



Aleppo City Development Strategy

INTRODUCTION

The Aleppo City Development Strategy (Aleppo CDS or Madinatuna in Arabic) is an undertaking in which public, private and civil society actors in Aleppo City work together on finding a shared vision for a better future of the city.

Aleppo City is growing like never before. And its growth is expected to continue as more and more people flock to the city in search of opportunities and a better life. In order for Aleppo to thrive, the city must find ways to adapt to emerging challenges and leverage its strengths. This is exactly what we do, and our ultimate goal is to improve the quality of life for all citizens.

This brochure gives a brief on our story, our goals, our principles, our steps of work, and our team.

PHOTO BY : SALAH MARAASHI



WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

Some of the major challenges Aleppo is facing today include:

Unprecedented population growth rates: Migration, combined with natural population increase, has resulted in unprecedented urban growth rates. Estimated annual growth projected over the next ten years is about 2.7% per year. This will add an additional 1.2 million people to Aleppo's population, making for a total of 3.6 million in 2020. This population increase is the biggest challenge Aleppo is facing infrastructurally, economically, socially, and ecologically.

Increasing urban poverty: As the numbers of urban poor grow, inequalities in opportunity and income deepen. Nearly half of Aleppo's urban residents live in informal settlements and another sizable portion resides in poorly planned sub-standard housing. Both portions are likely to continue to rise.

Livelihood: At work, most people in Aleppo do not realize their productive potential.

Environment: Aleppo is especially vulnerable to climate change (such as drought) due to its economic dependency on agriculture and due to rural in-migration. Also, the city is located in a tectonically sensitive area making it vulnerable to seismic shocks.

Urban management: The Municipality is grappling with how to manage this rapid urban growth. Lacking the required resources and effective policy, the Municipality is ill-equipped to meet the needs of the present and future population.

PHOTO BY : ANDRE YAKOUBIAN



WHAT ARE THE OPPORTUNITIES?

While Aleppo faces some daunting challenges, the City also has tremendous opportunities to benefit from urbanization, just like any other major city. These opportunities include:

Economic growth: Aleppo is a major source of job creation and wealth generation. The city produces goods and provides services that strengthen economic opportunities for the entire country. Aleppo already accounts for over 50 % of manufacturing employment and an even greater export share.

Poverty prevention and alleviation: Aleppo can play an active role in fighting poverty. Its Metropolitan area can create enormous income for the urban and rural population, and the capital the city generates can be used to help alleviate poverty.

Dynamism: Better communication and transport can help to better connect Aleppo with the rest of the

world, resulting in a new economic dynamism. Aleppo also has a great cultural potential, which allows the city to be a potential magnet for thinkers, corporations, universities, banks, and industries.

Opportunities for shared learning: Aleppo has been actively cooperating with the international community to work on urban management; the city already recognizes the value of learning from others. Aleppo's existing networks are valuable resources the city can tap into to learn how other cities are addressing similar challenges and opportunities.

Greater potential to influence popular behavior: Because Aleppo is such a concentrated population center, it can be easier to reach and influence a greaternumber of people to change their behavior on important issues, such as waste management, and energy consumption for example.

PHOTO BY : OMAR SANADIKI



WHAT IS A CDS?

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A City Development Strategy (CDS) is a program promoted by the Cities Alliance. The Cities Alliance is a global coalition of cities, governments, and their development partners committed to scaling up successful approaches to poverty reduction.

A CDS is defined as a strategic action plan, developed and sustained through participation, to promote equitable growth in cities and their surrounding regions to improve the quality of life for all citizens.

A CDS helps cities integrate a strategic development approach and a long-term perspective into their urban planning. With a CDS, cities move beyond planning around the short-term political or donor-funding cycle to considering where they should be in 10, 20 or 30 years, and the steps that need to be taken to achieve those goals.

The idea behind a CDS is that strategic, well-positioned, and well-timed public, private and civil society interventions can significantly change a city's development path and improve its performance. Empirical evidence indicates that the performance of cities can change enormously within a short time—certainly within a generation, that is, 10–20 years. For example, dormant cities, such as Shanghai and Glasgow, have returned to health in a fairly short time as a result of focused strategies incorporating policies, political will, and catalytic investment. In contrast, cities lacking coherent city development strategies, such as Lagos and Manila, have had problematic track records.

PHOTO BY : WALEED ESSAM



WHY IS A CDS IMPORTANT TO ALEPPO CITY?

Aleppo's role as an engine of economic growth has become more important as its population is growing. It is critical for Aleppo to be strategic about its investments and growth in order to capitalize on its opportunities.

A CDS helps Aleppo - as a city – to achieve the following:

Clarify the vision for its future: A CDS aims to catalyze new thinking about the city's future. In Aleppo, the CDS assesses the city frankly and objectively, thus enabling the city to see its future more clearly and identify the best ways forward.

Plan for growth: A CDS helps Aleppo anticipate the rate, type and physical direction of growth and develop its infrastructure ahead of that growth.

Allocate resources strategically: By focusing on the key strategic options, a CDS helps Aleppo allocate limited resources in areas where they will make the most impact.

Attract capital and discipline its use: Aleppo needs discipline to most effectively use its limited financial and human resources to achieve set targets. In addition, the capital available to any given city flows to cities that show potential and have well-thought-out urban futures. A CDS can both attract capital and help Aleppo use that capital in a disciplined way.

Build necessary partnerships: The Aleppo Municipality alone cannot turn Aleppo around. A CDS helps the local authorities work in partnership with national governments, private interests, and civil society to change the city's developmental direction.

PHOTO BY : PAUL HAHN



HOW DID WE START A CDS IN ALEPPO?

In 2005, The Mayor of Aleppo held discussions with the World Bank and the Cities Alliance (CA) to apply for a grant from the Cities Alliance to set a strategy for the future development of the city till the year 2025. That has coincided with the expansion of the cooperation between the Aleppo City Council and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) to work on urban development in the whole city of Aleppo. In 2008, endeavors of the City Council, the GTZ, and the CA were joined resulting in the Aleppo City Development Strategy (Aleppo CDS or Madinatuna in Arabic).

The Aleppo CDS identified a number of focal work areas based on the Aleppo City Council first 4-year work plan (2003-2007), and that are in line with the second 4-year work plan (2007-2011), and consistent with the government's tenth five year plan.

In 2008, the Aleppo CDS started its first phase of work.



WHAT IS ALEPPO CDS WORKING ON?

Aleppo CDS is working on seven topics simultaneously. The following is a list of these seven topics and our goals in each topic:

Economy: Our goal is to develop the local economy to become more competitive and more adaptive to change, and to provide more jobs.

Urban form: our goal is to enhance the spatial structure of the city to have more multifunctional open spaces, multiple centers, better mobility, more proximity, and the right density and mixture of uses.

Informal settlements: Our goal is to improve the informal settlements in the city and to minimize their growth in the future

Services: Our goal is to improve urban services delivery.

Environment: Our goal is to protect the urban environment

Youth: Our goal is to make the city more children-friendly.

Urban Administration: Our goal is to modernize the administration of the Municipality and enhance its fiscal capacity.

PHOTO BY : ADAM TEALE



WHAT ARE OUR STEPS OF WORK?

Work will be carried out in six phases which are as follows:

Phase 1: Inception - 11/2008: We started with determining: Who will provide political leadership? Who are the key stakeholders? How to elicit their cooperation? Who's responsible for what? How to achieve a sense of joint ownership of the process? What is the scope of the CDS? How is the CDS expected to proceed?

Phase 2: Assessment - 10/2009: This phase is about asking "where are we now"? We analyzed challenges in: Economy, Urban form, Informal settlements, Services, Environment, Youth, and Urban Administration.

Phase 3: Shared Vision - 4/2010: The Vision is a statement of where Aleppo wants to be, in 15 years. The CDS team will shape the Vision in consultation with stakeholders and using information from the

assessment. Aleppo's Vision will reflect the unique attributes of the city.

Phase 4: Identifying the strategic options - 6/2010: The CDS Team will identify certain strategic options in consultation with stakeholders and experts. These strategic options are a set of cross-cutting interlocking actions, which bring about maximum impact cost-effectively.

Phase 5: Identifying key projects - 12/2010: This phase will set out the range of short term activities (projects, programs, investments, etc.) that will get the CDS off to a good start. Focus will be on rapid implementation of high-profile, low-risk initiatives.

Phase 6: Implementation - till 2025: Implementation Task Forces will be established for each strategic option. These in turn will formulate more detailed action plans with responsibilities, timelines, milestones, and expected inputs and outputs.

PHOTO BY: OMAR SANADIKI



WHAT ARE OUR PRINCIPLES?

The following principles govern the design of the Aleppo CDS:

Political backup: The Aleppo CDS was lucky enough to have the Mayor of Aleppo agree to contribute time and political capital to the CDS process. If the Mayor (or another equivalent senior official) was not willing to fully support the CDS, the whole process would have been abandoned.

The “Right” Stakeholders Mix: The Aleppo CDS acquired the “right” stakeholders mix. It has a strong steering committee chaired by the Mayor and “true” representatives of the key stakeholders in the City. Moreover, the CDS has great work groups, whose members can speak and bargain on behalf of their constituencies.

Local Ownership: All of the members of the Aleppo CDS team are residents of Aleppo, and the

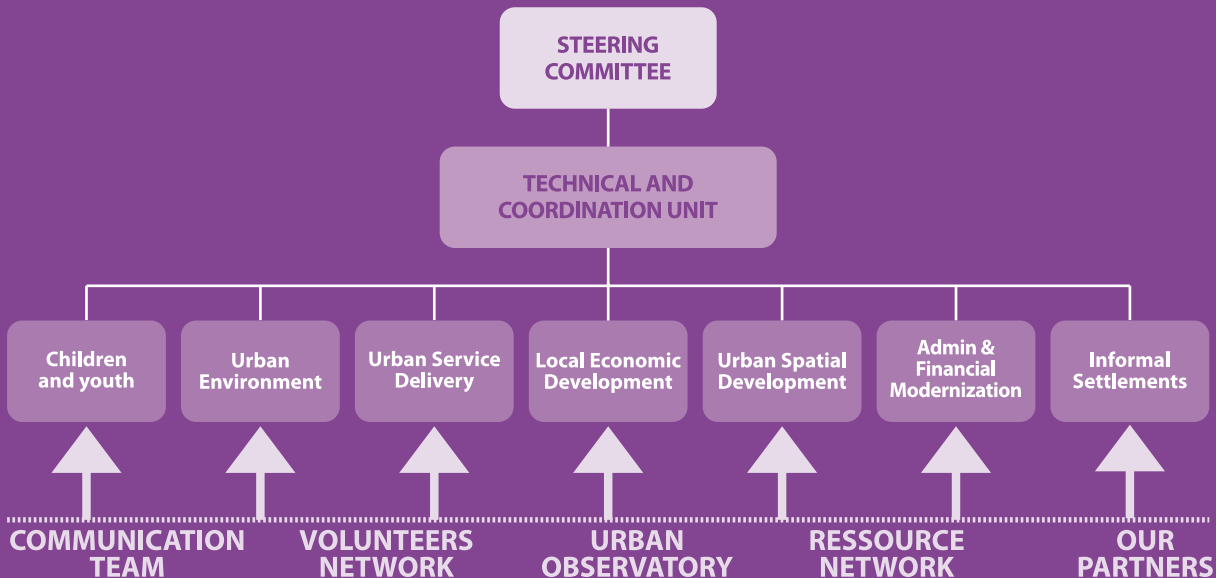
majority of them are volunteers. These people are the ones who prioritize problems and formulate the strategy.

Participation: Preparation of the Aleppo CDS is participatory. We give the voice to all three sectors: the public sector, the private sector, and the civil society (more on participation in another section).

Action vs. Talk: The Aleppo CDS is not just about “talk”; it is about “action”. Small and quick projects are implemented on the ground while strategies are being prepared on paper.

Institutionalisation: The Aleppo CDS will be ‘institutionalised’, that is, integrated into the city’s routine operating procedures and systems (both existing systems and new systems under development).

ORGANIZATIONAL SET-UP OF CDS ALEPPO



WHO'S ON OUR TEAM?

The Aleppo CDS has an organizational structure comprising of the following bodies:

- The Steering committee (SC)
- The Technical coordination unit (TCU)
- The Working Groups (WG)
 - Local Economic Development Group
 - Spatial Development Group
 - Urban Services Delivery Group
 - Urban Environment Group
 - Informal Settlements Group
 - Children Friendly City Group
 - Municipal Modernization Group
- The Communication Team
- The Volunteers Network
- The Urban Observatory
- The Resource Network
- Our Partners

PHOTO BY : OMAR SANADIKI



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