

8. Conclusions and Summary of Recommendations

The rating of individual projects – in terms of relevance, efficacy and efficiency – has been covered earlier in the discussion of the two main areas of focus (4.2 and 4.3). This leaves a summing up of the assessment of the work programme activities of the CA. Before that, however, we need to assess the relationship of slum upgrading and CDS to the final purpose of the CA.

8.1 Ultimate Aim

In the three years of existence, the CA has made substantial advances in achieving its objectives at a world level. Relative to its central purpose:

“unprecedented improvements in the living conditions of the urban poor and the socio economic and environmental viability of cities”.

The Cities without Slums campaign is indeed relevant to the first aim, and has achieved great publicity at a world level. It is highly relevant and has been efficacious in achieving a change in the climate of world opinion. However, it is not so clear that CDS is equally relevant since it is composed of many different kinds of exercise. To a greater or lesser extent, all CDSs have focussed on urban poverty, but with great variation in the levels of analytical knowledge of the city’s poor, and of the relevance and precision of different forms of public intervention. It is not clear that the more focussed approach of the World Bank’s City Poverty Strategy might not be more appropriate. On the other hand, the CDS may improve the ‘viability of cities’, but as we have seen there is great variation in each CDS application to these questions. Some CDSs make no serious analysis of the city’s economy; some lack any environmental component.

In sum, if we leave out of account any suggestion of the final impact of either programme, Cities without Slums should be highly rated¹³ in terms of relevance to changing the climate of world opinion on the question of slums. Without a proper evaluation of the complete range of CDS, the relevance of CDS to proposing the means to secure “the socio economic and environmental viability” of cities may, depending on the particular CDS, be substantial to modest (and in some cases, perhaps negligible). In terms of efficacy, the Cities without Slums programme should be rated high in terms of influencing world opinion, although it is far too early to speculate about its ultimate impact. This effectiveness has been achieved at relatively small effort in terms of Secretariat and CG inputs. By contrast, the short-term effectiveness (leaving aside the medium-term) of the CDS, depending upon the particular case, still needs to be assessed, and that assessment would in turn suggest the cost and opportunity cost involved.

8.2 The Objectives

How does the CA’s activity relate to the four central objectives¹⁴?

- i) “to improve the quality of urban development co-operation and urban lending”.
The ‘quality of urban lending’ is a performance target that it would be premature to assess here. However, as we have seen, members of the CG have indeed been increasingly co-operative and the World Bank is in the process of scaling-up its urban

¹³ The text employs the World Bank’s qualitative evaluation rating – high, substantial, modest, negligible.

¹⁴ These are included in the Terms of Reference for this study – see Annex VI.

lending, particularly in the two areas of interest prioritised by the CA. Outside the range of the CG, there are much fewer signs of change, particularly in private sector lending, although considerable efforts have gone into seeking to mobilise micro financing schemes. In sum, actions by the CA in relationship to increased co-operation within the CG have been substantially relevant, modestly effective so far and relatively efficient. Outside this range, the achievements are at this early date modest to negligible.

- ii) “to strengthen the impact of grant-funded urban development co-operation”.
As we have seen, actions of the CA have stimulated the development of an increasing number of donor collaborations in the field of urban aid. In some cases this has included in-country collaboration. However, the alignments of urban development programmes have been modest so far, and this is hardly surprising given the lags between changing government opinion and expenditure commitments. The potential of the CG’s relationship to LGAs has not been optimised. Thus, at this early date, the relevance of CA actions for the direct collaboration of donors is between substantial and modest, but the achievement of an alignment of programmes is negligible. The impact of these collaborations and whether they are strengthened has still to be seen, so the efficiency with which they have been achieved cannot be rated.
- iii) “to expand the level of resources reaching the urban poor by increasing the coherence of programmes and sharpening the focus on scaling-up successful approaches”.
The CA has had an important effect in ‘increasing coherence of programmes’ by encouraging collaboration and new collaborative initiatives; it has also begun to reorient urban development on scaling-up efforts, with some notable successes, particularly in non-core funding. Thus, the relevance of CA actions here has been high in both cases. However, it would indeed be premature to assess the efficacy of these actions since any increase in the flow of resources reaching the urban poor is still to take place.
- iv) “to provide a structured vehicle for advancing collective know how”.
The major effort to launch and sustain the basic operations of the CA – and in particular, to establish the administrative procedures governing the trust-fund and processing applications for funding – has meant that it is only in the current year that it has become possible to go beyond the development of information networks and world meetings, workshops etc. Evaluation has remained underdeveloped because so few projects have been completed, and dissemination remains also weak. The actions taken have been relevant in purpose but modest in scope. Actions outside the circle of the CG and immediate associates – for example, with the vast majority of cities themselves – have been modest to negligible. However, the actions have been substantially relevant, and many seem, on relatively superficial assessment, substantially effective in facilitating communication, exchange of best practice and mutual help to those cities involved. The cost of these initiatives has been low and their relative efficiency high. However, the tasks of evaluation – of the projects of the CA itself and the relevant ones of its partners – and of mass dissemination require a major scaling-up in the coming period if this objective is to be reached.

8.3 The Strategy

The objectives are operationalised through a three-part strategy:

- i) 'political commitment' (see the Terms of Reference, Annex IV for full details).
The actions taken by the CA to build the membership of the CG, to increase its financial resources, and to build a commitment of the CG and the wider world of urban development to its programmes, have been highly relevant, effective and efficient. However, as is to be expected at this stage, this cannot yet be seen as extending to the ultimate clientele, the major part of the world's cities and the slum dwellers. Nonetheless, the start, in such a short time, has been impressive. On the other hand, a secondary aim under this heading – to 'sustain local economic growth' within CDS – has tended, as we have seen, to be neglected, in some versions of CDS.
- ii) 'city-wide and nation-wide scales of action'.
The CA has been consistent in its stress on scaling-up in proposals for funding, and has therefore been both substantially relevant and efficacious in its actions. However, less attention seems to have been devoted to "addressing the policy, legal, regulatory" constraints to moving to scale, changing the 'enabling framework'. Local government reform ought to be a higher priority in assessing applications for funding. Actions here appear to be only modestly relevant and efficacious.
- iii) 'learning and sharing'.
As mentioned earlier, this is the area of CA work which, now that the organisation is fully operational, requires urgent attention – through the development of evaluation (of the CA's projects and those of its partners), dissemination and in-country capacity building. Actions so far have been too limited – with the exception of various databases and city web networks – to be more than modestly relevant outside the circle of the CA's immediate associates. Efficacy has therefore also been modest, but given this modest rating, the efficiency has been substantial.

We have already commented earlier on the application of the guiding principles in assessing proposals for funding. Actions here have in general been highly relevant to a focus on the urban poor and poverty eradication, to pro-poor policies and to scaling-up. There has been less action relevant to the promotion of the role of women, perhaps less support for local initiatives (a by-product of how recently the organisation has been created). Partnership between local and national governments is partially inevitable in any CA in-country initiative, but not partnerships with organisations that directly represent the poor where the record is weaker. Thus, of the six guiding principles, actions have been highly relevant and efficacious in three, modest in two others, and the sixth is divided between highly relevant and negligible.

In sum, the comparative advantage of the CA is in the process of being vindicated:

- in encouraging and facilitating the collaboration of partners in the process of drawing the lessons of urban development and extracting best practice;
- in providing a means to develop initiatives which would not be possible for ordinary donors, restricted by the need to deal exclusively with sovereign governments;
- in providing unorthodox ways to work with the poor and with NGOs in up-scaling the two priority tasks for a full attack on urban poverty;
- in creating the promise of a 'learning alliance', a point to pool experience, to evaluate and to disseminate it to all participants in urban development.

Thus, given the brief life of the CA so far since it became fully operational, this is a strong performance. Given some reorientation in the light of the experience of the first years, it seems set to grow stronger in its role. We can say on the record that, in the absence of the CA, the alerting of world opinion both to the demographic transition to a predominantly urban developing world and to the opportunity to make a serious attack on urban poverty would be significantly less; the scale of donor commitments would be much less; that the scale of collaboration – and therefore the magnification of the urban development efforts – would be less; that the mechanisms for the pooling and dissemination of experience would be inferior. Furthermore, the promise of significant action against urban poverty in the future would be considerably less as a result.