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**The German Internationale  
Bauausstellung (IBA) and Urban  
Regeneration: Lessons from the  
IBA Emscher Park**

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**Summary**

The German approach of using international building exhibitions (Internationale Bauausstellung) to provide an impetus for innovation in planning and construction dates back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the New Architecture communities at Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt (1901) and the

Weißenhofsiedlung Stuttgart (1927), and later the 1957 Interbau exhibition in West Berlin with its presentation of the ‘city of tomorrow’. By the 1980s the IBA Berlin started to embody the broader policy discourses of urban regeneration and renewal, a purpose made yet more explicit by the IBA Emscher Park during the 1990s. This sought to utilise a series of innovative architectural and environmental projects to revitalize landscapes and communities across this former industrial heartland area of the Ruhr Valley.

The IBA Emscher Park, which ran over the ten year period 1989-1999, in many respects was a diverse and innovative approach to urban regeneration which attracted the interest of a wide international audience of policy professionals. This Chapter, therefore, examines its legacies, transferability and lessons for contemporary approaches to urban renewal. The analysis focuses on a range of key themes including: the political and governance structures adopted to co-ordinate this project based approach to regeneration across the municipalities, communities and cities of the Emscher Valley; the guided incrementalism approach and the manner in which sustainability and ecological principles were embodied into the IBA projects; the way the IBA approach promoted regional resilience in a context of shrinking urban regional systems; and lessons that can be learned from the experiences of the IBA Emscher Park.

## **Introduction**

The German approach of using international building exhibitions (Internationale Bauausstellung - IBA) as a public showcase for innovative architectural and urban planning ideas dates back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with the New Architecture communities of Mathildenhöhe in Darmstadt (1901) and the Weißenhofsiedlung in Stuttgart (1927). Over subsequent years, the scope and ambition of the IBA approach has gradually evolved. The 1957 Interbau exhibition in West Berlin presented an architectural vision of the 'city of tomorrow', whilst the 1987 IBA Berlin began to embody broader policy discourses of urban regeneration and renewal. This purpose was made yet more explicit by the IBA Emscher Park of the 1990s which in its aim of revitalizing the former industrial heartland of the Ruhr Valley extended the IBA approach to the regional scale and addressed environmental and landscape issues. The IBA Fürst-Pückler-Land (2000-2010) further illustrates the adaptability of the IBA, with a series of interventions into the predominantly rural post-mining environments of Lausitz. The urban-focussed IBAs for Saxony-Anholt (2010) and Hamburg (2013) not only illustrate the continued adaptability of this policy model but cement its position as an internationally recognised model for regeneration strategy across a range of states of the German Federal Republic.

The enduring international appeal of the IBA approach demonstrates an uncanny ability to be relevant to a diverse audience at different times, in different contexts and for different reasons. This Chapter seeks to examine the character of this diverse and innovative approach to regeneration and its continued appeal to a wide international audience of policy professionals (see CABE 2007; Ganser 2008). This is principally done through a case study of the IBA Emscher Park (1989-1999), which at the time was the most geographically extensive and flexible application of the IBA approach, realizing over 120 urban and environmental projects of varied scales and characteristics throughout the Emscher Valley. The Chapter examines its legacies, transferability and lessons for contemporary approaches to urban regeneration and renewal. The analysis focuses on a range of key themes including: the political and governance structures adopted to co-ordinate this project-based approach in the fragmented governance context of the Emscher Valley; the manner in which sustainability and ecological principles were embodied into the IBA projects; and the ways in which industrial heritage, identity and regional collective memory formed critical components of regeneration strategy for a region characterised by shrinking cities and decline.

## **The IBA Emscher Park**

The IBA Emscher Park was a comprehensive regional policy instrument devised by the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) to tackle the profound socio-economic and environmental problems facing Germany's Ruhr region, the former industrial heartland of coal mining and associated heavy industries, notably steel production. For over 100 years this was one of Europe's largest industrial concentrations, but by the 1980s decline and restructuring had left a toxic socio-environmental legacy of population decline, unemployment and redundant contaminated land.

The IBA ran for 10 years from 1989-1999 and targeted a vast programme area of 800 km<sup>2</sup> flanking the Emscher River system. It stretched for some 70 km between the city of Duisberg to the west and Bergkamen to the east, and over 15 km north and south between the rivers Lippe and Ruhr. The aim was to stage and co-ordinate a diverse range of innovative regeneration projects so as to enhance the region's economic competitiveness, as well as promote social-cultural and ecological renewal. The ambitions of the IBA Emscher Park are encapsulated in its motivational mottos: it was to be a 'workshop for the future of old industrial regions' and followed a new 'change without growth model' (Reicher et al. 2008). The IBA sought to construct a context-specific narrative about the transformation of the region toward a post-industrial future and showcase a series of visible interventions symbolic of this renewal.

A planning company, the IBA Emscher Park GmbH, was set up as a subsidiary of the state of NRW to manage the programme, co-ordinating competitive bids for IBA project status from a diverse range of regional stakeholders stretching across 17 cities and including local municipalities, infrastructure providers, private development companies and community groups. It is important to emphasise that the IBA planning company was not itself involved in implementing projects, nor did it provide new money. Instead it relied upon existing public finances (from a range of European Union, German Federal Government and state of NRW sources) or levered private sector investment. Over the 10 years of the IBA it is estimated to have realised some EUR 2.5 billion investment, 60 per cent or EUR 1.5 billion of which was derived from European and German Governmental sources (Uttke et al. 2008).

One of the principal aims of the IBA was to provide a means of invigorating the architectural and environmental integrity and quality of regeneration projects across a dense regional network of participants. The planning company invited bids for IBA project status under six programme areas. The 'Emscher Landscape Park' thematic sought to rehabilitate open spaces and derelict industrial landscapes into an integrated regional landscape park of cycle paths, parks and recreational green areas. The Landscape Park ethos

underpinned the entire approach, which in itself was ambitious given the contrast between the concept of a park and the realities of industrial decline. In turn, this environmental project worked closely with a second thematic focussed on the ‘ecological reconstruction of the Emscher river system’ through new water purification plants and measures to restore the river to a more natural state. What might be thought of as more traditional urban regeneration projects, focussed on economic development and housing renewal, were channelled under the themes ‘working in the park’ and ‘new residential and urban development’. The final two project themes gave emphasis to ‘conservation of industrial monuments and industrial culture’ and ‘new facilities for social, cultural and sporting activities’.

One of the many paradoxes of the IBA Emscher Park is that despite its conclusion by the state Government of North Rhine-Westphalia well over a decade ago, this diverse and innovative policy initiative has continued to attract international interest and evaluation of its planning programme and methods (Uttke 2011). Academics and policy professionals across a wide variety of specialisms – such as spatial planning, architecture, landscape design, environmental policy, housing, industrial heritage and tourism – continue to be drawn to a range of features of this innovative model for regional and urban regeneration.

## **Inside and outside the state: the politics and governance of the IBA process**

One of the key lines of interest in the IBA Emscher Park has been to pursue an understanding of the political intricacies and rationales for the delivery mechanism used to co-ordinate regeneration across such a wide geographical region and fragmented institutional context. As indicated above, the IBA was principally a state-directed and -financed project, yet involved an agency without dedicated investment funds to implement its ideas and projects. Moreover, the quasi-corporate character of this planning and delivery organisation set it outside established political structures and interests, thereby positioning it simultaneously inside and outside the state.

There appear to have been two key drivers underpinning such an arrangement. First, the design and adaptation of the IBA methodology to the Emscher valley is cited as originating with two individuals, one explicitly within the state of NRW, Christoph Zopel its Minister for Urban Planning and Transport, the other an external academic advisor, Karl Ganser, who became Managing Director of the Planning Company. Much mythology surrounds the genesis of the idea, stakeholders having informed the authors that the participants apparently formulated the IBA idea whilst communing with nature on a shared forest walk. Whether fact or fiction, such folklore



nevertheless does bear testament to the importance of key personalities and their vision and charisma as agents of change in complex and fragmented policy and political environments. Kunzmann (1995) claims that they helped establish an important pre-condition for 'regional creativity potential'. Certainly, the IBA had a character informed by scholarly work. Academics played a prominent role in the IBA planning company adjudicating projects, and Zopel and Ganser were strong supporters of evidence-based or academically informed public policy. Managing Director Ganser had six part-time assistants, drawn from specialisms such as landscape planning, ecology, the media, urban and regional planning, architecture and the arts. There is much, therefore, that speaks to the significance of the interplay between knowledge and policy at various spatial scales, as well as the politics of incorporation (see Lovering, 1999; Adams et al. 2011).

Second, and following from the above, the positioning of the IBA delivery company was viewed by many as a necessary structure for stimulating innovation in an otherwise traditional and non-innovative policy environment characterised by entrenched party political paternalism and large-scale corporate and industrial interests. Kunzmann (2001) provides a detailed and withering assessment of these entrenched regional stakeholders and their collective incapacity for effective regional co-operation. Arguably,

therefore, a bold instrument of regional policy such as the IBA, ambitious in its bid to raise the standards and aspirations of regional change, could not otherwise have emerged from within. That Karl Ganser came originally from outside the Ruhr region undoubtedly gave him the biographical freedom to promote the IBA vision unconstrained by pre-determined ties to vested interests and policy networks. Nevertheless, ‘... the deliberate establishment of a new agency outside the traditional institutional system of the region ... [was] an affront against the regional establishment, against local governments and against the established intercommunal regional authority, the Kommunalverband Ruhrkohlenbezirk (KVR)’ (Kunzmann 2004: 5).

Given these features of the IBA Emscher Park, it has inevitably drawn comparisons with experiences of regeneration structures in other countries. In the UK, for example, Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) emerged in the early 1980s as a flagship policy mechanism for transforming de-industrialized spaces across British cities. There appear to be some parallels here (Danielzyk and Wood 1993). The UDC for London Docklands also involved a new unelected delivery agency that operated simultaneously inside and outside the state, though they had considerably more power than the IBA Planning Company. The UDC usurped planning powers from five existing elected local government bodies, which according to critics at that

time had demonstrated a similar collective incapacity to provide a co-ordinated response to structural economic decline. There are however significant differences between the two approaches as identified by Danielzyk and Wood (1993). In particular, UDCs were an explicit attempt by the Conservative central Government of that time in the UK to impose a neo-liberal vision of socio-economic change upon entrenched and oppositional local political interests. In contrast, the IBA stood as a more unusual and innovative policy measure with a broad and holistic interpretation of regional development and a more politically inclusive character. Unlike the ideologically driven UDCs the IBA, therefore, can be construed as a more collaborative and co-operative approach to achieving its aims (Neill 2007). The co-ordinating board to the IBA Planning Company had a wide representative base drawn from the regions cities, employer and union organisations, state Government, environmental and special interest groups. It might be thought of as an arena where collaborative planning principles could be applied to communicate across diverse stakeholder interests and voices in a fragmented political environment (Forrester 1989, 2009; Healey 2005).

Arguably, therefore, the IBA delivery company delivered the possibility for a long-term approach to regional renewal, beyond short-term political and financial expediencies and in a context neglected by the private sector.

Kunzmann has characterized its methodology as analogous to a rhizome ecosystem where, just as the rhizome plant system weaves a complex layer of underground roots which periodically emerge above ground, so the individual IBA projects were ‘... interlinked by an invisible underground net of principles and quality criteria, promoted by a network of individual change agents’ (2001: 147).

This model suggests that the mechanics of the IBA delivery instrument stimulated and facilitated partnership working and the development of new alliances and networks within what was previously a highly fragmented institutional arena. The IBA approach not only recognised the value of such intangible benefits as consensus building but also placed a greater emphasis on cultural, historical and social values in comparison to the dominant economic rationale that guided the UDC approach. However, there was also a pragmatic underpinning to its operation because achieving the kudos of IBA endorsement for project proposals submitted through a competitive bidding process became a principal channel through which financial resources were distributed to regional stakeholders by the state of NRW. In this sense, the IBA-enforced partnership working suggests more direct parallels with second generation UDCs across UK regions which developed more conciliatory working partnerships with a range of previously isolated local political interests and policy communities (Imrie and Thomas 1999).

These later UK UDCs also mediated their rhetorical attachment and reliance upon property-led regeneration thereby bringing them closer to the IBA approach which sought to deliver a regional future that was distinctive and not merely reactive to opportunistic private-sector led development.

Whilst the IBA was demonstrably a top-down project, from the outset the importance of community involvement and bottom-up citizen empowerment was an important discursive element in its rationale and rhetoric. However, retrospective assessment of the IBA, much of it in the light of lessons subsequently learnt concerning the challenges of meaningful public participation in urban regeneration and planning (see for example: Coulson 2003; Doak et al. 2005; Tallon 2010) is far from conclusive. Danielzyk and Wood, exploring the issue of inclusiveness of the IBA, concluded that it ‘... did not live up to its own high standard of broadening the basis of those who participated in the planning process’ (2004: 197).

Arguably the mechanisms employed in the IBA to assess potential projects appeared to exclude, particularly in its early stages, those without access to professional support in preparing such proposals, thereby handicapping grassroots community organisations. The considerable financial and physical scale and complexity of some of the initial IBA flagship projects may have reinforced these participatory barriers to bottom-up initiatives. Nevertheless, the IBA demonstrated a capacity for reflective learning from

critical citizen feedback of its exclusionary practices, and after a period of intermediate stock taking in 1995 created a new 'Take the Initiative' (Initiative Ergreifen) array of projects designed to encourage citizen participation in the provision of social and cultural infrastructures and neighbourhood renewal. These included: the Ethno Art Ruhr (EAR) music start-up centre in a former test centre building at Zollverein coal mine; the Consol Theatre at the former Gelsenkirchen Bismarck coal mine; and the AGORA Greek Culture centre on the site of the former Castrop-Rauxel coal mine. A further response came under the new residential and urban development thematic with the 'Build It Simply Yourself' (Einfach und selber bauen) scheme. This state-financed project provided low-cost owner occupied housing to target young families through the subsidy of their self-build labour, or so called 'muscle mortgage' (Muskelhypothek). Lessons learnt from such projects have continued under a 'Citizens Make the City' project banner and have been carried into other areas of the state of NRW, and indeed beyond to the Germany-wide Social City (Soziale Stadt) initiative of over 500 projects in 300 cities (Uttke 2008). Residents' self-build schemes have also continued, with examples in Braunschweig (2002-2007), Aachen (1997-2000) and Rautheim/Niedersachsen (2005).

Overall, then, the institutional and governance structures and processes of the IBA resist straightforward interpretation. In one sense, it challenged

long-standing corporatist structures across the region, judged ineffectual by its founders. Yet to its critics, the IBA, somewhat paradoxically, recombined these elements into new forms of corporatism, since project delivery remained dependent upon the region's large players and interests. Moreover, particularly in its early stages, it embodied a bias towards professionally organized planning, often to the exclusion of citizen groups. Nevertheless, through the 10-year period of the IBA, knowledge and expertise was spread and transferred, along with an organisational confidence to involve new participants. As Kilper and Wood (1995) suggest, this speaks to the notion of a 'pedagogical paradox', whereby the teacher's role from 'above' is to convey the maturity and independence to students positioned 'below'.

### **The IBA project-based approach: guided incrementalism**

A distinctive feature of the IBA method is that it adopted a project-based approach to regional regeneration under the motto of 'projects, no plans'. In one sense, the IBA approach strongly emphasised long-term strategic planning through a public authority. It embodied a set of aspirations for the region that were visionary in seeking to link together economic, social and environmental processes toward a long-term transformation of the region. This was necessary because areas of extensive industrial dereliction – such

as the Ruhr region and many inner-urban areas of European and North American cities – are particularly problematic. Simply abandoning a region is not an option. Abandoned properties need clearance, contaminated land has to be subject to expensive remedial treatment, and fragmented property and ownership rights need to be consolidated. In this context, spontaneous private sector initiatives are likely at best to be piecemeal and most likely low-value and short term and will often contribute little to co-ordinating and rebuilding a regional mosaic of positive change.

However, at the same time this IBA project-based approach meant that there was no overarching and comprehensive strategy or physical masterplan for the region, an almost standardised feature of traditional strategic planning. The project-based approach was conceptualized as a continuous process of guided incrementalism, responding to initiatives from a range of sources, often redesigning as progress continued, with initiatives being plugged into the IBA's broader philosophical aspirations. Such an approach has not been without its critics. Knapp et al. (2004) have highlighted an inevitable preference for projects that were uncontroversial and that did not generate conflict, and they also show the lack of discussion about different scenarios for regional futures and the inability of an incremental approach to deliver a programmed sustainable future. Nevertheless, a project-oriented approach – with some highly visible and prestigious outputs – appeals to policy makers



and practitioners and does provide an alternative to what many perceive as the disappointments and lack of delivery associated with more abstract forms of strategic planning. The physical legacies of the IBA and particularly the sheer scale of some of the flagship monuments to the industrial past certainly play a part in the enduring interest of this approach to regeneration. In addition, the focus on projects was an important means of mobilising and harnessing endogenous resources whilst simultaneously attracting exogenous capacities through international architectural competitions for certain flagship schemes.

The IBA was successful in imposing high standards of design on many of its projects and it appeared to go far beyond the norm in terms of environmental and sustainability requirements, before agreeing to support individual projects. Insisting on such high quality standards is not always seen as a priority in the allocation of scarce public resources, especially in times of recession and structural change. Indeed initially there appears to have been an element of resentment amongst local stakeholders as different projects were rejected as not being innovative or future-oriented enough (Kunzmann 2004) or where institutional actors refused to meet the high environmental and sustainability criteria. Nevertheless, it was an important tool in terms of starting to embed environmental thinking and needs into approaches to development (Shaw 2002). Projects such as the Kuppertsbusch

Estate and the Rheinelbe Science Park in Gelsenkirchen are physical testaments to this environmental concern and the challenge of promoting mitigation and adaptation strategies to tackle climate change. The former, a 267 unit housing estate built on a former kitchen stove and furniture factory, embodies a unique rainwater drainage and storage system that was highly innovative at the time. The latter, a science park with a focus on solar energy research, built on the site of a former Thyssen cast-steel works, involves a 300 m long glazed arcade with integral photo-voltaic plant and light installation. Though the physical isolation of the Science Park has inhibited the realisation of the initial vision of a solar energy research centre, and despite the ongoing need for public subsidy to support high maintenance costs, the building itself bears testimony to the environmental sustainability principles that underpinned its conception.

The IBA, therefore, in instigating what were at the time perceived as overly stringent environmental- and sustainability-related criteria in many respects pre-empted approaches that have subsequently become more universally accepted and incorporated into practice. The same goes for the IBA approach to public space, with its strong emphasis on good design and the purposeful positioning of public art. It can be thought of as advocating the importance of ‘spatial planning’ as a means of moving beyond narrowly focussed land-use planning to recognize the complexity of processes and

networks that are constitutive of the built environment (Alden 2006; Haughton et al. 2010; Tewdwr-Jones 2012).

Nevertheless, and particularly in the context of periods of economic and financial retrenchment, such debates and negotiations will continue between public authorities and developers, but without strong guiding institutions such as the IBA, environmental and sustainability standards risk being diluted in debates over project feasibility and viability. Indeed, the IBA was not immune from such pressures, particularly since regional municipalities were still free to negotiate and pursue developments independent of the IBA vision. Knapp et al. (2004) note that many IBA participants were advocating the expansion of motorways and airports at the same time as signing up to the IBA project's ambitious sustainability principles. Somewhat inevitably, therefore, the area has witnessed the development of projects that appear to have contradictory purposes.

One of the flagship IBA projects – the Oberhausen Gasometer – provides a prominent example. As an innovative reuse of a former industrial building as a major exhibition space for public culture and artistic events, it sits uncomfortably close to the neighbouring non-IBA 'Centro' regional shopping centre developed at roughly the same time and one of the highest traffic generators in the region. Another controversial project, and strongly

opposed by Karl Ganser and some of the other key figures involved in the IBA, was the siting of a vast IKEA development on land adjacent to the prestigious Landscape Park Duisburg North. This IBA project preserved in situ a monumental blast furnace from the site's former steel works and created a vast area of public and environmental open space and recreational opportunity. It has been widely celebrated as a sustainable and innovative scheme, a refreshing contrast to '... trying to structure places and build identity around sheds and call centres' (CABE 2006: 12). The paradox is blatant to anyone perusing the wider setting from the top of the blast furnace. The image of nature reclaiming what man had taken from it is powerful but its power is diluted by the presence and scale of the IKEA development. Such paradoxical juxtapositions provide a telling illustration of the tensions involved in reconciling strong environmental principles, such as those set out by the IBA, with the more pragmatic need to create jobs, a lesson familiar to many regeneration areas.

### **Regional resilience and shrinking urban regional systems**

The question of employment creation, therefore, like that of accountability and empowerment, is one that stalks any policy measure underpinned by public money, be it in Ruhr region or any international setting. However, as Knapp et al. (2004) suggest '... evaluation of the factual output is made

relatively difficult by the complex circumstances provided by societal change, the specific spatio-economic challenges of the Emscherzone as well as the incremental project-oriented planning style that framed the IBA' (334). Certainly one of the goals of the IBA manifesto was to provide a basis for economic change in an old industrial region and a setting for innovative new business and working opportunities. However, to judge the project in terms of major job creation and transport infrastructure provision in many ways is misleading since this was always beyond its original intention (Shaw 2002).

Indeed, rather than a vision of restoring the Ruhr to its former status as the economic and industrial powerhouse of Germany, the IBA was cognisant of a more salutary reality. The region had been rapidly losing population since the 1960s and shed some 440,000 jobs in manufacturing, 325,000 from the coal and steel industries (Danielzyk and Wood 2004). Acceptance of this trajectory and the unpalatable social consequences for the region's former miners and steelworkers was central to regional transformation.

How to represent and manage that which has declined and become historic is a controversial and highly complex challenge for any process of socio-economic restructuring and regeneration. In this respect, the IBA is fascinating in terms of how it sought to deal with the region's industrial

heritage and collective social memory (see Siebel 1999). The IBA sought not only to preserve regional industrial sites and monuments as museums, such as the Zollverein Colliery (once the largest coal mine in Germany), but to also promote the creative re-use of former industrial sites as vibrant leisure, recreation and employment spaces. A number of IBA projects simultaneously acknowledge the past and celebrate the present whilst also symbolising a different future. This contrasts with the more familiar 'museum, visitor centre and café' model which predominates more widely in such settings (Shaw 2002: 92) and where visitors are often expected to pay sombre homage to a bygone age. Examples such as the Oberhausen Gasometer, the Zollverein Coking Plant, the Rheinelbe Slag Heap, the Landscape Park Duisburg North, the Bottrop Tetrahedon and the Gelsenkirchen Sculpture Forest act simultaneously as both symbolic monuments to the regions past and bold transformative images of its future. The successful unification of past, present and future is one of the most noteworthy achievements of the IBA. Certainly the cultural legacy of the IBA would appear to be a strong one, arguably underpinning the Ruhr designation as European Capital of Culture 2010 and resonating amongst the numerous cultural and intellectual activities, which take place in former industrial spaces throughout the Ruhr. Moreover, the experiences and knowledge generated in the Ruhr have permeated broader professional networks, such as the European Route of Industrial Heritage, within which

organisations from the Ruhr and the State Government of North Rhine-Westphalia have been a major driving force.

FIGURE 1 NEAR HERE

However, more critically, the IBA can be construed as a somewhat elitist project, driven by an intellectual coterie promoting their own vision of culture as the necessary driver of regional development. Certainly, the class effects of cultural regeneration can be problematic, particularly in former industrial areas marked by unemployment and lost livelihoods and identities. What is clear, however, is that the IBA, particularly in the way it championed ‘change without growth’, in many ways provided an early policy marker for more contemporary discussions concerning how to effectively plan for shrinking cities and city regions facing long-term decline. These debates have been particularly prevalent in the context of US cities and Eastern European countries, many from the former Soviet and socialist bloc whose entry into the European Union has made such questions politically imperative (Bontje 2004; Matthias 2009; Wiechmann and Pallagst 2012). It also resonates with questions concerning how to plan for vulnerability through the promotion of regional resilience and the kinds of demographic, economic, cultural and environmental structures thought to be most conducive to a resilient region (see Hague et al. 2011).

Viewed, therefore, from this more contemporary perspective the two-stage character of the IBA approach is drawn into focus. The first and primary stage was that of creating the pre-conditions for a new regional future (see Kunzmann 1995). The collective impact of developing, building, managing and maintaining the IBA's 120 individual projects has been estimated to have included the employment of over 30,000 people during its 10-year period. Moreover, the construction of large and physically imposing IBA flagship architectural projects and the creative fusing of art, landscape and recreation were crucial to a re-imagining and representation of the region, both to an external global audience of tourism and economic investment and across an internal one of families and communities across the region.

The second stage of the IBA in essence is that which follows on after it in terms of the changing economic structure of the region and the kinds of livelihoods which it sustains. The IBA has in some cases provided the context within which new forms of work have been created. Jobs in heavy industry are being replaced by those in creative and knowledge-based industries. For example, on the site of a former steelworks in Gelsenkirchen which once employed over 3000 workers the new Rheinelbe Science Park now employs over 750 people. This has become a centre for research into renewable energy, part of a much larger set of regional multiplier effects



conceptualized as ‘Solar City’ and employing over 1,000 people in Gelsenkirchen. Nevertheless, more widely the region sustains higher than average unemployment levels and remains testament to the problematic challenges of managing structural change. The harsh reality for thousands of former miners and steelworkers is the absence of employment, the only consolation being that the IBA may have laid the foundations for future generations to find work in a more environmentally sustainable context that acknowledges the past, celebrates the present and looks towards the future.

### **Conclusions: IBA visions and regional futures**

The IBA Emscher Park continues to attract interest from a diverse audience of international policy professionals and academics. Despite this, however, the extent to which the IBA was successful and the extent to which it offers lessons that can inform approaches elsewhere is open to debate. The IBA model of competitive and collaborative urbanism has not been without its critics who urge caution in eulogizing such an approach (see Danielzyk and Wood 2004). The complexities of policy transfer between diverse contexts are well known (Adams 2008; Stead 2012) and the deployment of simplistic analytical constructs such as success or failure is problematic in any policy setting and even more profoundly so across international borders.

Nevertheless, the IBA has been and indeed remains highly relevant to a wider audience charged with managing post-industrial regional futures and the creative use of post-production environments. International comparisons can reveal valuable insights into the epistemologies, practises and discourses of planning and regional development. The IBA in this sense demonstrates how public policy, when faced with deeply embedded economic and political interests, should not only be persuasive of the need to take bold and ambitious steps to re-imagine regional change and regional futures, but to do so in an inclusive manner. Moreover, its 'change without growth' model of regeneration sought to integrate social and cultural renewal with principles of environmental sustainability and economic recycling that resonate with contemporary concerns to construct resilience for shrinking urban regional systems.

However, there remains no magic recipe for regional transformation and urban regeneration in the Ruhr or elsewhere, and the transferability potential of the IBA approach is limited. The IBA was a context-specific policy intervention, its innovative character being defined partly by the timing of a group of creative people being in a particular place at the particular time, but also by the pressing consequences of structural economic change, private sector disinvestment and the need for the state to be seen to respond. There are no simple ways of transferring regeneration policy and there is

little doubt that the process of managing structural socio-economic decline can be a politically exhausting one. Consequently, the importance of visionary leadership and the development of context-specific storylines and delivery mechanisms within any policy context should not be underestimated. The IBA demonstrates the need to devise context-sensitive and innovative local solutions to specific regeneration challenges and the need to be imaginative in harnessing and mobilizing unique local combinations of opportunities, assets and territorial capital.

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