



# Best Practices Database

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## Cato Manor Development Project, Durban

*South Africa*

**Best Practice**

**New for 2002**

- Categories:** Urban and Regional Planning:  
- community-based planning  
-urban renewal
- Poverty Eradication:  
- income generation  
-vocational training
- Social Services:  
- public safety

**Level of Activity:** Neighbourhood

**Ecosystem:** Tropical/Sub-Tropical

## Summary

The purpose of the Cato Manor Development Project (CMDP) has been to reverse a legacy of apartheid-era planning 'worst practice', and subsequent unplanned settlement, poverty, internecine community conflict, and poor urban environmental quality. Cato Manor is strategically located near to the centre of South Africa's second largest metropolitan area, and it will soon house over 100 000 poorer people under neighbourhood conditions which external adjudicators now regard as exemplary in international context. Yet, prior to the intervention of the Cato Manor Development Association (CMDA), the area was nationally infamous for a history of forced racial removals (150 000 displaced) and, more recently, for land and home invasions, internecine political conflict and violence amongst poor communities, and an absence of urban services.

In a context of a vacuum of planning authority and legitimacy in the area during the late 1980s and early 1990s, an NGO the Cato Manor Development Association (CMDA) was formed, and it initiated efforts to: Socially stabilize the area, introduce participatory planning and services upgrading, and then substantially improve housing, social services, economic opportunities and general neighbourhood quality. The result has been a project that has drawn consistent praise from the democratically-elected two-term Metropolitan Mayor Mlaba and his Metropolitan Council (the Mayor remains the Chair of the Metropolitan Special Projects Committee of which the CMDP is a leading element); the national government (the CMDP has been designated a "Presidential Lead Project"); and donor groups including the European Union

## Narrative

Situation Before Initiative

Cato Manor was an area of forced racial removals during the apartheid years, 150 000 people being removed during the 1950s. With the breakdown of apartheid controls, there was growth of unplanned settlements of poor communities, and no effective planning for the area. At project inception, about 25 000 people lived here without any services.

### Establishment of Priorities

Priorities were set by the Board of the NGO, the Cato Manor Development Association (CMDA). This reflected the views of the affected local communities, planning expert groups, and democratic local and provincial government representatives. The first priorities were to socially stabilize the area, and reduce internecine violence and land and home invasions. These were followed by redevelopment priorities, beginning with an interest in physical services upgrading and later centering upon expanding economic opportunities.

### Main Objectives and Strategies

The CMDA's objectives and strategies are determined by its Board, and have focused on improving the quality of life in Cato Manor itself. The project is also aimed to be replicable elsewhere in Durban, South Africa, or abroad. The 1998 First Annual Work Plan for the CMDP of the European Union stated inter alia that:

"The project purpose is to provide housing, infrastructure services, and access to jobs for the poor people in the Durban Metropolitan region. In addition, the project serves a secondary purpose, i.e. to develop solutions for the poor that have replicability elsewhere"

Currently the CMDP is serving as the major role-model for the Durban Metropolitan Council in its approach to area-based development projects.

### Mobilisation of Resources

The CMDA began with almost no resources and was initially based largely upon the volunteering of time by local academics and professionals. Once the CMDA became formalised in 1993, it was able to attract funding and took on permanent staff, and it incrementally grew its capacity to cope with the expanding throughput of practical project work. After an initial planning phase, the efficiency of CMDA increased dramatically, with an approximate 720% increase in capital expenditures on urban services per unit CMDA staff cost over the period 1995-2000.

Most of CMDA's technical staff (over 605 women) are drawn from the local (Durban) environment, although the European Union has also since sponsored two international experts to the project on a full-time basis. Some technical and administrative assistance is also provided on an 'as-the-need-arises' basis by the Durban Metropolitan Council. Financial resources were initially drawn from the SA government, Provincial Housing Board and Metropolitan Council, and subsequently expanded through funding from the European Union.

### Process

The CMDP confronted a very difficult urban development challenge, insofar as the locality was characterised by high unemployment, internecine violence, land invasions, and a politicised planning legacy. Government was undergoing major transformation and exercised little authority in the area. This legacy was approached through a combination of 'bottom-up' participatory planning and inclusive governance of the NGO, together with efforts at rebuilding local civil society, and mobilising external resources to upgrade living conditions.

Once there was consensus on priorities, and confidence and security were established in local communities, programmes of basic services delivery, extension of in situ freehold tenure rights and/or provision of serviced land, and the provision of social services were introduced. Land and homes were

allocated on the basis of pre-existing community membership. This has been followed by the establishment of a local economic development programme, including the establishment of small businesses, skills training programmes etc., focusing particularly on women.

Clear and effective distinctions have been made between: (a) inclusive systems of development NGO governance, (b) professionalised and skilled methods of development management within the NGO, and (c) participation in on-the-ground development processes by local beneficiaries.

Benchmark studies, and regular monitoring of project progress are conducted by external evaluators, and the results of these are reported to donors, the CMDA Board and local communities. The project is adapted and amended as a result of such feedback. Quantitative assessments are continually made by internal and external evaluators of: the numbers of serviced sites delivered, the numbers and quality of public buildings, small business or housing loans issued and redeemed, etc. External evaluators and CMDA staff and Board members also regularly assess improvements in the quality of intangibles, such as community cohesion and satisfaction.

A variety of discipline-specific methodologies have been applied in external evaluations, including peer reviews of evaluator's studies. The inclusive structures of governance of the CMDA, and separate evaluation efforts of different donor groups, provide a cross-spectrum of evaluation parameters and insights into project progress. These provide an array of mechanisms to ensure compliance with evaluator recommendations, which is not typically true of projects that rely upon a single funder.

## Results Achieved

Over thirty projects on new enterprise development are completed or in progress, and nearly seven thousand people have received skills training. Homes have been secured for tens of thousands of poor people. Fourteen kilometres of roads have been built, and twenty four projects on bulk services and drainage infrastructure have been completed. Twelve schools, and eight sports fields/parks have already been established or are in progress, as well as three community halls, three libraries and two health centres.

The efficiency of the project in terms of overhead costs per rate of capital expenditure has been externally assessed as considerably in advance of anything provided by the public sector (CMDA has a staff cost to capex ratio of about 1:25). These cost efficiencies have been achieved at the same time as a deepening of civil society and public participation in development in the area. For example, there are now literally dozens of community choirs operating in Cato Manor (their exact number varies over time) whereas in the late 1980s there were none; and tourism, culture and the arts are flourishing (for illustrations see the press clippings).

Numerous journals of professional societies have documented the success of the CMDP (see for example copies of building industries and architects journals attached). The CMDA is now used as a role-model by two of its main donors (the European Union and the Durban Metropolitan Council) for the extension of area-based management (ABM) into the remainder of the metropolitan area.

## Sustainability

The CMDP is Durban and South Africa's pioneer in large-scale, holistic and integrated area-based urban development project targeted at the poor. The sustainability of the project can be partly measured in relation to its own objectives, which set specific physical servicing targets that have all subsequently been reached within budget. Freehold properties have been allocated to all, unless there is stated preference for rental.

Operational and maintenance aspects of public servicing costs will be taken over by local communities and the Council. All significant physical project work has been subject to the prior approvals of South African Environmental Impact Assessment requirements, these being amongst the most stringent in the developing world. Cultural continuity has been assisted by an extensive review of the heritage of the

area, and its incorporation into physical planning; and the establishment of a major tourism project including a tourism centre and a craft merchandising initiative based around the celebration of the precinct's history. Women's leadership in such programmes has been emphasized.

The CMDP is now moving into a period in which private economic development processes are taking over from public investment as the focus of activity. New institutions are being formed which will use some of the local asset base created through public and donor interventions (e.g. serviced industrial land) to leverage further private investment into an appropriately geared LED institution. The socio-political stabilisation of the area, and the provision of a coherent planning framework and public infrastructure, together with its central location, are now making Cato Manor increasingly attractive to both private household and firms. Private market demand forces are, therefore, increasingly ensuring project sustainability.

### Lessons Learned

A dedicated urban management agency such as the CMDA can certainly make an effective intervention into a complex and politicised environment, and make a difference. This is because:

- The nature of the CMDP, in terms of its sectoral foci, its location, its chosen target groups, and its intervention logic which was not only consistent with local, democratically-determined policy perspectives; but was also congruent with internationally-derived perspectives on efficient and equitable patterns of urban development.
- The project supported an already existing development NGO that had limited capacity, but strong vision, expertise and legitimacy, and good working relationships with democratically-elected authorities.
- The project supported important areas of development initiative by national and local government, and did not seek to replace them; and it then extended and elaborated upon such initiatives, quietly bringing the best of international experience to bear in 'adding value' to the process.
- Every component of a multi-sectoral urban development programme must fit into an internal logic to add value and not cause a diversion from stated goals.
- Ideally, within integrated, area-based development programmes the LED component should be implemented alongside other development programmes from the start, and form the basis for long term sustainability.
- The success of the project is closely related to the fact that it supported and enhanced a system of local urban development management that was:
  - socially inclusive in terms of its governance structures,
  - expertise-centred in terms of its management systems,
  - in terms of timing, beyond a planning phase, and starting into a delivery phase,
  - cost efficient, since it was managed with financial and accounting rigour, yet was also enterprising in outlook.

### Transferability

The transferability of the project has been widely recognised, not least by its core donors who have already initiated a project to this effect (see above). A research and documentation project has also recently been approved that will provide for the preparation of best practice 'manuals' and course modules based upon the CMDP experience. This will be used to train future urban development practitioners in the Durban metropolitan area, and southern Africa, beginning in 2003.

The replicability of the Cato Manor Development Project was initially identified in early 2000 in

policy documents issued by the Durban Unicity Committee. This committee of the Metropolitan Council was mandated with formulating the policy processes and strategies to be followed in Durban associated with the final phase of post-apartheid restructuring of local and metropolitan government in South Africa. The Council that has since been elected in terms of this national pattern of restructuring has opted to place the Cato Manor Development Project model at the centre of their initiative to establish area-based management of development, throughout the metropolitan area of some 2,8 million people. This exercise is also being financially supported by the European Union. The recognition accorded to the CMDP in professional journals such as those appended here, together with the current preparation of training materials based upon the CMDP experience, will likely ensure the potential replicability of aspects of the project throughout southern Africa. Even today, the CMDP is taken as a basis for several university courses for example in the U.S. and the Netherlands, and the organisation's web-site records a remarkable 12 000 hits per month.

## Key Dates

1993 - Registration of CMDA as Section 21 (not for profit) development association - basis for external funding set

1995 - Designation of CMDP as a Presidential Lead Project of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of national

Government - recognition for major funding by SA government

1997 - Financing Agreement between SA Government and European Union on the CMDP - recognition for major funding by EU

2000 - Mid-term review of EU financing of the CMDP - endorsement of results.

## References

W Peters et al, Rebuilding Cato Manor, KwaZulu-Natal Institute of Architects Journal, Vol 25, No 3, 2000, pp 1-13

E Semmelink, Cato Manor - sustainable and replicable, South African Builder, November/December, 2001, pp 23-28.

J McCarthy, Syntnthesis Report - Midterm Review of EU Funding - Cato Manor Development Project, European Commission, Pretoria, 68p.

Several articles in Natal Mercury and similar newspapers

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**Type of Organization:** Non-governmental organisation (NGO)

## Nominating Organization

Same as above

## Partners

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**Type of Organization:** Local Authority

**Type of Partner Support:** Political Support

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**Type of Partner Support:** Financial Support

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Year	Total US\$	EU (%)	Metro CI (%)	SA Gov't (%)
1998	3,000,000	0	19	90
1999	8,000,000	20	15	65
2000	9,000,000	50	20	30
2001	6,000,000	40	10	50