

IIUD

INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL  
URBAN DEVELOPMENT



### **MISSION**

*The institute for international urban development is committed to promoting sustainable urban and regional development through community-based planning initiatives and research. We operate at the policy, program and project levels with teams that include regional experts and members of our network of local affiliates.*

### **NEWS FROM THE FIELD**

**January-March 2009**

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## **News from the Island of Ireland**

### **Fourth Annual ICLRD Conference—Jan 22/23**

After months of planning, the ICLRD fourth annual conference on Achieving *Balanced Regional Development: Dynamic Regions, Spatial Strategies and Collaboration* was very well attended and received by 132 delegates, speakers and chairs from the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland, England, Hungary, the Skane Region in Sweden, and the states of Massachusetts, Maryland and Virginia. Letterkenny was chosen as the venue to highlight the ongoing efforts with Derry/Londonderry to develop the cross-border Northwest Gateway. John Driscoll organized the event with his ICLRD colleagues in Ireland and the Institute formed the bookends of the event with opening remarks by John, and Frank Vigier gave the closing summary.

**Press Release, January 22, 2009:**

### **Minister Kitt Addresses Major Cross-Border Planning Conference**

Mr. Michael Kitt, T.D., Minister of State at the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, today (22 January 2009) addressed a major cross-border planning conference in Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, organized by the International Centre for Local and Regional Development (ICLRD). The conference was also addressed by Mr. Conor Murphy, MP MLA, Minister for Regional Development in Northern Ireland.

The theme of this year's conference, which is being attended by policy-makers, public bodies, academics and non-Government organizations from both sides of the border and from abroad, is "Achieving Balanced Regional Development - Dynamic Regions, Spatial Strategies and Collaboration," which will focus on the impact of spatial strategies and designated growth centres - such as gateways - on balanced regional and local development. Over the two days of the conference, a broad range of international speakers will share their experiences and know how on planning initiatives, including the regional impact of cross-border planning initiatives on both sides of the border. The conference and the Minister's address is timely, given that the plenary session of the North South Ministerial Council being held tomorrow in Magee Campus, Derry, is also focusing on cross-border initiatives.

In his address, Minister Kitt emphasized the need for cross-border co-operation and collaboration to maximize opportunities on the island of Ireland to boost our economic performance and competitiveness. "In global terms, we're a small nation on a small island. In order to withstand and recover from economic shocks, we must maximize our strengths and ensure that we are well-positioned to grasp the opportunities that we have or that come our way. As well as our shared cultural heritage, we also have strong (and indeed growing) economic links with Northern Ireland. The reality we must all face is that we are operating within an all-island economy and so we have to start thinking in those terms. We are stronger when we work together - we can achieve more through collaboration than competition."

The Minister voiced his strong support for the Framework for Collaboration on Spatial Strategies on the Island of Ireland, which has been drafted by officials and experts from both the Republic and Northern Ireland to highlight the synergies and shared opportunities presented by the National Spatial Strategy (NSS) and the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland in cross-border spatial development in order to maximize the region's development. It is expected that the Framework will shortly be considered and endorsed by both Governments.

The Minister called on everyone to put a fair wind behind the Collaborative Spatial Framework, which will present challenges but also significant potential benefits arising from greater collaboration.

"We must see it as a starting point which will require commitment, energy, support and clear actions from all stakeholders - central and local Governments, Government and State Agencies, the private sector, academia and NGOs."

The Minister went on to inform the conference that the NSS is to be refreshed and updated in the coming months by identifying the achievements to date, highlighting best practice, the challenges for the future and the best spatial policy responses to those challenges. The dovetailing of the NSS Refresh with an ongoing review of the Northern Ireland's RDS and the adoption of the Collaborative Spatial Framework are essentially interlinked for the positive and future-looking and implementation of cross-border development.

He also highlighted the need for a focus on creating and nurturing competitive cities which act as drivers of wider regional development: “Cities and larger urban areas that are attractive, competitive, sustainable and dynamic are one of the key drivers for regional development. International research clearly shows that successful countries and regions must have successful cities and urban areas at their core. As well as bringing economies of scale, good linkage between businesses and a concentrated skilled workforce, competitive cities contribute to the formation of competitive regions by acting economic engines that promote regional growth and employment.

The process of updating and refreshing the NSS will look at our network of cities, our gateways and hub towns and set out what needs to be done to assure and accelerate their development as drivers for their wider regions and more rural environs. Challenging questions will also need to be addressed within the NSS update and refresh process about the roles that rural areas must play in the wider context of regional development.”

Note: The full text of Minister Kitt’s address is available on the DEHLG website: [www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie)

### **Sustainability Study**

Erick Guerra also attended the conference and helped out before heading off for field visits and interviews with John Driscoll and Paddy Gray from the University of Ulster for the ICLRD Sustainability Study. Please see Decembers *News from the Field* for more information on this research. Visits were made to housing estates in Londonderry and Antrim with long histories of sectarian violence where they met terrific community organizers who have brought divided communities together.

John Driscoll

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### **Technical Assistance to Sedibeng District Municipality, South Africa**

IIUD has been awarded a subcontract with KV3 engineers in South Africa to provide technical assistance to the Sedibeng District Municipality and the Local Municipality of Emfuleni, about one hour outside of Pretoria, to prepare plans to integrate and upgrade three to four established townships in the area housing a large number of low-income residents. Key elements of this project include:

- Identifying and designing corridors and hubs for economic, social, and government activities;
- Creating plans for upgrading of roads and pedestrian areas;
- Formulating open space plans;
- Developing a strategy to preserve and valorize local historic sites;

- Creating an environmental management plan.

IIUD will work to engage community residents in all aspects of the project by conducting meetings with key stakeholders, including community leaders, business owners, ward committees and local groups active in the townships. Stakeholders' viewpoints will be instrumental in the formulation of neighborhood development strategies.

Mona Serageldin, Alejandra Mortarini and Christa Lee-Chuvala are traveling to South Africa this week to visit the sites, begin to work with the local team and hold community meetings. This project will be completed over a six-month period, finishing in September.

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### UN-HABITAT 22<sup>nd</sup> Governing Council

In March, Mona Serageldin attended the 22<sup>nd</sup> Governing Council of UN-HABITAT held at the agency's headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. She was invited to participate in a Special Dialogue on Investing in Youth-Led Development opened by the Director of UN-HABITAT, Ms. Anna Tibaijuka. The Dialogue discussed HABITAT's new Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-Led Development, an initiative that will provide small-scale grants to grassroots youth-led organizations around the world to demonstrate the value of investing in and engaging youth to promote development.

#### Christa Lee-Chuvala

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### ICLRD e-journal

The ICLR is in the process of publishing its first of a biannual e-journal featuring six articles related to data-driven policy and planning – evidence-informed in the lingo of the isles – and an update on ICLR activities. Institute staff are editing and preparing the final document which will be made available in May, 2009. The journal includes the following articles:

#### **Spatial Indicators and the Mapping of Strategic Infrastructure and Key Services on the Island of Ireland: Creating a Baseline for Infrastructure, Transport Networks and Community Accessibility**

- Justin Gleeson, All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO)
- Introduction by Martin Spollen & Johann Gallagher, Strategic Investment Board, Northern Ireland

#### **How Data Enhance Evidence-Informed Spatial Planning**

- Mike Thompson, Department for Regional Development (Northern Ireland) and Dave Walsh, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Ireland)

#### **Using GeoDirectory to analyse patterns of Residential Growth in the Greater Dublin Area**

- Peter Foley, Prof. Stewart Fotheringham, Ali Robinson and Annette Egan, National Centre for Geocomputation, NUI Maynooth, Ireland (see map below)

#### **Limitations and Challenges of Evidence-Based Planning:**



and racially diverse. Carran Crescent, a 20-unit publicly led development in Enniskillen Town (Fermanagh District Council, Northern Ireland), is branded as the first socially integrated housing scheme in Northern Ireland and was the winner of the national UK Housing Award's 'Outstanding Achievement Award' in 2007, jointly held by the Chartered Institute of Housing and Inside Housing. In the Republic of Ireland, Adamstown, the planned 10,000-unit private development on the Dublin ring road, takes a different approach by promoting mixed communities through affordability requirements. Yet challenges remain at both developments – Carran Crescent is a conservative and small scale intervention in an already peaceful and mixed estate and Adamstown's private approach, based on strong housing demand, looks unfeasible in today's economy – emphasize the challenges of building and managing affordable housing in general but also of using public housing policy to address wider social issues.



Erick Guerra and Paddy Gray at the Derry/London Derry Housing Executive

The Taoiseach, Mr. Brian Cowen TD, received a copy of the 2009 edition of *The Journal of Cross Border Studies in Ireland* in Government Buildings in Dublin. Francois Vigier wrote an article for the current issue -- *Learning to be Good Neighbors: the Role of Cross-border Spatial Planning in Ireland*. Frank captured the essence of the ICLRD story and notes that “a remarkable transformation is under way on the island of Ireland...and the lessons to be learned from this experience provide a model to societies emerging from conflict situations...”

You can find a PDF of Vol. 4 of the journal that includes Frank's article on the Centre for Cross Border Studies website <http://borderireland.info/info/pdetail.php?iref=2208>. and follow to page 53.



John happened to be in Dublin when the journal was presented (left).

**Taoiseach receives a copy of the 2009 research journal** From left to right, are: Annmarie O’Kane, Dr Patricia Clarke, Dr Gibson, Joe Shiels, the Taoiseach, Mairead Hughes, Dr Travers, John Driscoll (Director, International Centre for Local and Regional Development), Patricia McAllister, Andy Pollak (Director, Centre for Cross Border Studies), and Eimear Donnelly.

**Editor:**

**Mary Shia**