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Sustainable Urban Planning in Santos, Brazil

by Patrick Knight



Santos, Brazil, is laying the foundations for a more sustainable future

In Santos, Brazil, public and private sector workers, professionals, academics, and poor members of society are sharing ideas to ensure that the future of this coastal city unfolds from a foundation of sustainable planning.

Located on the coast about 75 km from São Paulo, Santos provides the gateway to this industrialized region of 16 million residents. The Port of Santos, which employs some 40,000 people, is strategically important for the entire country. It harbours over 300 ships each month. More than 30 million tonnes of cargo such as coffee, sugar, beef, and soya pass over its docks each year.

Like the rest of Brazil, Santos endured for many years restrictions of civil rights, economic crises, and environmental degradation under the rule of a series of military regimes. In 1985, the country's new civilian administration drafted a federal constitution, enacted in 1988, that greatly increased the authority and responsibility of local and municipal administrations.

CITIZEN COUNCILS

Under the direction of the Workers Party (PT), the Municipality of Santos set out to involve all levels of the community in creating and implementing policy and programs to improve environmental, economic, and social conditions. To ensure broad community participation, the city council encouraged the formation of "citizens councils for public participation." Some councils, such as those concerned with health, housing, social assistance, and child welfare, were conceived by federal laws. Others, such as those responsible for education, heritage, the elderly, and the physically challenged, were formed through a process of municipal conferences.

With these structures in place, the Municipality of Santos was invited by the Toronto-based International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) to take part in the Local Agenda 21 Model Communities Program (MCP).

ICLEI PROJECT

The ICLEI project in Santos is coordinated by the municipality's Environmental Secretariat, under the direction of the mayor. The local MCP coordinator, [Siomara Gonzalez Gomes](#), works in a project team of about a dozen people. The project's local launch was a large public conference to present the Local Agenda 21 planning approach to the community. Some 70 organizations participated, representing NGOs, unions, business interests, citizens councils, municipal departments, disabled people, and housing cooperatives, among others. Through this process, all Agenda 21 issues were examined that had some impact on Santos and where the municipality exercised jurisdiction, says Prabha Khosla, ICLEI's field manager for the MCP.

PLANNING PRIORITIES

Eventually, the strategic services planning process led to choosing nine priorities for Santos: employment generation, income and education; natural resources and environmental sanitation; housing; health and education; transport; violence and security; tourism and leisure; citizenship; and master plan formulation.

Seminars bring together organizations and individuals interested in each of the nine topics to share information, create action plans, and identify resources for the realization of projects. In recent months, the nine priorities have been further narrowed to three: the quality of beaches and tourism, solid waste management, and the environment of the hills of the city.

DENSE POPULATION

Although Santos spans a total area of about 474 square km, more than 400,000 residents (about 95%) live on the small island of São Vicente, which comprises less than 10% of the city area. The population density is high on the island. The remaining 5% of residents live on the mainland.

Santos is relatively rich by Brazilian standards. With a per capita income of \$3,000, unemployment levels are well below the regional average. Although its industrial base is small, tourism is big business -- accounting for about two-thirds of the economy.

POLLUTION PROBLEMS

At one time, however, Santos suffered a deep economic recession when polluted coastal waters damaged prospects for the tourism industry. An overburdened and complicated system of stormwater drainage canals was carrying raw sewage to the ocean. Tourism slumped as tourists deserted the unhealthy city beaches for alternatives to the south and north.

Recognizing that this grave problem could only be resolved through cooperative efforts between local and

state governments, the municipality initiated the Santos Beaches Recovery Program in 1991. In its first phase, the program involved diverting contaminated water from the canals to a sewage treatment plant. A second phase, which relied upon assistance from engineering students at a local university, consisted of re-routing 10,000 unauthorized sewage connections to the main drainage system. By 1993, the Santos beaches were clean once again and tourism began to recover.

TOURIST DESTINATION

Urban beaches and a lively nightlife are major attractions for the millions of tourists who visit Santos each year. The population density doubles during the summer months (December to March) and can triple or quadruple on weekends. Balancing the needs of tourists against those of retired and elderly residents is among the more delicate and time-consuming tasks of town council staff, according to Siomara Gomes, MCP coordinator.

The greater Santos area also has tremendous potential for ecological tourism. Together, the town council, the Department of Environment, and various tourist agencies are developing ecotourism activities in the surrounding mangroves and Atlantic rainforest. Local merchants often pay the salaries of tourism coordinators trained by town council staff.

BETTER HOUSING

Another important program initiated by the Municipality of Santos has been the Dique Project, says Gomes. Many poor families have been living in communities of dilapidated huts built on stilts over the water. These "favelas" are now being replaced with two-storey houses that can be purchased by their new occupants. By generating roughly 250 jobs and improving living standards for residents, this project has fostered hope and fellowship as residents plan and build their own homes.

Currently, ordinary rubbish in Santos is dumped at a municipal site in a mangrove swamp on the island, and covered with sand each day. Eventually, waste will be taken to a disused stone quarry on the mainland. In conjunction with a large army of independent waste collectors, cans, bottles, plastic, and paper are collected weekly by the council and recycled.

SOCIAL SERVICES

In recent years, Santos' social services have improved. Better health services have yielded 23 free municipal health clinics, which draw patients from surrounding municipalities. The Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents is concerned with the welfare of abandoned children. By providing shelter, training, and some employment, Santos has done more for this particularly underprivileged group than most other cities in Brazil. In fact, authorities in neighbouring towns with less resources often send abandoned children to Santos.

Although Santos' Agenda 21 achievements have been recognized by the central government of Brazil, national publicity for these initiatives is limited. Santos' single local newspaper remains hostile toward the town's administration and no national publications exist to cover such achievements. However, efforts are being made to spread news about the initiatives undertaken by the Municipality of Santos through the Internet. For more information on Santos and Local Agenda 21, the Internet site is:
<http://www.iclei.org/csdcases/santos.html>

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Global Action on Local Agenda 21

by Kirsteen MacLeod



Residents of Pimpri Chinchwad, India, participate in a global initiative that encourages sustainable urban planning

How can local authorities around the world better integrate environmental concerns with social, political, and economic policies? By implementing changes in many planning departments, says the [International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives \(ICLEI\)](#), an environmental organization of local governments. Its Local Agenda 21 (LA21) initiative is designed to help municipalities on every continent adopt sustainable, participatory urban planning. From worldwide headquarters in Toronto, ICLEI, known for its international work on carbon dioxide emissions and urban environmental issues, coordinates its efforts to change planning structures and create sustainable development at the local level.

ICLEI's LA21 initiative -- announced during the United Nations' Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 -- includes a three-year project supported by IDRC, with funds coming also from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the UNDP LIFE Programme, and USAID. This project, called the Model Communities Program (MCP), complements a wider initiative known as the LA21 Communities Network.

MODEL COMMUNITIES

The Model Communities Program is an action planning and research effort involving 14 northern and southern municipalities in 11 countries. Selected for the program were a cross-section of municipalities of varying sizes in different regions that had demonstrated a commitment to sustainable development planning. Using a framework developed by ICLEI, the municipalities are testing approaches to this type of planning. Through this process, LA21 aims to develop replicable models of sustainable urban development. These models will be more widely disseminated via LA21's communities network phase, which will provide municipalities in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and North America with tools to incorporate the concept of sustainability into their planning processes.

"Our whole purpose is to improve the quality of the planning process -- that's the program in a nutshell," says LA21 Project Director Dr [Pratibha Mehta](#).

MAKING CITIES SUSTAINABLE

Prabha Khosla, field manager of the Model Communities Program, explains LA21's approach thus. "We are looking at how to make urban environments sustainable, and we are doing that from the standpoint of local authorities, local communities, and service provision," she says. Khosla and Mehta, who recently returned from a field trip to Quito, Ecuador, one of the 14 municipalities in the program, agree that decentralized, participatory development planning is fundamental to establishing sustainable urban environments, whether the municipality is in the north or south.

As part of the program's challenge in advising municipalities on how to integrate social, economic, and environmental policies, comes the question of how to link different sectors such as health, economic development, and transportation within local authorities with various stakeholders in the community. The stakeholders can include groups with diverse interests and backgrounds, such as industry, community organizations, and trade unions. "The project's fundamental objective is to analyze planning situations from a holistic standpoint and provide interventions," says Mehta. "You must approach the issues from a social, economic and environmental point of view. To do this, you must have stakeholders representing all sectors, and this doesn't happen by itself; you must also develop mechanisms."

ROADMAP FOR MUNICIPALITIES

The *Local Agenda 21 Planning Guide*, developed by ICLEI, is a tool to take municipalities and their community partners through the planning process. The steps include creating opportunities for public participation, setting priorities, examining problems as part of systems, and developing action plans that incorporate environmental, social, and economic objectives as well as indicators for measuring progress.

Where necessary, Mehta and Khosla provide workshops and training programs for local project teams. For project teams in developing countries, LA21 supports the salary of a part-time researcher who assists the project teams to document and assess the municipalities' experiences. So far, three regional workshops and two international conferences have been held to give an opportunity for experience-sharing and discussion of issues.

ROADBLOCKS

Although it is still early in the project, some roadblocks to reshaping decision-making and planning processes have arisen. One challenge is to broaden perspectives to incorporate broader issues. "If you ask someone what their job is, they might say: 'I supply water.' But they don't necessarily mean it in a way that takes the ecosystem into account. The system needs a total overhauling," Mehta says. Lack of institutional frameworks and mechanisms, including many problems related to political processes, are another stumbling block. "Politicians think in terms of the next election. Sustainable development means thinking in terms of the next generation. How do you resolve that?" Mehta asks.

LEARNING MODE

Answers to these types of specific questions are what the project aims to provide. "It is still difficult to pinpoint the main obstacles in implementing the LA21 planning process, the strengths of the municipalities that we can capitalize on, and what institutional frameworks are required for a sustainable planning process. Everyone is in learning mode," Mehta says. Her recent trip to Ecuador illustrates how changes toward sustainable urban development are already starting to take root. "In Quito, we had various departments from the municipalities, non-governmental organizations, and a diverse group of people representing all socio-economic sectors, all sitting down and analyzing the issue of ravines. Each will have a role in decision-making on issues affecting them," she says.

Kirsteen MacLeod is a Toronto-based freelance writer.

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Environment, Society, and Economy: Policies Working Together

by David B. Brooks and Jamie Schnurr



Viet Nam is one of many countries attempting to harmonize environmental, social, and economic policies

Among Southeast Asian nations, Viet Nam is poised to join the next wave of Asian "tigers." But the heady pace of economic growth has carried with it significant social and environmental stresses -- and this in a country where four of every five persons works in agriculture, fisheries, or forestry. Rapid industrialization of these sectors, coupled with hurried urbanization as people are forced from traditional employment in rural areas, has contributed to the degradation of the natural resources that in many ways are the foundation of Viet Nam's society and economy. Therefore, Viet Nam is now attempting to harmonize its environmental, social, and economic objectives through a national environmental action plan.

The Vietnamese experience is by no means unique. In no country of the world are there neat divisions among goals for ecological sustainability, social equity, and economic efficiency. Policies and programs targeted at each objective have impacts in more than one sector -- typically, many sectors -- at once. Nonetheless, researchers and policy makers are more likely to focus on particular problems. Although the

need for policy integration is assumed, it is often left to others to address explicitly.

BARRIERS

Not surprisingly, the task of integrating policy invariably faces significant barriers. Interactions among ecological, social, and economic systems create complex cause and effect relationships that are not easily unravelled. Government agencies, corporate departments, and research and academic institutes are typically set up according to discrete sectors and disciplines, each with its own interests (and interest groups), virtually assuring policy segregation. Our political economy emphasizes discounting the future value of human development, natural resources, and ecological processes in exchange for shorter-term economic development. We find ourselves short of **experience in the effective application** of analytical tools and decision-making processes to identify, evaluate, and manage the necessary trade-offs among objectives.

WHAT SORT OF INTEGRATED POLICY?

One way of confronting the problem of complexity is to define the different levels at which integration should take place, whether this is local, regional, national, or international. Another strategy is to approach policy from an ecosystem perspective, such as fluvial or watershed regions, or bio-regions based on vegetation.

There are varying degrees of integration. A sectoral policy that is sensitive to other sectoral policies or issues could be considered one degree of integration. Command and control forms of legislation that require social and/or environmental impact assessments of development projects, or "end-of-the-pipe" abatement technology applied to industrial production systems, are more advanced forms of integration. Even deeper degrees of integration involve market-based instruments, green or socially responsible procurement measures, and various types of voluntary arrangements to attempt to make environmentally and socially responsible management a priority throughout government, industry, and among citizens. Strategic environmental planning, life cycle assessment and integrated impact assessment techniques are other tools that can foster forms of deeper integration.

One case study suggests that various degrees of integration can occur incrementally along a continuum. In this case, a series of legislated impact assessments created awareness of the environmental impacts of building hydro lines on a preselected site. The "learning" that took place during the assessments and the desire to apply the new knowledge, eventually led to change within the utility, which instituted strategic environmental planning processes and self-directed assessments. In the end, new management practices were introduced that proactively assessed the impacts of alternate sites for its transmission lines.

COORDINATION AND PARTICIPATION

Integration of any sort requires coordination and collaboration in designing, planning, and implementing policy to establish clear objectives and divisions of responsibility. More advanced degrees of integration require more sophisticated forms of communication, decision-making, and organizational behaviour.

Mechanisms and tools such as multi-stakeholder fora and "user-friendly" information systems can provide a range of people with the means for having input into policy processes. As well as contributing to informed decision-making, the process also helps policy makers understand the socio-economic and ecological context in which they work, and all stakeholders to appreciate the trade-offs entailed in a given policy decision.

GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS

Whether multi-stakeholder processes and other forms of participation can be applied in developing

countries depends on specific political, social, and cultural conditions. Systems of "governance" that can anticipate societal responses to various integrative measures and accommodate the policy objectives of a range of stakeholders and sectors are crucial.

In this perspective, governance means the inter and intra-organizational arrangements, decision-making processes, incentives, and disincentives through which government and non-government actors -- including civil society, the public, communities, and the private sector -- influence decisions about societal priorities and resource allocations. It goes beyond the formal institutions of government and recognizes the significant role of non-governmental actors in policy formulation and implementation, particularly in developing countries.

INTEGRATION MODELS

One model for policy integration uses a triangle whose points represent environmental, social, and economic objectives. This approach is useful, but it subsumes political activity under the "social" category. Political activity is the main way that any society does the integration. A tetrahedral -- or three-sided pyramid -- model, where the upper point is politics, would include not only government as elected officials but also all the institutions set up by government to carry out its policies.

Despite coordination and participation strategies, efforts to balance conflicting objectives often cannot avoid some degree of conflict. Success in managing conflict lies in structuring the process so that it involves the affected parties' representatives in the design and evolution of the process itself, as well as in the negotiation of substantive issues.

Interest-based negotiation is one example of a structured, deliberate attempt to cooperatively seek an outcome that attempts to accommodate rather than compromise the interests of all concerned.

LEARNING

In structured multi-stakeholder and negotiation processes, learning is fostered through decision-making guidelines, communication rules and process steps. Learning can also be fostered even when specific structures are absent. In the case of the hydro utility discussed above, legislation, along with encouragement from management and an inter-departmental committee, prompted line departments to learn from their experiences and develop more effective integrative tools.

Learning can best be encouraged when the various parties jointly define rules for communication and negotiation, have equal access to information, create incentives for risk taking, and allow a margin for error. Other positive elements involve the delegation of responsibility and a willingness and ability to capture and build on unexpected results.

IDRC'S APPROACH TO POLICY INTEGRATION

IDRC has taken a dual approach to policy integration as a research question. One component is exploration and the other is "learning by doing." Among other things, the Centre has reviewed all projects it funds under the theme of integrating environmental, social, and economic policy (INTESEP) to identify common threads. It has supported case studies where specific information was lacking and funded workshops in different regions to learn how researchers and policy makers address policy integration.

ROLE OF RESEARCH

There is no longer any question that research can play a valuable role in a successful integration process. For example, research can identify policy options or alternative institutional mechanisms under different scenarios, and analyze their advantages and disadvantages. Research can also develop the tools and

techniques for analysis and evaluation.

Not surprisingly, the policy emphasis in integration varies by region or country. The focus in Africa tends to be on impacts of macro-level economic policies on social development, whereas in Asia the environmental implications of economic growth are paramount.

The findings also highlight challenging questions for policy integration. In what context is integration appropriate? From a governance perspective, how should integration be managed and by whom?

LESSONS LEARNED

One key conclusion drawn from the research to date is that integration hinges on the process by which the trade-offs inherent in any policy choice are evaluated and managed. Political institutions and policy-making processes need to have the flexibility to promote and foster integration when appropriate.

Ultimately, policy integration unleashes processes whose outcomes cannot be predicted at the outset. A variety of stakeholders may be relevant in any given context, which will affect both substance and process. As a result, inputs can arrive from diverse sources, leading to several possible outcomes, any of which may meet goals of equity and sustainability.

David B. Brooks and Jamie Schnurr are chief scientist and research officer, respectively, for integrating environmental, social, and economic policy (INTESEP) at IDRC. Neale MacMillan is editor-in-chief of IDRC Reports.

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INTEGRATION: A SKEPTIC'S VIEW

For the most part, we assume integration is a good thing. We talk quite blithely about integrated rural development or integrated river basin management. Of course, in some sense, such integration is highly desirable. All too often, sectoral policies and programs have been implemented with little concern for, if not sheer ignorance of, their broader effects. However, I am less concerned with integration as a practical tool for implementing policy than as an analytical concept for developing policy.

ANALYSIS PARALYSIS?

I see at least three problems with integration in analysis. First, integration tends to reduce intellectual rigour. It is a fact of life that affects all inter-disciplinary and, to a lesser extent, multi-disciplinary, research. True, academic disciplines often become straitjackets on innovative thinking. But those disciplines did not evolve entirely for their own sakes and they do, in the end, have some meaning. By obscuring those boundaries, making us all into generalists, we risk achieving what one observer called "profound superficiality".

Second, as we integrate across analytical lines in the logical attempt to emulate the real world, the very complexity of the process typically forces us to ever higher levels of abstraction. Hence, we move further and further from policies that can be applied to that real world.

Third, and perhaps most important, I worry that by integrating analytically and deriving policies on the basis of that integration, we are stepping beyond the role of analysts and playing politician. I am not arguing that a clear line exists between value-free analysis and value-laden politics. Rather, our most appropriate analytical role is to present alternatives and suggest how they will work under various scenarios, but not to propose the integration itself.

David B. Brooks is the chief scientist for integrating environmental, social, and economic policy (INTESEP) at IDRC.

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Community Participation in Planning for Jinja, Uganda

by *Anna Borzello*



Jinja, Uganda: model community on Lake Victoria

The Ugandan city of Jinja sits at the headwaters of the Nile River on Lake Victoria. This geographical fact led to the ascent of Jinja from small fishing village to Uganda's industrial heart. By the mid-1950s, the town had a hydroelectric dam, a developed service infrastructure, and a communication system fed by boat, rail, air, and road.

Despite this affluent base, Jinja could not escape the decline triggered by Idi Amin's expulsion of the Asian community from Uganda in 1972 and by civil war. By the end of the decade, the economy and industry were devastated, and investment nearly non-existent. Although new investment has flooded into Uganda since President Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) took power in 1986, most of it has gone to the capital, Kampala.

The same infrastructure that served Jinja in the 1950s is coming under further pressure as villagers move to town in search of work — swelling the already high numbers of unemployed. Even when services are available, many people — with an average per capita income of only US\$215 — cannot afford them.

Environmental degradation

Poverty has had far-reaching effects on the environment. The council has not built public pit latrines because there is running water available. Yet many people with access to water cannot afford to pay for the service, which means they are forced to dump their waste in public places.

Even the search for extra cash has burdened the environment. Many people have turned to rudimentary agricultural practices as a short-term generator of revenue, and have begun cultivating the wetlands that border the town. This practice, in turn, threatens the fish breeding grounds of Lake Victoria.

Local Agenda 21

Joseph Birungi Bagonza, Assistant Town Clerk and Coordinator of the Model Communities Program in Jinja, is confident that the municipal council can find ways to ensure the community receives the services that are now eluding them — and solve their environmental problems in the process. The vehicle is an initiative known as Local Agenda 21 (LA21), in effect, implementing Agenda 21 goals for sustainable development at the local level.

"Local Agenda 21 is very important," Bagonza explains. "This project aims to find models of community participation to help us."

Jinja is part of the global Model Communities Program coordinated by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), which is based in Toronto. The project is an attempt to assess how the LA21 approach — in essence, participatory and sustainable development planning — works in different countries. ICLEI staff are available to provide training for local project teams and to help identify what forms of community participation in planning are appropriate in different cities — a key objective of the global program.

Action plan

Jinja's two-year LA21 project began with an agreement between the council and ICLEI in early 1995, committing the council to preparing and evaluating a local action plan. So far, the council has held workshops for council members and formed a multi-sectoral team to help guide the project.

A stakeholder group — made up of representatives from churches, the chamber of commerce, service organizations, market vendors, women, youth groups and local council members from parish to municipal level — was formed last year. A vital part of the process is to bring together people from diverse backgrounds to work on a common platform. Bagonza is currently helping to set up lower-level stakeholder groups for each of the three divisions in the municipality. When these are in place, the groups will begin identifying the environmental, social, and economic issues that the municipality should deal with first.

Feedback

Although the project is still at an early stage, the variety of responses from public participants are providing valuable information. It has been difficult, for example, to make people fully understand how environmental issues relate to them. "It's almost cultural. Ugandans have never had a problem with natural resources in the past, so they don't see why they should have a problem now," explains Bagonza.

Despite municipal councillors being deeply involved in the process, there have been surprisingly few political challenges so far, partly because the project has not yet developed enough to come into conflict with conventional planning processes.

The political smooth sailing that has prevailed until now is also due to the fact that the LA21 strategy complements the NRM's own decentralization policies. As far back as 1987, the NRM instituted a system known as 'Resistance Councils' that encouraged local participation and self-governance from the village level up. As a result, most Ugandans are familiar with the idea of community participation — although not necessarily in the sectors that the Model Communities Program is asking them to work.

Devolution and power

However, [Konstantin Odongkara](#), ICLEI-funded researcher for the Model Communities project, warns that this situation may change as the project gets under way and the roles of people within the municipality are forced to change. "Once power starts devolving to the community and council resources start following it, there may be some resistance from councillors who may see it as a weakening of their influence," he explains.

One problem, says Bagonza, is convincing stakeholders that they should take community action on issues like sanitation which they see as the council's responsibility. Because stakeholders feel that the problems fall within the council's mandate — and because many do not feel the urgency of environmental problems — they are often unwilling to work for free. By and large, Ugandans are poor, and a day at a seminar to discuss environmental problems means a day unpaid. "If people have the choice of tending to their life or going to a meeting, they tend to their life," says Bagonza.

The council cannot afford the transport and lunch expenses that are involved in attending meetings. As a result, members sometimes do not return to meetings — a situation that is demoralizing and could threaten the sustainability of the project.

Economic benefits

Bagonza has tried to deal with the problem by starting a project to demonstrate that community action really can have direct economic benefits for participants. Jinja produces 25,000 tonnes of refuse a day — nearly all of it organic. Under council direction, a group of women have begun a small composting project on council-donated land to produce manure for farming.

Although the implementation of LA21 in Jinja still has some distance to go, both Bagonza and Odongkara are optimistic that the groundwork they are laying, and the problems they are overcoming, are essential to the eventual success of the program. They are also certain that any lessons they learn can be transferred to other towns in Uganda, many of which face similar problems. "We are still in the process of developing this project. We are talking about what we have seen and we are looking forward to getting feedback from other participating municipalities," says Odongkara. "We feel that we have more allies every day."

Anna Borzello is a journalist based in Kampala, Uganda.

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- **LATIN AMERICA**

- Buga, Columbia
- Quito, Ecuador
- Santos, Brazil

- **AFRICA**

- Mwanza, Tanzania
- Jinja, Uganda
- Durban, South Africa
- Johannesburg, South Africa
- Cape Town, South Africa

- **ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

- Manus Province, Papua New Guinea
- Pimpri Chinchwad, India
- Hamilton, New Zealand
- Johnstone Shire, Australia

- **EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA**

- Lancashire County, UK
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