

NEWS



Delegation from Durban goes to São Paulo for workshop on informal settlements upgrading

Between last July 28 and 30, a delegation composed of political representatives and technicians of the eThekweni Municipality, as well as of representatives from the academia and civil society of Durban, visited the Housing Secretariat of the City of São Paulo (SEHAB). The visit continued the cooperation project between São Paulo and Durban on housing issues, as part of the METROPOLIS Initiative “Mentoring on Upgrading Informal Settlements”, which also counts on the support of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

The first two days of the meetings between representatives of these two METROPOLIS member cities were held at the municipal offices in São Paulo. During these days, participants were exposed to the various social housing programs run by different stakeholders from the public and private sectors in the city level, as well as in the regional and national levels. On the third day, both teams made a technical visit to a slum

upgrading project in an area called Favela do Sapé.

Day 1

On July 28, the main goals of the São Paulo city government regarding the production of housing units, slum upgrading and land regularization were presented. The presentations included the program of the Brazilian national government *Minha Casa, Minha Vida* (“my house, my life” in Portuguese) and its funding mechanisms for housing production, which encompass various financial models to the different families of beneficiaries, from subsidized housing units to mortgage credit. According to the participants, this was highly relevant information for the Durban delegation, since they are currently seeking for funding models to boost housing production in South Africa.

The first day also served for two representatives of the Durban delegation (Beryl Mphakathi, Head of Human Settlements, and Laura Hunt, Senior Architect from the Architecture and Engineering Unit) to present the history of cooperation between the two cities and the key challenges faced by Durban in promoting social housing and precarious settlements upgrading.

Day 2

The day started with the staff of the Urban Development Department of the City of São Paulo presenting how the participatory process of revising the Strategic Master Plan of São Paulo was structured through numerous public hearings, participatory workshops and also a virtual platform. Moreover, participants discussed in depth the main innovations of the new Master Plan focusing on housing policy instruments, induction of the social function of property and environmental management tools.

Afterwards, representatives of SEHAB showed the contribution of the Housing Secretariat to revise the Plan primarily through the demarcation of new Special Zones of Social Interest (ZEIS) in the city rising from 964 to 2546 perimeters of ZEIS.

In the last block of presentations of the day, directors of Regional Technical Divisions and also from Social Work Management of SEHAB showed the different methodologies applied in social work conducted by the Department focused mainly on setting up Management Councils to develop the guidelines, approve and monitor the implementation of the Plan of Urbanization for ZEIS.

There was also a presentation from Mrs. Bisini Naidoo, Academic Coordinator from the University of South Africa (UNISA), about the social work developed in Welbedagt East and a presentation about the program *Braços Abertos*, (“open arms” in Portuguese), whose primary focus is to reintegrate in the society and formal employment extremely vulnerable families due to drug use, by its coordinator and special advisor to the Secretary of Government of São Paulo, Mr. Mauricio Dantas.

Day 3

The participants visited the urbanization of the Favela do Sapé, in the region of Butantã, which is located at the southern zone of São Paulo. Through this site visit the delegation from Durban could view the technical aspects discussed in previous days finally applied in reality: underway urbanization in the area, infrastructure and production of housing units that will reintegrate 2.427 families who previously lived in substandard conditions and irregular along the Sapé creek.

Main outcomes

The outcomes from this visit will base the main debates about the closure of this Initiative during the **11th METROPOLIS World Congress in October in Hyderabad**, and serve as a pilot project to be known and replicated by other cities.

At least 12 people from eThekweni Municipality (Durban) participated in the study visit to São Paulo. The delegation included four councillors, two senior managers, four municipal officials, one academic, and one member of a local nongovernmental organization in the area of Welbedagt East. "There is a lot that has been learned from the Brazilian experience, and a lot will be documented and used in future", reported Fezile Njokweni, Chief Policy Analyst at Durban's Municipal Institute of Learning (Mile).

"This event allows an exchange of experiences on social housing between the two countries. It is very enriching. Technical cooperation allows us to plan a strategy that meets the housing needs of the South African city and thus also qualify our technicians" concluded Mr. Jose Floriano, Secretary for Housing of the City of São Paulo. The activities of the visit were followed closely also by the Housing Production Director from the Brazilian Ministry of Cities, Mrs. Maria do Carmo Avesani, and the Executive Superintendent of Caixa Economica Federal (the Brazilian financial institution which supports the *Minha Casa Minha Vida* program), along with representatives from the São Paulo Housing Department and Urban Development Department staff.

Click here to download the report with the main findings of this visit, the background activities and the next steps of this METROPOLIS Initiative.

Photo: Technical visit to Favela do Sapé (by SEHAB, São Paulo Housing Secretariat)

For more pictures of the visit, click here to check the album at the METROPOLIS Flickr.