

The World Cup 2010 and the urban poor 'World class cities' for all?

By Ilda Lindell, Maria Hedman and Kyle Nathan-Verboomen

South Africa was expecting to benefit by hosting the World Cup 2010. For urban disadvantaged groups, however, the reality proved very different. Street vendors and marketers were among the excluded. Evictions caused many of them to lose their livelihoods, and strict regulations made it difficult for them to derive economic benefit from the mega-event. This Policy Note explores their predicament, as well as the responses of grassroots organizations. Finally, lessons are drawn for cities aspiring to host similar events in the future.

Introduction

'Place marketing' has become a common strategy by which governments attempt to deal with the challenges of international competition in the 'globalisation era.' This is also evident in African cities and is manifested in strategies aimed at hosting international events. These strategies are driven by the assumption that, through exposure to international media, the host cities will attract foreign investment and generate economic growth. Promoting an image of a modern and orderly city becomes paramount in these strategies. The urban poor and their informal activities are often perceived as incompatible with such an image. Consequently, international events held in African cities (including summits such as the Commonwealth meeting in Kampala in 2007 and sports events such as the African Cup of Nations in Ghana in 2008) increasingly set in motion interventions that range from evictions to various projects of urban renewal that often involve the relocation of poorer urban groups. These intensifying modernising endeavours tend to treat urban informality as a nuisance to be eradicated and as an unhealthy deviation from internationally accepted standards of urbanism. In this way, these initiatives contradict current international policy that encourages support for informal income activities on account of their beneficial effects on urban poverty.

The World Cup 2010 recently held in South Africa is a good illustration of the dynamics triggered by a mega-

event. According to the authorities, hosting the games would generate economic benefits for everyone. For many, however, the reality proved to be very different, as evictions, relocations and restrictions caused many to lose their livelihoods or hindered them in benefiting economically from the event. This Policy Note addresses the impacts of World Cup 2010 and related interventions on disadvantaged urban groups, with a particular focus on street vendors. It will be argued that their exclusion (economic and political) during the event, rather than being an unintended outcome, ensued from transformations in urban governance intended to secure the interests of powerful actors. The role of civil society organisations in voicing the concerns of the disadvantaged will also be discussed. On the basis of the concrete World Cup 2010 event, lessons will then be drawn of potential relevance to other cities on the continent and beyond aspiring to host similar events.

FIFA, corporate sponsors and street vendors

Hosting a World Cup involves massive investments in infrastructure and security, as well as accommodating select corporate interests. In line with the requirements of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the host country is required to provide eight to ten large

stadiums of modern standard and located in its major cities. In South Africa since its bid was accepted in 2004 by the World Cup selection committee, the nine host cities have undergone a series of rejuvenation projects. These projects were intended to raise the host cities to the status of 'world class cities' and to provide an advantageous base for the corporate sponsors of the event. Construction and renewal projects and the establishment of demarcation zones in accordance with FIFA's strict regulations resulted in the relocation of tens of thousands of informal vendors. ¹FIFA developed a Rights Protection Programme aimed specifically at supporting the event's corporate rights holders and preventing organised 'ambush marketing,' counterfeiters and unauthorised traders.² The corporate rights holders included FIFA partners (Coca Cola, Emirates, etc.), FIFA World Cup sponsors (McDonald's, Castrol, etc.) and national sponsors (Telkom, Prasa, etc.). Each of these rights holders had exclusive access to profit opportunities as a result of their contributions to the event. They had immunity from all competition within all demarcated zones of the host cities, for example fan parks, public viewing areas, fan boulevard walkways, MTN Ekasi TVs, park and rides and drop-off zones. Anyone else wishing to profit from the event, such as local informal vendors, faced a number of restrictive by-laws regarding access and the use of advertising, decorations, etc. FIFA's strict regulations were to be enforced by the tournament's host cities. FIFA's Rights Protection Programme mentions that the informal sector would have the opportunity to benefit from the events, since a select number of informal vendors would be properly trained by FIFA delegates in adequate trading and food preparation, and would be provided exclusive access to certain demarcated zones. However, from the outset of the preparations, informal sector workers did not receive the treatment they had expected. Instead, loss of income and relocations became a reality for many. Many informal traders and their representatives feel that this was a project reminiscent of the apartheid regime, with no long-term benefits for the informal economy.³ In preparation for the World Cup, host cities appear to have transformed themselves into engines for ensuring a clear profit window for corporate rights holders.

1. StreetNet International. 'Press Statement: Durban's Street Wars,' http://www.streetnet.org.za/Durban_250707.htm (accessed 9 March 2010).

2. Fédération International de Football Association. 'The FIFA Rights Protection Programme at the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa.' http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/affederation/marketing/01/18/98/99/march2010rightsprotection_a5_20100308.pdf (accessed 4 July 2010).

3. See *Sunday Tribune*, 'Not Fair, Mr Mayor,' http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?from=rss_South%20Africa&set_id=1&click_id=13&art_id=vn20090802062338990C154440&page_number=1 (accessed 4 July 2010). See also Shine, '2010 World Cup Informal Trader By-law Defined,' <http://www.shine2010.co.za/Community/blogs/goodnews/archive/2010/02/18/2010-world-cup-informal-trader-by-laws-defined.aspx> (accessed 9 March 2010).

The governance of host cities: excluding the poor

Changing governance strategies in the host cities in preparation for the event help explain why informal vendors and other disadvantaged groups did not benefit from it. First, municipal governments were required to form a new structure, the Local Organising Committee, which, in collaboration with local and central government agencies, was to ensure that preparations complied with the regulations and requirements set out by FIFA. Second, as part of host cities' agreement to abide by FIFA guarantees and to undertake 'beautification' projects within event zones, local governments had to sign 'FIFA by-laws,' that is, laws geared specifically to the 2010 World Cup. These by-laws contain strict regulations as regards street vending, as they control access to event zones, excluding street traders and granting exclusive rights to FIFA's partners and sponsors. In some cases, former policies were completely disregarded in order to clear the streets in preparation for the mega-event. City 'beautification' meant, in practice, the absence of street vendors, as these were not seen to be a performing part of the host population.

Third, social dialogue opportunities for informal vendors, already modest, did not improve during the preparations for the World Cup. Various interventions went ahead with virtually no consultation with vendors, despite countless attempts by their representatives to encourage proper participation and mitigate the negative impacts on vendors' income-earning activities. Information important to street vendors, such as vending regulations during the World Cup, was most often accessed by the population through TV or newspapers, rather than through direct consultation. And street vendors were even more marginalised, since many of them have little if any access to such media sources and illiteracy rates are high among them.

Fourth, the complex governance structures involving different government levels as well as a global actor, FIFA, further complicated the politics surrounding the event. Vendors' associations often negotiate mainly with local government, which in this case was only one of several relevant actors.⁴ In addition, these influential actors engaged in mutual blame to avoid assuming their own responsibilities. Thus, for example, in the run-up to the World Cup, local governments often ignored their responsibilities towards informal traders and tried to deflect criticism by blaming FIFA's by-laws and the central government. These strategies and transformations in urban governance in the context of the mega-event contributed further to the economic and political marginalisation of the poor.

Experiences from Durban and Port Elizabeth

In the municipality of eThekweni, Durban, most of the existing 25,000 informal traders were permanently removed from their sites as a result of interventions related to the

4. Horn, P. (2009). 'Street Vendor's Support for Shack Dwellers,' (electronic) Abahlali baseMjondolo. October 21. <http://www.abahlali.org/node/5931> (accessed 7 July 2010).

World Cup. These included vendors operating at the beach market, which has been in existence for 20 years.⁵ The Local Organising Committee capitalised on the culturally unique and commercially lucrative aspect of the beach market and revamped it to cater to tourists. As a result, no more than 500 vending stands were to be available for a select cast of informal traders.⁶ Over the last two years, there have been disputes over who would be permitted to set up shop during the event. This not only created opportunities for corruption and inequality among traders, but also disrupted the networks of dependable clients so vital to the vendors.⁷ During the World Cup, unless otherwise authorised, informal traders were only allowed to sell food or products outside the demarcation zones, and always in strictly controlled settings. Throughout the preparations for the World Cup, eThekweni's informal traders repeatedly expressed their resentment at the event, stating that the loss of income, mistreatment by police officers and lack of information concerning evictions had made their livelihoods dangerous or unviable, an intolerable scenario for people with so few income alternatives.⁸

Overshadowed by the shiny stadium, with large profits flowing into the hands of the few, street vendors in Port Elizabeth were not getting a fair deal out of the World Cup. The municipality in Port Elizabeth held a meeting with street vendors a few days before kick-off, informing them they would not be allowed in the FIFA fan park, at the stadium or anywhere around it. Vendors operating in the 'exclusion zones' set up for the World Cup were forcibly removed without compensation or the provision of alternative trading places. A number of street vendors interviewed in Port Elizabeth just weeks before the World Cup⁹ told of how they worked very long hours for a modest income. They expressed their disappointment and explained how the local authorities had not consulted them and had made empty promises. They complained of the evictions from areas where they could have benefited from the mega-event. Several vendors expressed the view that the South African government had placed the interests of big business first and had neglected the needs of the poor. Several expressly stated that the World Cup benefited only those already rich. As one vendor put it, 'I think the World Cup is more for the richer ones, it's not really for the poor ones.' Street vendors in Port Elizabeth formed an association to make their voices heard and organised a march to protest the evictions and bad working conditions. Unfortunately, there was little response from local government.

5. StreetNet International. 'Press Statement: Durban's Street Wars'.

6. Maennig, W., and Stan du Plessis (2009). 'Sports Stadia, Sporting Events and Urban Development: International Experience and the Ambitions of Durban,' *Urban Forum*, 20(1): 61-76.

7. Skinner, C. (2006). 'Falling through the Policy Gaps? Evidence from the Informal Economy in Durban, South Africa,' *Urban Forum*, 17(2): 125-48.

8. Pretoria News. 'Cops vow to clear up streets for 2010,' <http://www.pretorianews.co.za/index.php?fsectionId=1026&fArticleId=vn20090711071106467C487265> (accessed 10 March 2010).

9. Reported in Hedman, M. (2010) *This World Cup is not for us poor people: Interviews with street traders in Port Elizabeth and Pretoria, South Africa*. Durban: ProPrint.

Demands for inclusion: The 'World Class Cities for All' campaign

As already intimated, disadvantaged groups have not been passive in the face of the above developments. During the preparations for the event, StreetNet International, an international federation of street vendors' organisations, launched the 'World Class Cities for All' campaign (WCCA) to promote participation by street vendors and other marginalised groups in the preparations for the World Cup (and other mega-events).¹⁰ The campaign challenges the authorities' approach whereby 'World Class Cities' are to be built at the expense of the urban poor. Campaign partners include street vendors' organisations, trade unions and social movements. The campaign was active in all nine South African host cities. Demands by street vendors and their organisations were presented to local authorities through campaign activities such as workshops, protest marches and demonstrations. Through such initiatives, participants sought to put pressure on local authorities and promote policies and actions that could result in fair benefits for all. The campaign encouraged the formation of bargaining forums between street vendors' associations and local and national governments to demand negotiations and social dialogue. WCCA facilitated the creation and development of associations to enable street vendors to speak with one voice. In some host cities, this initiative resulted in stronger associations with clear long-term goals and leadership. In Rustenburg, for example, evicted street vendors were able through their organisation to take the evictions issue to court and won their case against the municipality. Some municipalities responded to the demands of street vendors and were willing to negotiate increased opportunities during the World Cup.¹¹ Overall, however, the picture was gloomy, with street vendors and other members of the urban poor facing eviction and exclusion from critical areas for the sake of city 'beautification' for the World Cup.

Lessons from the World Cup 2010

The first lesson to be drawn is that hosting international events produces winners and losers and does not necessarily benefit the urban poor. Indeed, in many cities, the imperatives of international competition and economic growth increasingly overshadow social needs and concerns about poverty amelioration. In the case of the World Cup 2010, the event (a) triggered interventions that were poor-unfriendly, and (b) excluded the poor from participating in the benefits that could eventually flow from such an event. Economic and political exclusion of the urban poor in the context of such events is, however, neither automatic nor inevitable. In this case, it was achieved through changes to laws and governance structures driven by very powerful actors. International events need not exclude the poor and may even provide opportunities for them if the

10. On the WCCA campaign and on StreetNet International, see <http://www.streetnet.org.za>

11. On campaign achievements, see Host Cities Watch, <http://www.streetnet.org.za/?p=532>

governance of the event, the regulations and eventual interventions, are designed with their participation and take their needs into consideration.

Second, civil society organisations have a critical role to play in democratising opportunities related to international events. They are invaluable in achieving rights and in pressing for expanded opportunities for dialogue with the authorities and other actors. Participation by grassroots organisations is critical in the design of laws, regulations, interventions and governance structures that may precede a mega-event, as well as in monitoring their implementation (or lack of it) and their effects on the grassroots. The slogan 'Nothing for us without us' used by some South African grassroots organisations clearly expresses their rejection of top-down planning and interventions and their demands for a bottom-up approach.

In South Africa, relocations and evictions met with strong reactions from broad coalitions of civil society organisations, leading to both successes and shortcomings. In those countries with weaker civil societies, the challenges of participation are even greater. The grassroots may be fragmented into collectives or associations that are too small to be heard. In such contexts, it is important to encourage local organisations to build alliances and to connect with existing international civil society networks from which they can derive knowledge, backing and solidarity.

Third, World Cup 2010 illustrates the complex structures of governance that may be at work in such mega-events, involving not only local and national state actors but also international actors. In this case, the considerable influence of FIFA and corporate sponsors on urban governance was particularly egregious. One could argue for a greater diversity of dialogue partners, for example, through negotiation forums in which grassroots repre-

sentatives, corporate and state actors are represented. This might prevent the 'blame game' and shifting of responsibilities among influential actors reported above. However, any such forums must address the vast power differences between such highly unequal 'partners.' In the context of acute international competition among cities to host international events, local governments in developing countries often command modest leverage in relation to influential corporate powers. Effective mechanisms and pressures, which go beyond (non-enforceable) corporate social responsibility guidelines, need to be devised for holding powerful global actors accountable. This can be considered a matter of global responsibility in which concerned governments, donor agencies and even corporations can get involved. In addition, transnational grassroots networks and their expanding networks have the potential to generate such pressures both locally and internationally. Networks such as StreetNet International are already playing an important role in creating global awareness about the otherwise concealed dark side of mega-events. They may in future develop, through their global links, the capacity to negotiate with powerful global actors. Such networks are therefore worth supporting.

Finally, all relevant actors – from local governments to international donors – must come to terms with their views of African cities and of urban informality. Some writers and practitioners increasingly assert that informality (of housing, livelihoods, etc.) is an important and integral part of the African city, rather than a symptom of abnormal urban development. Without romanticising 'the informal city,' urban planners and policy makers and practitioners need to envision cities that build on rather than destroy the efforts of the urban poor and design interventions that respect the fragility and complexity of the social networks through which the poor survive in the city.

*Ilda Lindell is the leader of the Urban Research Cluster at the Nordic Africa Institute and a lecturer at the Department of Human Geography, Stockholm University. She is the editor of a recent book entitled *Africa's Informal Workers: Collective Agency, Alliances and Transnational Organising, 2010*. Her research focuses on urban change, urban informality and urban politics.*

Maria Hedman is conducting a study on the prospects for street vendors and their organisations in South Africa at the Department of Human Geography, Stockholm University. She recently spent three months in South Africa working for the World Class Cities for All campaign in connection with the World Cup 2010.

Kyle Nathan-Verboomen is conducting a study on the impact of the World Cup 2010 on street vendors in Durban at the Department of Human Geography, Stockholm University. He is the co-founder of Cinema Politica Stockholm, Stockholm's cinema for independent political documentaries; co-founder of Stockholm University's Graduate Student Association; and the International Student Coordinator at Stockholm University's Student Union.