the issue of working with the existing systems by highlighting that if they would not be working with the unions in Lagos, “they slash the tires”. Therefore, full inclusion is crucial and so far successful in Lagos – while driver-less options are according to him not a solution in Lagos at all.

#### **5.4 Jacqueline M. Klopp**

Jacqueline M. Klopp, a Research Scholar at the Center for Sustainable Urban Development, Earth Institute, Columbia University, New York, discusses the “Future of popular Transport in African Cities”. She uses the word popular instead of informal due to intensive planning and structure which makes it work so well. However, she highlights the urgent need to solve the transportation situation, as it already contributes significantly to the pollution of air, car crashes being the “no. 1 killer”; combined with extensive congestion, rising obesity to the car-dependencies, higher vulnerability to climate change, and growing GHG emissions due to the import of dirty cars from the Western world. She presents an accessibility study of Digital Matatus, where many minibuses were fitted with GPS-trackers and extensive information were generated which can be used for variety of studies or projects (Campell, Rising, Klopp 2019). Concluding, she argues that transport must be safe, convenient, and friendly. Existing systems must either be displaced and replaced or embraced, engaged, innovated and improved and utilised to move towards multimodal mobility as a service.

#### **5.5 Justin Coetzee**

Justin Coetzee, the Founder of GoMetro and flxrides.com, Cape Town, SA, presents his manifesto which starts with the underlying problem of the of the space of the city which is necessary of moving, parking, and other related activities of cars. Secondly, the single occupancy is highly inefficient, and the existing demand is not responded to, with many approaches at the “wrong time, wrong place”. Also, better skills and better funding is crucial to implement the much-needed mass transit systems. Lastly, he criticises the current vulnerability of the users, partly due to the lack of enforcement strategies. Minibus companies are often involved in criminal activities (e.g., smuggling) and lead to dangerous situations for the passengers, while mostly women are harassed on a daily basis. He therefore asks, how African cities can transition – and provides his answer with “Flexibility Mobility (– an African Innovation)”. He argues, that a flexible mobility scheme can work with limited parking, accelerate the shared and electric vehicles, respond better to the unmet demand, build mass transit with more sustainable funding models, and lastly protect users by means of regulation and enforcement. In order to achieve this, he highlights three crucial elements: Measuring, Modelling, and Managing. Measuring refers to better understanding the infrastructure (supply, demand, and temporal). Modelling shall distinguish and close missing linkages or unserved nodes, and allowing for an optimal supply, with new business models and adapted operating contracts. Lastly, the managing shall work through three different technological approaches: A driver app, ride-share engine at the centre, and a rider app. He ends his manifesto by emphasising that it should be more worked with the “indigenous systems”, while it is simultaneously “time to open up the black box of mobility and technology in Africa”.

#### **5.6 Kate Meagher**

Kate Meagher, Associate Professor in Development Studies at the LSE, has a much more critical perspective on some of the new approaches for transportation and presents a research about the actual inclusivity of transport and the labour markets in Lagos. She argues that there is a mismatch between the digital allure and the actual needs of African cities and employment systems. While she agrees on the need to modernise, she argues that it needs to go along with quality job creation and creating accessible transport. In her view, the “digital taxis” often bypass existing labour laws and taxi registration, commercial transport taxes, and do not appear in the public statistic. In regard to modernising, she found that 70% of the vehicles were over 12 years old and therefore contributing largely to the pollution. Furthermore, Meagher highlighted the limited job creation. In four years, three companies created only 7,330 new jobs in two cities, and often undermine other jobs. Additionally, many of these new jobs generate low incomes due to hidden costs, and many drivers without cars who need to pay rent which is not considered in the numbers of the companies. She found, that in Lagos half of the drivers barely earn the minimum wage despite working

long hours with 60-80 hours per week. Meagher further questions the “dignity of work”, where 59% of the enumerated drivers were university graduates and see driving as a low activity, while the new forms devalues the occupational skills of commercial drivers (e.g., knowing the streets). In some cases, it can also exacerbate existing social tensions; for example, in case of the northern resistance in Nigeria, or the xenophobia in South Africa. She finishes her presentation with calling for more engagement with the local transport strategies and creating low cost mass transport solutions and not only for the elite. Instead of local taxis being replaced, they should be upgraded, and digital taxi firms should create higher value jobs which are higher up the value chain and pay taxes like their traditional competitors.

### **5.7 Discussion “Popular Transit”**

In the discussion, Kidane reacts to the previous speakers by highlighting that in Addis Ababa, they are not fighting minibuses but try to replace them through the market by creating more larger buses. Furthermore, he sees no chance to regularise them as they already tried to embrace them through various tax benefits and created loans for importing bigger buses. However, none of these attempts worked as the minibus system is in comparison to many other African cities too individualistic and therefore difficult to work with. In Lagos, Lawanson stated, they attempt to improve the transport with a focus on creating jobs. To do so, he, for example, went to South Africa and asked boat builders to train people from Nigeria and move the work there. Additionally, he emphasises the need for more skills and stronger vocational trainings, because “not everyone can be an LSE-professor”.

### **5.8 Jean-Louis Missika**

Jean-Louis Missika, Deputy Mayor of Paris, France, described a few of the actions Paris undertook in the transport sector. Firstly, they are focusing mostly on concepts of shared mobility by creating apps for hailing taxis, introducing shared bikes and allow for more electric car-sharing service. However, he also sees new challenges with digital mobility platforms arising. In Paris for example, Uber drivers are often waiting for passengers in the most densely populated places, further congesting the public space, and many bikes and other shared vehicles being left behind in public space. Missika sees the main challenge as transitioning from car ownership towards the freedom of mobility. Today, there are cars and plenty related inconveniences, while tomorrow there should be ultimate freedom with a variety of services worldwide. Exemplary, moving to increasingly high-end subscription services allow already to replace the individual car ownership. In order to make the markets evolve, Missika sees the crucial role of local government to create good market environments and keep open ecosystems but no “winner takes it all” environments. Mobility should be handled as a service, with a variety of apps, which leads towards a competition of various transportation providers.

### **5.9 Yolisa Kani**

As the last speaker, Yolisa Kani, Head of Public Policy for Uber Southern Africa, Johannesburg, has the task to react to the variety of critics towards Uber and other digital taxi companies. She provides a quick overview of the history of Uber in South Africa, which started in 2013 and operates today in eight cities of South Africa with over 679,000 active monthly riders, over 12,000 active monthly partner-drivers, and a total number of 82 nationalities who already used Uber in SA. She argues, that Uber’s users are not the people who are using normal taxis but those who normally have their own cars. Furthermore, they have several projects in place, which try to benefit the public interest. For example, they reduced the arrival time of Ubers in Soweto from 20 to 5 minutes to avoid an unequal service distribution according to income levels, have many female drivers and riders as part of their "Driving towards Equality" strategy and invest in a variety of research projects and make their data accessible online (which is however barely used). However, Kani criticises three elements of proposed policy changes in South Africa; namely punitive provisions, vehicle markings and area restrictions. While Uber is willing to comply to them, all of them come currently with limitations which make them hinderances in an economic development of the transport sector in South Africa. One example she gives is the marking of vehicles. Uber could mark the vehicles of their drivers in any possible colour, however, as long as it is not ensured from the government, that the drivers will not be at risk due to the hesitation of, e.g., minibus drivers, Uber does not want to undergo the risks and request the responsible institutions to rethink their strategies in a more comprehensive manner.

### **5.10 Discussion “Virtual Platforms and Real Cities”**

In the short discussion of the “virtual platforms and real cities”, a variety of topics is mentioned, like the importance of the equality and role of women and how new forms of transport could embrace them.

Meagher summarises her critical point of view by saying that “cities need to use technology, not technology using cities”, and to be integrate, not only disrupt the current system. Furthermore, new forms of transport need to be part of tax systems, statistics, and registrations. Klopp highlights the potential of crowd-sourced data, while Kani argues that the governments have the responsibility to solve upcoming issues. Uber just operates on a market and creates convenient alternatives for people who do not have access to public transport. Lastly, Ashebir highlights, that there should be a shift towards more attention of the secondary cities which were completely left out in the previous discussions and are mostly for revenue-driven companies not interesting.

An element which the audience did not hear anything about was the integration with other sectors of the city and planning. What about, e.g., trying to change the transport patterns by creating more availability of services and jobs close by, what about working against injustice by serving different sections differently? What about integrated land-use and infrastructure planning approaches? While it should be an important topic and was disappointing to not hear even once, mostly on a conference where various stakeholders come together, it just clearly demonstrates the reality of planning culture where different sectors are still seen as independent endeavours.

## 6 | ETHIOPIAN'S URBAN TRANSFORMATION

In the sixth session, chaired by Fasil Gioghis, the Chair of Conversation of Urban & Architectural Heritage, EiABC, Addis Ababa University and Philipp Rode, Co-Director of the Executive Msc in Cities, LSE, and Executive Director, LSE Cities and Urban Age, the focus is laid on the host city Addis Ababa and its urban transformation.

### 6.1 Tazer Gebreegziabher

Tazer Gebreegziabher, State Minister for Urban Development and Housing, Government of Ethiopia, starts by presenting the current urban vision of Ethiopia. They are aiming at creating economically productive, socially inclusive, and environmentally sustainable cities. The instrumental set-up to achieve this is a national urban development scheme, local development plans and urban design plans, which is currently implemented for 12 cities in Ethiopia. Main drivers for the selection of these are the presence of new and large commercial farms and agro-businesses, on-going mega projects, large infrastructure investments, the location of major universities, and the expansion of tourism. Furthermore, the 12 cities and their clusters should have balanced regional development with strong potential and present drivers, strong linkages to the rural hinterlands, and act as a counterbalance to Addis Ababa. The capital itself shall develop as a polycentric urban pattern. Concluding, Gebreegziabher emphasises the importance to mobilise financing, create a new system of coordination at the national and local scale, invest more in capacity building, and create new urban planning tools.

### 6.2 Zegeye Cherenet

Zegeye Cherenet, Assistant Professor at EiABC, Addis Ababa University, starts with the localised disaster loops which he sees as one of the major challenges. There is a multiplicity of challenges which influence each other and result in a vicious cycle which is difficult but necessary to break. Elements of these are the rapid population growth, environmental challenges, regional and local political uncertainties, and economic opportunities and uncertainties, which exist local and globally. The question he poses is if urbanisation can break the disaster loop? He concludes that the reality demands cities to be envisioned as places for environmental rehabilitation and opportunities for livelihood production, by building certainties within the global economic uncertainties, and highlights the importance to grow with “spatial quality and justice worthy of human dignity”.

### 6.3 Dieter Läßle

Dieter Läßle, Emeritus Professor from the HafenCity University, Hamburg, highlights the importance to think on a global scale. How can a farmer become an urban trader? To allow for better transitions and more variety, he calls for a stronger focus on secondary cities and regional centres, and of including the substantial agricultural livelihood of people. Furthermore, approaches need to be more innovative and create new livelihood strategies in rural areas to reduce rural-urban migration. Läßle also warns from a “premature deindustrialisation” where industries decline, and a dramatic lack of employments arises. The key question for him is how the lack of employment can be faced. A strategy for this should be a “multi-tier national development strategy which leads towards a deep transformation of mass production to network



production” and does not only follow World Bank requirements or recommendations. He ends his statement with economic development being more than “cheap labour and mass production” which is an outdated strategy, already proven to fail or decline globally.

#### **6.4 Patrick Lamson-Hall**

Patrick Lamson-Hall, Research Scholar in the Urban Expansion Program at the NYU Marron Institute of Urban Management, New York, focuses mainly on the public sector. However, the public sector is heavily limited through the low enforcement capacity in informal settlements and the lack of functional subsidy programs (e.g., in building finance). Considering the pace of growth, there will be a fivefold increase in size of the urban areas in Ethiopia over the next 35 years, with the land consumption per capita continuously increasing. Lamson-Hall argues that the public sector cannot be involved in creating all these buildings, instead the public sector needs to create enabling environment. He quotes the head of the Marron Institute who says, “If they let them come, they will build it”. Furthermore, he supports the necessary increase of focus on secondary cities, with better core public services, provision for infrastructure, and identification of the environment, public spaces and protection thereof.

Gebremedhin, one of the following speakers, comments that the scale is highly important and that the government does not understand the complexity. This has the result, that if plans are made without this understanding, plans can even become counterproductive.

#### **6.5 Dereje Fekadu**

Dereje Fekadu, the Planning Commissioner of Addis Ababa, gives a brief overview of what the city has planned for Addis Ababa, starting with the meaning of Addis Ababa – *the new flower*. Therefore, it has to become green, clean and attractive again, and allow for a future where people want to live, work and enjoy. Furthermore, it must become globally attractive and bring paradigm shift. Fekadu argues, that Addis Ababa’s planning has big implications for national development. Some of the main objectives are to increase the green area coverage, to develop a polycentric city and create mass transit systems (by integrating TOD) and provide adorable and standard housing in mixed-use areas through the involvement of public private partnerships. Another crucial element is the improvement of the waste management system, focusing at approaches at the household level and increased recycling. The creation of mass transit must act as a backbone, connecting the main centre with the sub centres. Additionally, the creation of jobs is crucial, by “investing on the minds” and supporting entrepreneurship. Fekadu highlights the need to focus on indigenous knowledge and enhance the chances also for people without a formal education. He ends his presentation with a highly questionable statement in which he says that “in our recent urban development programs like that of La Gare we build humanity through the project”.

Giorghis comments on the presented plans, that the implementation of ideas and master plans are mostly the problem, giving the example of the local development plans which were mainly not implemented.

#### **6.6 Rahel Shawl**

Rahel Shawl, the Founder and Managing Director, RAAS Architects, Addis Ababa, starts her presentation with a more personal perception of Addis Ababa, highlighting the existing fragility and tension between old and new. She further criticises that there is no control of the urban fabric and that she is “breathless on the fastness of the growth”. Instead of providing answer, she asks a range of questions which are crucial for the urban future of Addis Ababa: “How are we building our buildings? How do we transform our cities? How to include human scale?” Shawl calls the current implementation poor and unfit for environment and calls for a stronger focus on traditions and scale in public spaces. When talking about a liveable city, she asks how it can be built, how can it be inclusive, and involve excellence (which existed in the past). She ends her presentation by questioning the role of the architect – only a bystander, or part of change and of the participatory progress? A statement she further extends by asking where currently the participation of the people and community is?

#### **6.7 Betelehem Demissie Shibeshi**

Betelehem Demissie Shibeshi, Spatial Plan Preparation Director at the Addis Ababa City Government Plan Commission, starts with the fact that plans might not be perfect, but they are there, probably implying the need to work with them. He also emphasises the need to densify which however does not necessarily need to happen through high-rise buildings. For him “housing is different to making a house” and that “seeing people walking up 9 floors with jerry cans is not providing housing”. Coming back to the existing plans, he

says that walkability, the provision of facilities (e.g., public toilets which do not exist) are in the plans but lack in the implementation. Shibeshi says that "there is a major disconnect, a lack of continuity" and that a shared vision for the long-term made by everyone is missing; extending it by the fact that "every time politics changes, we start anew". To tackle this, he argues for the need of a better understanding of the context instead of copy-pasting and looking at the details of what works and what does not and where the opportunities are for Addis Ababa. Furthermore, better data needed: If there is no clear land registry in place it is difficult to plan. Clean data management and open access, build upon automated processes, is needed. According to him, this fundamental system must work before large scale planning can take place. He supports his last statement by raising the point that correct figures are needed and there needs to be one answer to the question of "how many people are actually living in Addis?" – a question which currently results in a multiplicity of strongly varying answers.

## **6.8 Maheder Gebremedhin**

As the last speaker of the panel, Maheder Gebremedhin, Principal at Yema Architecture, and Radio Host, Kebet Eske Ketema, Addis Ababa, zooms a bit more out and raises some procedural challenges and responsibilities. He starts by asking "where we are?" and that the learning curve takes a long time and that by the time the leaders are educated, they are relocated. He extends by saying that there are a "lot of elephants in the room, a herd" – a statement which gets a highly positive feedback from the audience – and that there are various discrepancies which need to be considered. For example, the educated and the un-educated, or the urban and the rural. He agrees on the earlier made need to have a shared vision, which for him needs to be a plan for all (including the Italians, French, UK, Chinese, Arup, etc.). In the case of the current masterplan, some people support it, some do not, but there is no discussion. This leads him to the question who owns the city – the government or the people? Referring to Honwana's opening talk about the "Waithood", he argues instead there is "Youth-Tsunami" and movements which are impossible to foresee or plan for, e.g., the rise from two to 56 million mobile users over just a few years. Gebremedhin ends his comment by asking how knowledge can be transferred, and if the scale of these challenges are possible to understand at all? Without trying to be comprehensive, he suggests starting with the land management and with people and society.

## **6.9 Discussion**

The discussion is more an addition of various points from the audience and the speakers. A lecturer and architect from Nairobi highlights that the urban and the rural are not two disconnected entities and build upon strong bonds to the history, while a lecturer of Torino, complaints about the build typologies and monofunctionality, together with the loss of African heritage in new housing programs. Cherenet, criticises that informality is not mentioned in the masterplans. The chief resilience officer from Lagos ends the panel with an energetic comment that Lagos is "famously chaotic, our gift to the world" but that the real strength is the social capital and that this should not get lost! He sees a strong sense of order in Ethiopia which needs to stay but be discussed. Referring to the book "How China Escaped the Poverty Trap" by Yuen Yuen Ang, he raises that China challenged the rules, and Africa needs to do that as well. The current rules were not made in Africa; therefore, they need to be challenged and new ones made.

# **7 | FINANCING URBAN FUTURES**

After nearly all aforementioned challenges came back to the issue of lacking capital, the second-last session intended to explore financing strategies and ways. Chaired by Ricky Burdett, Director, LSE Cities and Urban Age, and Astrid Haas, Senior Country Economist (Cities), Cities that Work, IGC, Kampala, the session starts with the quote that "nobody wants to pay taxes, but everyone wants services".

## **7.1 Babatunde Fashola**

Babatunde Fashola, Minister for Power, Housing and Works, Government of Nigeria (previously the governor of Lagos), starts his presentation with highlighting that there is a lot of money in the informal sector which is however not recognised. They commissioned a study which resulted that only 30% of capital is recognisable, with similar numbers across Africa with about 20-40%. Also, small and medium firms are not in the financial frameworks and cannot access the finance system. He sees a strong importance to create a synergy between these two separate, parallel financing systems of formality and informality. The task at hand is to find a way of accessing and designing a strategy therefore. In the case of Lagos, the economy must move from the dependency on oil towards a diversification on other sectors. To achieve this, the

national strategy prioritises the upgrading of national infrastructure, mainly of highways and rails. Additionally, he sees a strong pressure for housing but does not know where it is the most urgent as the “data is faulty”. He argues that housing in rural areas is not a problem, and in urban areas everywhere is significant vacant housing stock; and that housing is therefore not only about building new houses. Fashola argues that housing needs to be looked at across the value chain of products, including for example the building materials and possibilities of local sourcing. He then goes over to discussing the transition of the public financing system in Lagos, where they managed over a few years to increase the number of registered taxpayers from 500,000 to 5.4 million. Fashola further talks about other types of funding and highlights that borrowing should always be used to invest and not to consume, with a focus on infrastructure. In Nigeria the government also experienced with Sukuk, an Islamic alternative to conventional bonds. In the beginning, it caused a lot of dissent, however in the end none of the six geopolitical areas of Nigeria, which it was equally divided into, did not want the money. He also sees debt-financing still as a significant form of financing, which is however needed. On the other hand, there are different ways of financing, e.g., through leveraging, tax credit advance, or better targeting the income tax of companies and involve them in development projects. Currently, a bridge is built over the Niger delta, where half of money comes from one company, which benefits as their contribution is fully tax deductible. In the past, it was only possible that individual companies with enough profit after tax can contribute to these kinds of projects, but the regulations now changed so that smaller companies can get involved through cooperatives as well.

Coming back to housing, he says housing is mostly a municipal problem as most of the land is owned by the local governmental institutions. However, Nigeria also has a national pilot housing scheme, which tries to eradicate the problems which arose in earlier programs with little acceptance of the population and a significant vacant housing stock. Therefore, the current scheme includes a household study and tries to find the best way how it can be built, which needs to be different in different states. Then there needs to be proof of the concept, it must be validated and then can be scaled up. Furthermore, Nigeria is opening a national mortgage bank. Coming back to investment on the national level, the main areas of new investments are in developing new grids to access power, bring the meter manufacturing and installation to Nigeria and enable for licensing and entrepreneurial projects as part of the project.

## **7.2 Jennifer Semakula-Musisi**

Jennifer Semakula-Musisi, Executive Director of the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), Uganda, tells the story of the capital of Kampala and how its administration changed since it gained its current administrative status. Kampala has at the moment a resident population of around 2 M, and a 4.5 M day population, with a contiguously high urban growth rate of 5.2 %. Furthermore, Kampala is responsible for 60% of Uganda's GDP and 77% of the national taxes. Until 2010 it was a municipal administration but was transformed into the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), which introduced a new governance structure with an overall oversight by the Minister of Kampala and Metropolitan Affairs, and the technical wing headed by the Executive Director, while the political wing is headed by the Mayor. When Semakula-Musisi started as the Executive Director in 2011, she inherited a city revenue system which was fraught with many gaps and inefficiencies. It was a highly inefficient manual system, with cash-handling (prone to misuse), absence of a functional revenue register, multiple revenue billing/collection centres, operated 151 bank accounts, had a poor legislation in place to support revenue mobilisation, as well as poor enforcement and field collection/vigilance. A system of accounts where there were around 50 billion shillings nobody knew about. In order to replace the inefficient system, an electronic revenue collection and management system was introduced; a robust computer-based system with the objective of modernising and enhancing revenue collection in the city. It enables clients to pay from anywhere, also through mobile money, at the ATM, or through bank transfers. Furthermore, it eliminated the cash collection, allowed for improved assessments and a better billing and financial accountability. It reduced the number of bank accounts from 151 account to 8. The engagement of citizen was also encouraged, along with the voluntary compliance along with increased citizen validation. One project which is currently undergoing to improve the collection of property taxes and registration, is the property revaluation and definition of city-wide addresses (CAM & CAM-V). This property valuation is expected to increase the overall revenues by over 35%. Concluding, through all their efforts, Kampala was accorded with a credit rating of A in the long term and A1 in the short term by World Bank. The successfully implemented several public financial management reforms, and increased the tax revenue by nearly 200%. Also, the perception of the KCCA changed; Semakula-Musisi argues that today it is a trusted brand with an excellent financial management system in place and it continues to attract sponsorships from a number of development partners and private investors. However, there are still some challenges. She criticises the absence of enabling laws for new initiatives, and political interference in the

revenue collection initiatives. Finally, she argues that “we must therefore re-think our financing strategies and develop innovative, flexible and sustainable ways of raising revenues in our quest to develop SMART cities.”

### **7.3 Discussion**

In the first discussion, Haas asked what some of the major problems and challenges are. In the case of Kampala, Semakula-Musisi sees mainly the fact that central and local governments make decisions, while the KCCA plans and makes strategies which are based on revenue streams coming in. In order for policies to enhance revenues, those policies need to get approved by governmental institutions, which makes some initiatives impossible, due to the importance of societal support and popularity for the politicians.

Babatunde questions that taxes cannot be popular. He argues, that they can be made popular, at least among the general public by showing what the money did and focusing a lot of communication; “These books are not free, your tax bought them”.

### **7.4 Nyah Zebong**

Nyah Zebong, Project Leader at the African Tax Initiative, International Centre for Tax and Development, Yaoundé, Cameroon, came from the national tax office to the organisation and can therefore provide an interesting insight from two different perspectives. His presentation focused on sources, challenges and reforms for local governments, which importance he highlights through the huge need of better public service provision. He argues that all elements, from collection, to expenditure to the taxpayer’s perception need to be reformed and that the overall revenue collection at the moment is far below its potential. He sees a growing focus on more classic local government taxes (e.g., property tax) and that many forms of small nuisance taxes can be abolished. In his view, tax system should generate revenue effectively, efficient, and fair, and that tax systems should ensure that revenues are translated into public benefits. Currently, there are weak links between revenue raising and public benefits, which can lead to public discontent. Instead, there is the opportunity that through strengthening taxation an opportunity for citizens to engage with the governments can be offered, further increasing the accountability.

To get there, Zebong sees the main challenge in implementing an effective Local Government Revenue Management System, which is needed to the high levels of complexity between taxes, levies, charges, and the weak implementation capacity for complex laws. Furthermore, it can counteract the high levels of corruption. Another problem he sees is the limited space for public engagement and the weak links between revenues and spending, leading to tax being perceived as an unjust extraction. He calls for a general agenda for the necessary reforms, and highlights again the significant untapped revenue potential, and the need to eliminate small things, simplify the processes and connect taxes better to their benefits.

After Zebong’s presentation, Haas poses the question how the challenges for municipalities in order to borrow can be overcome. One speaker highlights the necessity to have a solid revenue base to be able to access funds, which requires to have a good credit rating first. He sees three crucial areas: 1) Investing in infrastructure that addresses aging infrastructure; 2) Building a city for the future which is responding to urban development pressures, and 3) to ensure access for people who had historically no access. Babatunde comments, that attention needs to be paid to smaller scale consequences of finance, because states cannot access international markets and large grants without federal support or change rates. Instead, they can just collect as much as possible.

### **7.6 Samih Sawiris**

Samih Sawiris, chairman of Orascom Development Holding GA, Switzerland and Cairo, Egypt, provides insights in the private sector perspective which was so often mentioned as the solution for many problems. He starts with talking about a 5% additional tax after the Arab Spring which only applies to people who pay high taxes. Simultaneously, they collected projects from all places and priced them, and let the people decide which one should be implemented. Sawiris highlights, that not one rich person contested it and it even became part of many CSR strategies. He argues, that if you let people be part of the projects and strategies, you can tap into large sums of capital.

A second story he presents is from Senegal, where the president gave him the land of a “slum”, under the precondition that the residents need to stay, and he uses a system which slowly upgrades and replaces the buildings in a higher density with people in the end paying rent, as well as being recognised and formalised. In the end, highly valuable land in the central areas is left which makes it interesting for the

developers. He argues, that this can work in every “horizontal slum”. However, the problem is that there are too many beneficiaries of slums. There are people involved in all services in the informal sector, which makes it difficult to upgrade them. He ends by arguing that one is “not helping the poor by taking their side”, and that other approaches can often be more successful and in the end better for the people.

Semakula-Musisi reacts to the simplified solution proposal of Sawiris by highlighting that for example in Kampala, there are six different types of land hold and that the government owns very little and pays a lot of compensation. The government mainly owns the environmental protection areas. Sawiris disagrees and says that there are many ways to solve this – for example by compensating people before presenting the new plans – which Semakula-Musisi directly counteracts by highlighting the complex governmental valuation system which is entrenched by corruption, and that “people know about projects” regardless of how it is done.

### **7.7 Tsedeke Yihunie Woldu**

Tsedeke Yihunie Woldu, the Founder of Flintstones Engineering, Addis Ababa, starts with saying that he “feels very out of place” and asks how LSE and AHG be associated with something more immoral than urbanism, which is according to him “where most evil happens”. He further continues with a “social construct of what urbanism is, which is built “on crusade on avoiding cruelty of urbanism” and the immoral coming out of the social construct of urbanism. He further states that quick and posh buildings like La Gare lead to “more evil coming soon”. He ends his criticism by stating that “if you want to make money out of the poor” one needs the leverage of the government. Instead, in order to make it legal and less immoral, it needs to be “grounded in the productivity of the people you want to cram into high-rise buildings”.

### **7.8 Summary**

Astrid Haas tried to sum up the rather complex chapter by focusing on five statements and questions:

1. Finance is needed for the cities which are there and will come;
2. The money is there, “it’s around the corner”,
3. But it needs to be unleashed; it is not figured out yet how to unlock;
4. We need to remember that the solution is part of a threat;
5. And when we think about unleashing the finance, we need to consider the dwellers.

## **8 | THE INCLUSIVE CITY**

The last session, chaired by Jo Beall, Director Cultural Engagement, British Council and Professional Research Fellow, LSE, and Gautam Bhan, Lead, Academics and Research, Indian Institute for Human Settlements, Bangalore, discusses the inclusive city and has a variety of panellists which look at the question from very diverse perspectives.

### **8.1 Rahul Mehrotra**

Rahul Mehrotra, Principal of RMA Architects, Mumbai and Professor of Urban Design and Planning, Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, highlights a few issues, including the development and “migration” of the deep democracy and its implications for the governance of cities. Furthermore, he calls out the “walled world” with the informal, 73% of the economy, being left out. Mehrotra sees architecture and the urban as a form of impatient capital, where a lot of damage is already done. He also sees a controversy between “The City as Big Architecture” versus “The City as Socio-economic Planning”, or in other words “Modernism versus the Socio-economic landscape”.

He ends his presentation with three thoughts. First, he sees the Absolute versus Transitions. While it looks compelling, absolute is not the answer. However, the question is how to design transitions. He uses Medellin as an example which allowed for transition and joined the city through the reimagining of transport and mobility pattern. Furthermore, he says architecture comes last, and there needs to be a “pluralism of morphed multiplicity” which couples design and contestation. To end his first thought, Mehrotra asks what kind of planning regime can accept this and how the political sphere can be brought into it. His second thought is about “Flux” and how to represent and plan for it. He criticises that many professionals are between outcome and progress-orientated, and that there needs to be a balance. In times of the “massive scale of urbanisation” more transitory approaches are needed. Why are urbanists focused on permanence? The last thing, building upon the idea of Flux, is the “Temporality”. He explains

this by the metaphor of the thermometer against the thermostat. One only measures – the other one adapts. And he believes, that planners need to be both to be able to deal with today's urban challenges.

## **8.2 Omar Nagati**

Omar Nagati, Founding Partner of CLUSTER (Cairo Lab for Urban Studies, Training and Environmental Research) talks about the research work his institution does about Cairo's contested grounds and negotiated design inclusions. In his view, the city is made from many contractions, mainly between how it represents itself and how the majority sees it, with strong issues of segregation, inequality, various transition patterns, and a spectrum of formal and informal transportation patterns. A contradiction between the reality and the vision. In 2011 the city's population protests against this vision in an urban revolution? An event, where the loud and spectacular clash with the silent. At that point, the state became powerless, which is the reason why they started analysing how the society organises itself by analysing the flux before the order was restored. In the moment of the highest vulnerability of the state, a multiplicity of formal and informal structures and new modes of practice evolved. CLUSTER attempts to document these informal patterns in order to develop tools. These are for example how the street vendors occupy sidewalks, and new demarcation of the public and private arise. Nagati argues that in Western world there is a clear distinction between "black and white", while in Cairo it's a variety of shades of grey. He therefore used street vendors to understand how the informal city is organised on larger scale? Cairo's downtown passageways can act as spaces of mediation and negotiation, where however no participation takes places and top-town planning prevails. To counteract this, he proposes new tools of participation which reimagines the city through back alleys; from the inside out. CLUSTER designed streetscape interventions to reach a more inclusive approach which includes all stakeholders and ask what they would want. Based upon those findings, they developed a design brief based on actions which takes place in the negotiable middle ground. Furthermore, they set up a committee for maintenance with one representative of each building, combined with the organisation of events. It led to a space which became highly accepted and continuously used and activated. He ends with asking what the new architects should be trained for – becoming a facilitator or a negotiator? For him, it is a political question of the role and ways the processes between the state and community can be managed.

Bhan comments with the strong prevalence of pluralities and refers to Vanessa Watson's idea of violence becoming a sign of democratisation. He adds, that social change always has friction and the challenge is how to deal this fraction; through patience, incrementality, time, or thinking about mechanism which slow things down?

## **8.3 Mohammed Adjei Sowah**

Shifting towards to political perspectives, Mohammed Adjei Sowah, the Mayor of Accra, Ghana, says that politics do not have the time to deal with many challenges as they would want to due to the short political cycles. For him, delivering inclusivity with a focus on the young population and informal are key. However, politics sees informality often as nuisance due to, e.g., aggravated tax collection. He asks how "do we marry these two issues?" In Accra, the socio-economic classification prevails between the old and central, between high, middle, and low-income neighbourhoods. He highlights, that the poor always go along with the high, because rich people need the poor people close by to work for them. For him, Accra has two sides; the "formal and fancy" and the informal. The problem lies in of both ways' recognitions. He therefore attempts to build blocks of social capital with a policy focus on delivering inclusivity by answering a range of question: Who are we? Where do we live? What work do we do? What are our means of recreation? What is the level of social and economic security, the level of security, or the level of community engagement and public engagement? How to improve the mobility and accessibility? He Sowah concludes that there are four areas to measure success: 1) By conduction social research on a systemic scale, 2) by setting up data systems for institutional collaboration, 3) by reducing the size and effect of the "underground economy", and 4) by covering and connecting economic and social services.

## **8.4 Ulrich Hoerning**

Ulrich Hoerning, Deputy Mayor of Leipzig, Germany, the sister city of Addis Ababa, tells about the unique transitional path of Leipzig and its inclusive growth model, which moved from decline to growth. Leipzig became the fastest growing city in Germany with a liberal openness deeply enrooted in its culture. Due to the scale of challenges which the city faced in the beginning, he says it is important to focus on small issues with a large possible impact, e.g., on corners. Currently, they are in the process of implementing the integrated urban development concept 2015/2017, which consists of many workshops and led to a broad

acceptance instead of preceding attempts. Over four months' work and participation processes, with new ideas like the Leipzig Lego Club building developed scenarios, or randomised invitations to "oversample young women to counteract domination of white old men with too much time on their hands" they moved closer to achieving the vision for Leipzig 2030. A vision, which focuses on sustainability and social inclusion. A number of interventions were determined: 1) Maintaining certain areas with guardian houses, by paying non-profit activate them; 2) creating green spaces in mixed use brown/field sites; and 3) allowing for new ownership models in the shrinking city, following the idea of "Leipziger Freiheit" (Leipzig's Freedom) However, new challenges continue to emerge in regard to affordability and availability of housing, gentrification, and many debates and demonstrations. Additionally, some problems still exist, which however are "great problems to have": The difficult to have mixed-use in multifunctional public buildings or overlay multiple uses vertically or the difficult sectoral laws which are crucial for projects which are on a larger scale. In Leipzig's current comprehensive social policy with the main objective to counteract the social problems, poverty, and provide better services for the disabled, the Agenda focuses on building new schools, creating more density and free space and 65,000 new jobs in digitisation.

### **8.5 Erion Veliaj**

The third perspective from the political sphere is from the Mayor of Tirana, Albania, Erion Veliaj, who starts his presentation with claiming that the "most difficult infrastructure is only 10 cm" and that what they are doing is "more trystorming than brainstorming". He first provides an overview over Tirana – "A place beyond Belief" – which grew from 200,000 to 1 M in only 25 years and is ridden by "casino capitalism". In the process of economic growth, the car became the new status symbol. He asks if a society where everyone has a car should be aspired or one where even the rich use public transport. For him, the most important thing in life, his focus groups, are children. Veliaj argues, that the money should go where the children are and highlights, that people spent 30% of their income on their car and only 20% on children – despite stating their prioritisation of their children. With that, he come back to the "10 cm infrastructure" – the brain – which is filled with stereotypes which are hard to break. He attempts to trigger this change by experimenting with projects like one car free day. Due to the great feedback from the children they started to do it once a month, and then even more often, creating a change of the mentality over the long term. Furthermore, he emphasises the goal of "creating things out of the ordinary". Veliaj wanted to plant two million trees but did not have the money to do so. He asks if politics is only about the next election or also next generation? If 100,000 children are all planting only one tree over a couple of years, a lot becomes possible – something which happens in Tirana and is "becoming cool". He further asks why people put trash on the street? His answer is that people do not belong and need roots to the place they live in. Another project of embracing cycling got reactions like "Albanians don't bike, we are not Dutch". In response he argues that "we are not anything before we become it" and used kids again as the drivers of change. Furthermore, he argues that "schools are not only places where kids are parked 6 hours a day" and wonders in the case of Addis Ababa, where all the kids are?! In order to further increase the importance of children and the identification with the city and use thereof, he had the idea to create the Grand Lake Park and build the largest playground in Balkans. In the process of 100 days of building, 78 protests arose which questioned why the money is spent on a non-needed playground. However, after completion, Veliaj sees that there is a "Daily Referendum" – the usage of the park by people of all ages. A process accompanied with more transitions of prejudices. He talked about people saying, "we don't do yoga, we aren't gay", but now more and more people trying new things in the public spaces. He ends his energetic story by highlighting the importance of urban acupuncture. If there is no money for the whole city, one can touch a nerve. And "if you touch enough nerves, you can make the whole body tweak".

### **8.6 Yeraswork Admassie**

The last comment comes from Yeraswork Admassie, the Executive Director of the Forum for Social Studies, Addis Ababa, who keeps it short and only highlights that "change is not always good" and "development not always smooth". He criticises that in today's cities many values are getting lost, mostly from the social networks, which leads to losing the previously existent inclusivity, the societal interdependencies, up to the point where one does not know the neighbours anymore.