Structuring Low-Income Housing Projects in Developing Countries

Focus: Rebuilding After Conflict

- Semester
  Fall 2018
- Instructor
  Dr. Reinhard Goethert

- Credits
  3-0-9H
- Schedule
  TR 11:00 – 12:30
- Location
  3-329
- Prerequisites:
  Permission of instructor
- Type of subject
  Lecture, seminar

FOCUS FOR FALL 2018
HOUSING RECONSTRUCTION AFTER CONFLICTS will be the context for project explorations. The ongoing conflicts in the world must come to an end, and the hard work of rebuilding begins.

We will explore approaches to rebuilding using project documents by development agencies. Participants will be required to find previous rebuilding project reports to use as the basis for comparison in the course. Ideally 3-4 projects will be compared during the term to be examined by teams of students. Consideration will be given to also comparing projects after disasters (hurricanes, earthquakes, etc.) and ‘standard’ projects addressing seemingly limitless demand. How does ‘reconstruction after conflict’ differ?

- General Course overview
  This course explores the divergent motivations and resultant dynamics among international funders, national ministries, local authorities and project benefactors in housing projects. ISSUES OF DEVELOPMENT ARE TESTED AGAINST ACTUAL PROJECTS IN A COMPARATIVE FORMAT.
  The course is intended as an introduction and understanding of current issues in Third World housing policies and projects. It targets those interested in a practical understanding of how projects are prepared by development agencies.

THE COURSE PREPARES STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, AND STRESSES HANDS-ON ‘REAL-LIFE’ ISSUES THAT CHALLENGE PROFESSIONALS.
WHAT MUST PLANNERS AND ARCHITECTS UNDERSTAND FOR EFFICACIOUS DESIGN?
Learning objectives – basic course structure

• Focus of the course: developing countries, low-income, housing, the project instrument; development agencies/governments/project implementation/users. How do projects consider reconstruction taking inconsideration the magnitude of destruction?
• Fall 2018 projects to be reviewed target urban development projects
• Issues will be explored and include a basic understanding and background on Third World challenges, and an understanding of the context in which projects are prepared.

• Awareness of how to prepare project proposals following accepted customary practice, particularly the ‘logical project framework’ approach. Is this useful after conflict situations?
• Identification of issues and dilemmas among the various actors when implementing projects. Awareness of the varied perspectives and motivations of the lender, government, local agencies, and users.
• Understanding of tradeoffs and alternatives in project practice.
• An active discussion format focuses on how to address issues, formulate an argument, and advocate a point of view

• Interest groups self-formed in the class will champion one project example during the term
• Projects are self-selected but focused on rebuilding housing after conflicts.
• A ‘Project Appraisal’ (World Bank terminology) report or equivalent which will be basis of class exploration. Sometimes called “Project Document:, in architecture terms they would be called contract documents and construction specifications.
• Class members are required to find a reconstruction project during the first 2 weeks to be able to continue in the course.

• An issues overview and discussion will be followed by a team presentation: how the project dealt with issue. The teams will present a summary of the topic, following an agreed format to allow comparison; (focus is on brevity and analysis)
• Reading assignments or bibliography references: Handouts and web links will be available for each topic each week.

• Occasional ‘mini project-dilemmas’ and ‘big issues’ exercises will challenge the class and your thinking
• An email list will be set up: 2018 Structuring@mit.edu (tentative)

Completion requirements

Deliverables at end of term:
1 Digital compilation of weekly team issue presentations, which will be made available to class in a course Dropbox
2 A project proposal of your choosing that relates to housing rebuilding, following a ‘logical project framework’, an individual effort.
3 A final debate: a 12-minute debate among the teams championing their project examined; an opportunity to review and to reflect on the project your group analyzed; it debates the question: “Which is the best model for rebuilding?”

Evaluation criteria and grading (basis for a grade)
Grading is based on class participation and weekly team presentation (40%), final individual paper (30%) and final team debate (30%).
GENERAL TOPIC AREAS

1 - “GETTING UP TO SPEED”
Overview and positioning of issues in the Third World. The goal is to develop a common information base for the class. We will review a ‘Housing Map’ as an introduction to the shifts in perspective of donors from the early 50’s to current thinking. The important ‘migrant trajectory’ will be examined, and basic list of ‘Basic Givens’ will be discussed. Approximately the first two weeks will be spent in positioning the issues. Key projects will be selected for further analysis during the term.

   Special consideration will be given to the situation after conflicts that affect any efforts at reconstruction.

2 - “WHERE DO PROJECTS COME FROM?”
An examination of the process of project identification, considering ‘rational’ strategies as well as political realities. A review of the key actors and their varied agendas. The project summary (for example, the Appraisal Document of the World Bank) and the process of developing the document will be considered, particularly from the perspective of rational project development. Approximately one week.

3 - “DETERMINING THE DETAILS”
Examination of the various components of a project: explicit goals, organization, staffing, project costs and funding flow, cost recovery, beneficiary issues, community participation. One week will be spent on each topic. Approximately seven weeks.

4 - “LESSON DRAWING”
Reflecting on the projects reviewed, and what would be useful for next projects. Review of monitoring and evaluation techniques, and debate of ‘best project’ attributes. Approximately 2 weeks.

SOME TOPICS IN PROJECT COMPARISONS

1 – MAIN GOALS AND PROJECT FEATURES
Perceived problems that the project addresses; strategies adopted and main features of the project (where will the money be spent)

2 – OVERALL COSTS OF THE PROJECT; Funding flows (how is the money distributed down from the various levels – funds tend to go to National ministries, then flow down to local authorities, and finally to families in support of housing, etc. How are funds recovered? (by subsidy, fees, mortgages, etc.)

3 – AGENCIES INVOLVED IN PROJECT. Listing of all agencies and their importance to the project. ‘Bubble’ diagram of how the agencies are interlinked

4 – If available, STAFFING requirements. Number, skill level. (often not available)

5 – BENEFICIARY ISSUES: How users found, selected, and what will they pay. Terms of funds, etc. to user: how funds made available (lump sum, mortgage, etc.)

6 – PARTICIPATION: How is participation handled? Who does it, for what.

7 – POST-PROJECT. How does the project handle land speculation, non-performance, subletting, maintenance? (often information not available)

8 – MONITORING, EVALUATION, FEEDBACK. How is handled in project
SOME UNDERLYING ISSUES OF CLASS EXPLORATIONS

Changing world
Multi-lateral agencies vs NGOs as key redevelopment players
Growth of $-lateral agencies (Bill Gates, etc.) over bilateral
and multi-lateral agencies | Rise of China, and other so-called
developing countries | Decline of the US as model and power
player |
Attacks on efficacy of official development aid, for example,
note book “Dead Aid” | Challenge of speed and
scale of growth | WB: “50 years is enough”

Structuring of projects
Goals: ‘Good enough’ vs Ideal
Single focus vs broad based multi-sector development
Large development agency vs small NGO | Self-reconstruction
Big money vs small money: influence, change, flexibility, risk
Politics! Competing groups.

Implementing issues
Power/leverage with funding
Gifts, incentives, threats
Related, use of media
Weak link the low paid government staff?

Long-term perspective - sustainability
Life beyond funded program
‘Hello-Goodbye’ approach

Solutions
Self-rebuilding vs Agency led
Micro-loans for everything
Participation by all every time; communities rule!
And now ‘incremental housing’ (formerly called ‘site and services’.)

New ways of working
Indirect, distance support (video conferences
techniques, etc.) Rise of cell phone, other
technology (should internet be included?)

And YOU
You will be seen as a leader by virtue of you attending MIT
Decision-making - not details - will be most important?