



GLOBAL PLANNERS NETWORK
Sharing new ideas about communities across the world

Self-diagnostic Assessments of the Capacity for Planning Worldwide

Key Findings Report October 2008



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Findings and quotations used throughout the report come from 1268 planners' self-diagnoses of capacity for planning in their own country, and reflect their experiences in 117 countries - see appendix for details.

1. Introduction

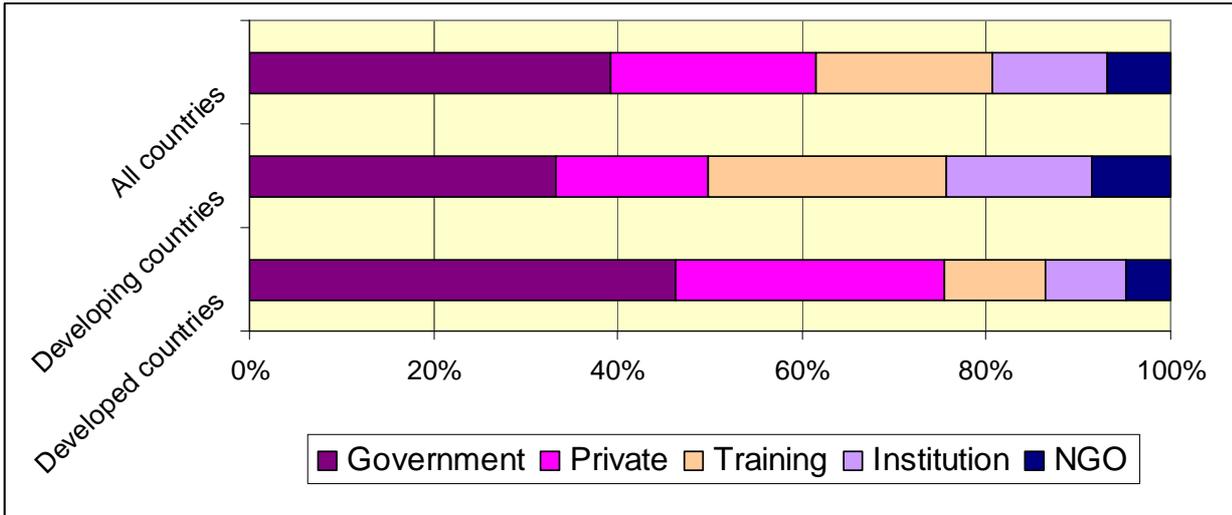
In March 2008 the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Commonwealth Association of Planners, as partners within the Global Planners Network (GPN), launched an online self-diagnostic tool which invited planners from around the world to assess the capacity for planning in their country and the priorities for strengthening it. Within 5 months, over 1250 planners in over 100 countries responded by completing the tool. Taken together, these responses provide a rich account of what it means to practise planning throughout the world as volunteered by a good cross-section of the international planning community. What stands out is the extraordinary variety of issues that planners deal with in all kinds of development environments.

These views come at a time when the need for development to be better integrated spatially has become inescapable, and there is much international discussion about how to make this happen. The responses to our tool contribute to the debate the on-the-ground experiences of men and women already working to deliver this integration. Their experiences provide essential practitioner insights about the practical challenges for planning, what the barriers are, what works in practice and what doesn't. It is essential that these insights should be reflected in future initiatives to build global planning capacity.

This report is a summary of key insights that are emerging from the exercise. However, both their quantity and the quality are such that a report of this size cannot hope to reflect the full extent of what we have received. This report therefore concentrates on what seem the most critical 'top line' messages that need to be shared with other GPN partners and other stakeholders who are to gather at the Fourth World Urban Forum to be held in Nanjing in November 2008. It describes the representation of planning from across the world that has been contributed; these planners' views about what planning can do to add value to sustainable development: the most critical challenges for planning in development; and the priority needs for building capacity.

Everyone who practises any of the activities falling under the very broad umbrella of the planning of settlements was invited to complete the tool, regardless of whether they were formally qualified professional planners. This reflects the reality that planning is not a 'closed shop' practised only by a narrow professional elite. Nor is planning just a function of government. Respondents are practising planners in government (national and local), the private sector, NGOs and community bodies and organisations which help create planning capacity, i.e. training and research, and professional institutions. As Chart 1 illustrates (next page), the distribution of respondents between these sectors of planners is similar in both developed and developing countries, as defined by the UN.

Chart 1: Proportion of respondents working in each sector, total and UN category



Base: 1268 respondents [576 Developed 692 Developing (UN Categories)]

Most respondents have put considerable time and thought into their responses enjoying the opportunity to respond anonymously. They appear to have valued the opportunity to reflect honestly, free of any political or organisational influence, on their working environment. We should like to thank each one of them for their contribution to what we think has become a fascinating study.

2. The untapped power of planning

Respondents are keen to communicate the unique value that a planning approach with its emphasis on spatial integration can provide for the development of sustainable settlements. Respondents highlighted the following four benefits of planning's approach:

- i. **Enhancing the quality of life** in human settlements is the aim of good planning. Planners use all types of information, such as demographics and economic data to feed into the creation of liveable settlements. Planners place high value on sensitivity to population needs, local culture and history as well as future trends. A sense of place and working with aesthetic considerations of an area are important for development and the desirability of a place for habitation.

Quality of Life

- Affordable housing
- Community empowerment through participation
- Cultural identity preservation
- Design for health, safety & lifestyle considerations
- Maximising space for local employment opportunities
- Public space development
- Service provision especially viable transport & mobility

Balanced Settlements

- Adequate infrastructure
- Appropriate materials
- Drinkable water supply
- Good sanitation, sewerage, and waste disposal
- Modelling & city planning for sustainable design
- Redistribution of benefits of land & regeneration
- Spatial containment of urban areas
- Transport connectivity
- Visioning for the future

- ii. **Balanced settlements** are centred on the integration of the many layers of physical development. They respond to pressures of growth or decline on infrastructure, and the need to resource the area especially with energy, sanitation and water. Planning helps to monitor construction, and develop an understanding of durable urban design in a local context.

- iii. **Harmonious environments** underpin planning's pivotal role in managing the environmental pressures, both in terms of resource use and natural hazards. This includes environmental resource preservation, planning to mitigate disasters, trend monitoring, and information provision and knowledge sharing in order to achieve the best outcomes.

Harmonious Environments

- Biodiversity preservation
- Disaster resilience planning (best materials)
- Energy conservation
- Food security
- Hazard monitoring
- Natural heritage conservation
- Pollution control
- Soil quality protection (appropriate land use)
- Water quality promotion

Engagement & Inclusion

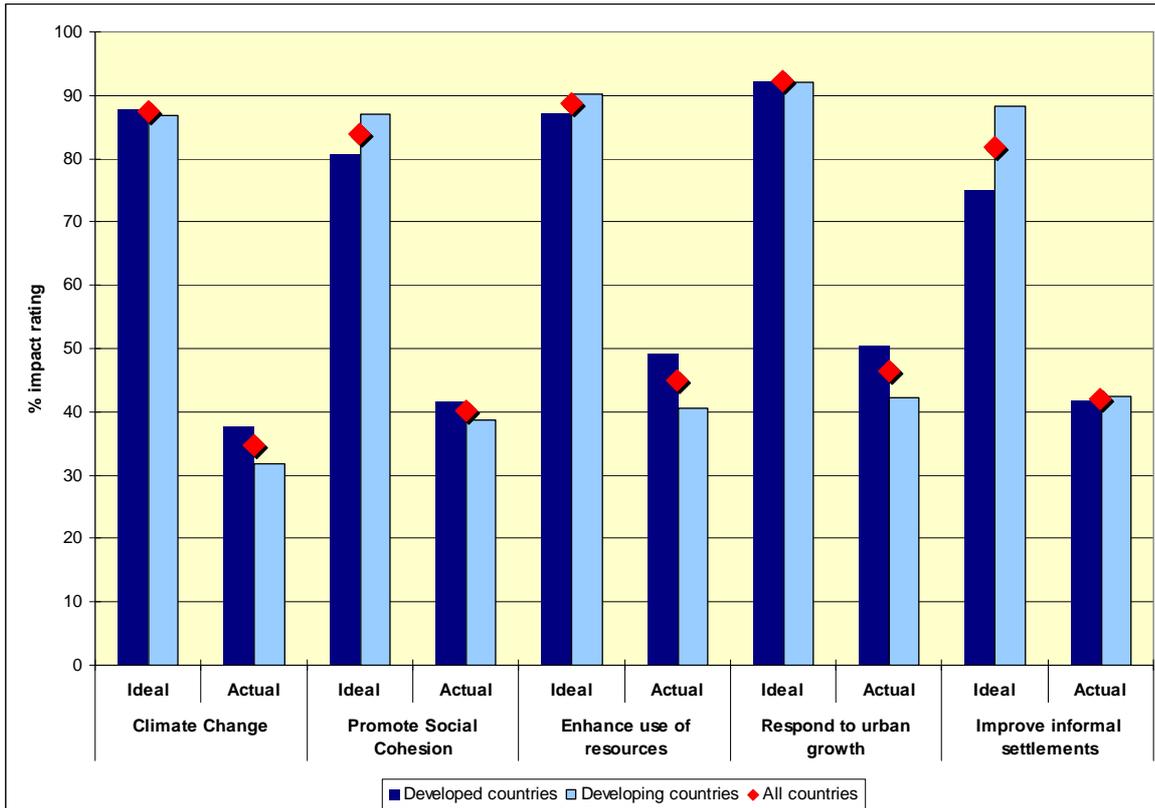
- Advocacy of needs of marginal areas
- Balancing various interests
- Conflict resolution
- Development resource negotiation
- Integration of land use disciplines
- Monitoring of programme roll-out
- Professional advisory on land management
- Redistribution of benefits of land
- Weighing risks (e.g. economic vs. environmental)

- iv. **Engagement and inclusion** of all groups of people involved in or potentially affected by development allows planners to demarcate and monitor common interests to resolve conflicts that arise. Land use issues affect people differently within cities, regions and even across territorial borders. Planning can offer a structured way to negotiate interests at various levels of governance.

There is a strong consensus that the power of planning is not now being best utilised to deliver these benefits.

Practising planners indicate that they are frustrated that opportunities to add value in terms of promoting sustainable development are being missed. As shown in Chart 2, there is a marked difference in the ratings of how much planning should ideally contribute to addressing five specific development concerns and how much it actually does.

Chart 2: Ideal and Actual impact of planning on development concerns, total and UN category

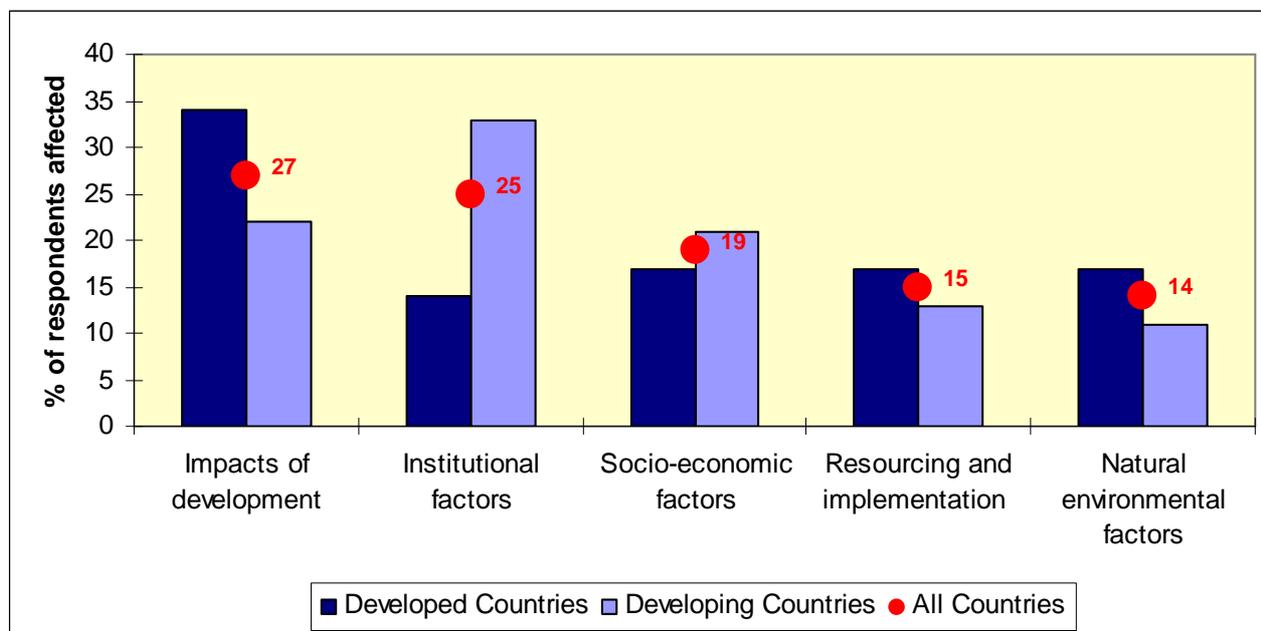


Base: 419 Planners in the Government Private and NGO sectors [222 Developing, 197 Developed (UN Categories)]

3. Challenges planners face

Respondents warn that the challenges for settlement planning are intensifying. In the self-diagnostic tool they were asked to describe these challenges as they perceived them and their replies can be summarised under five main themes¹. Chart 3 shows the prevalence of each theme.

Chart 3: Proportion of respondents affected by challenge type, total and UN category



Base: 1268 respondents [576 Developed 692 Developing (UN Categories)]

⊙ Balancing the Impacts of development

“On a large scale China is in a historic period of fast paced urbanisation... industrial development and upgrading urban construction must provide adequate quality and efficiency of space...” Planner in China

Planning’s role is to harness local knowledge to identify local assets, and minimise adverse spatial impacts by balancing competing sectoral demands for land use. The ability to work with such spatial impacts of development, promoting high quality urban design and function, is seen by respondents as far superior to a laissez-faire approach to development. Planners who noted this area see planning as aiming to promote balanced development that requires: conflicting interests to be negotiated; long-term durability to be achieved; the urban heritage protected; and sprawl avoided. Respondents from many countries consider that “urban sprawl” threatens food producing land and cities’ ability to work efficiently as human settlements for the long term. High urban densities are another challenge demanding a planning response. At a regional or national level, strategic and long term decision making about the location of development requires a spatial planning perspective, within the context of local situations, historic heritage and traditions. Most acutely, these problems arise in places where intense speed and accelerating pace of growth is coupled with sprawl that is not regulated by planning, but respondents describe problems that are equally complex in areas that experience steep decline.

¹ See technical appendix on the RTPI international website http://www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi_international/

⊙ Institutional capacity

“Violation of existing laws, rules & regulation, weak professional strength due to limited institutions” Planner in India

The second major challenge that planners identify relates to the capacity of planning systems in their countries to promote development that is balanced and sustainable. In some places, including some where urbanisation rates are highest, there are simply not enough planners. Human resources can be boosted through professional changes, particularly with a new focus on increasing skills, and increased community participation. But many planners have neither the time nor any opportunities to develop their skills due to the immense pressures of their work. Some countries have no formal planning and professional systems and in others political pressures interfere with otherwise well structured high functioning systems. External promotion of planning and awareness of its potential in development could help address these issues. ‘Political will’, or the consensus for embedding planning into development and decision making, is mentioned repeatedly as a challenge. Planning’s marginalisation is linked directly by many respondents to conflict and control by vested interests, which results in chaotic development. Many planners regard the absence of regulation and poor enforcement of regulations as disempowering. Key tools are critical too, for example availability of data and research, maps and IT software and hardware.

⊙ Socio-economic factors

“Proliferation of informal human settlements in urban set up ...planning for people in a forced migration set up (internally displaced persons as well as refugees from other countries)” Planner in Kenya

Social needs are a key driving force in planning. Current socio-economic trends dominate planners’ self-diagnoses, particularly population changes and economic needs. The issues of poverty, economic decline, and the need to compete locally and globally all confront planners sharply. Coping with migration, indigenous growth and aging lies behind many planning challenges that our respondents identify. The scope of socio-economic issues is wide and planners detailed the issues with a sensitive understanding of local context, social trends and historic legacies. Planning for better functioning, more equitable communities (e.g. through regeneration strategies and synchronisation of informal developments) is at the heart of many of these challenges. Issues of crime and safety, and the need for social cohesion with shared values are at the heart of other socio-economic challenges repeatedly identified by respondents.

⊙ Resourcing and implementing development

“Location of facilities ...waste disposal...power lines, and provision of basic essentials as water and effluent disposal.” Planner in Nigeria

Planners say that one of the key challenges is adequate resourcing for development, with the need for investment to be based on correct information about needs within a settlement, or simply having adequate land. Planners can help ensure that development is adequately resourced in real terms, so that energy, infrastructure, provision for housing transport and facilities are planned and delivered when they are required. The availability of suitable land is problematic in some areas. This is often linked to governance issues

including the lack of regulation of the informal market or the absence of a cadastre registering the structure of land ownership. Elsewhere, where resources to deliver planned developments on the ground are insufficient, the challenge is to implement planned schemes. Gaps between planned development and its delivery arise in both developed and developing countries.

⊙ Natural environmental factors

*“Badly controlled and over consumption of arable lands, exposure to major natural and technological risks...over-consumption of natural resources and unsustainable development”
Planner in Algeria*

Planners are deeply concerned with the natural environment, where planning is seen as necessary in safeguarding settlements, mitigating environmental hazards, and preserving resources. A very wide range of challenges are identified by respondents and these are becoming urgent in responding to the increasing impacts of climate change and natural disasters. Respondents are concerned about the causal relationships within the environment that link, for example, mass tourism, sources of pollution and unsustainable demands on resources. They also highlight the need to focus efforts towards environmental sustainability, particularly the need to protect biodiversity, water and soil. Coping with natural disasters and planning for potential future impacts are crucial skills that must be complemented by up-to-date information, on climate change and environmental risks. In those countries, where planners say there is political acceptance of environmental concerns, these issues are more easily addressed and solutions can be developed.

The implications of these challenges

Our responding planners are under significant pressure from the ‘main challenges’ in their countries. In some cases these challenges reflect planning’s unique role in promoting better places. In other instances, the challenges reflect the need for planning to take a more central role in decision making about development. Insufficient capacity is in itself a challenge. Solutions are suggested such as: increasing the political acceptance of the potential of planning; more community participation; and more widely available tools for planning.

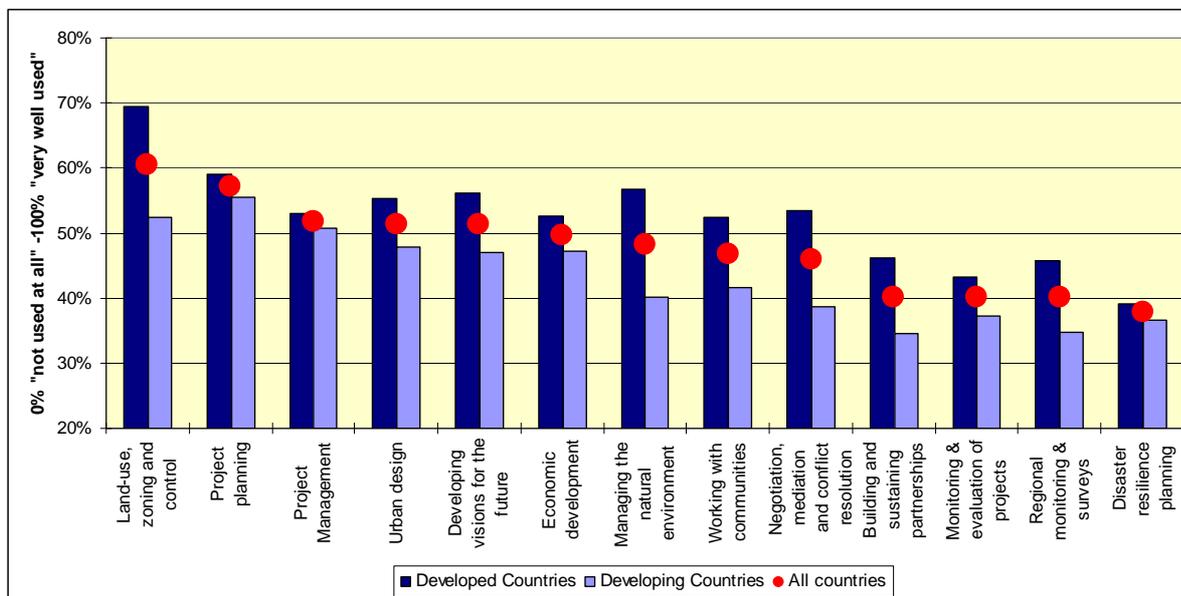
Ultimately, the issues to which planners draw our attention demonstrate their aspirations as well as the challenges they face.

Incidentally, amongst this international community of planners, the use of the terminology **sustainable development** (about which there is anyway some confusion) is most frequently used to describe **high levels of development that do not adversely affect the human quality of life nor the environment.**

4. Current planning activity

Planners responding to this exercise considered which planning skills are used most. They indicated how widely skills are used and we chart their ratings as “% used”. As reported above they say planning skills are very useful, but (as shown in Chart 4) they also feel these skills are under-utilised.

Chart 4: Respondents’ rating of use skill type, total average and UN category average



Base: 441 Planners in the Government, Private Sector and Professional Institutions [210 Developed, 231 Developing (UN Categories)]

Respondents from developed and developing countries say their skills are least employed (under 50%) in the areas of:

- ⊙ Creating and sustaining partnerships
- ⊙ Monitoring & evaluation of projects
- ⊙ Regional monitoring & surveys
- ⊙ Disaster resilience planning

They also told us that ‘other skills’ (not listed in the self-diagnostic tool) are under-used. These can be summarised as three distinct areas:

- ⊙ Participatory planning, involving citizens in the processes
- ⊙ Monitoring science and technology (including maps/GIS), both for threats to and opportunities for development
- ⊙ Regional and general standard setting

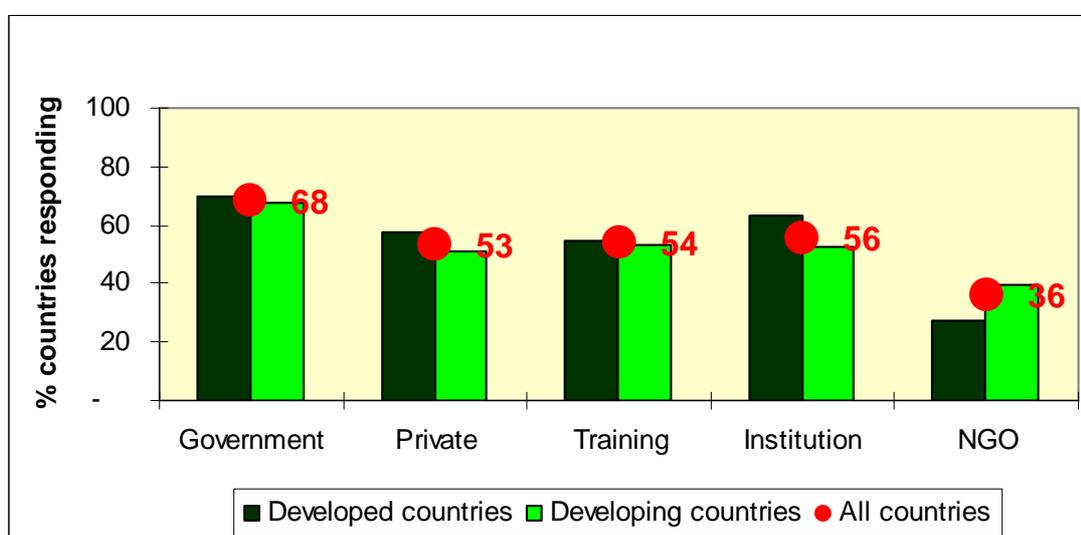
Implications

Our earlier comments about the untapped potential for planning to contribute to development, are supported by these findings. Generally some planning skills appear to be underutilised while our respondents say a boost is needed for other skills. Overall the skills highlighted by these planners are in the spheres of: regional planning and regional leadership; forward planning and risk projection using technology; partnership building and citizen involvement; and project evaluation. We note that this list is not exhaustive and it is striking how each respondent’s context is unique in a way that demands skill development to be tailored to local priorities.

5. Planning capacity

Having considered the challenges planners say they face, we turn to their views about the capacity that exists in their countries to meet them. Planning capacity and how it can be strengthened is perceived differently in different countries but several ways to measure it present themselves. Particular indicators of planning capacity include the number of planners at work, the existence of professional institutions that support planners, planning training, and professional development. Chart 5 shows the proportion of responding countries that have self-diagnoses from five 'types' of planners. Although the number of respondents to the tool remains far too small to estimate the number of planners who now work in each country, examination of each of these begins to develop an impression of current global capacity and the rate that it is being expanded. Most significantly, it highlights the most critical gaps that practising planners believe exist where they work.

Chart 5: Proportion of countries with any respondent in sector, total and UN category



Base: 117 Countries [33 Developed 84 Developing (UN Categories)]

Planners at work

Within our group of respondents, planners within the government are the most common planner 'type'. Respondents work within all levels of government from cities, local authorities, to state departments, and a wide variety of other departments. Their roles are very diverse, including advisory and technical roles, as well as directing and formulating national strategy.

Private sector: Respondents represent a broad range of skills amongst people working in large, medium and small organisations, and sole practitioners. They carry out a range of development and design-related work, and provide advice and impact assessments, and include drafts specialists, designers, industrialist planners, environmental planners, agrarian-planners, master planners, and urban designers.

NGO & Community organisations: Planners of this 'type' worked for scientific networking organisations, heritage societies, cultural trusts, urban space mediators, wildlife trusts, natural associations, economic foundations and educational development establishments.

Planning institutions

Just over half of the countries represented in the diagnoses included responses from planners working in professional institutions. Relatively more institutions replied from developed countries than in developing countries. This pattern suggests that professional institutional support of planning in developing countries is less common than it is in developed countries. Respondents from institutions almost exclusively said their institution's membership was steady or increasing.

Looking at their size and activities, we see three distinct forms of professional Institutions:

- ⊙ small institutes typically with under fifty members, possibly all of whom are unpaid, working directly in the field of planning in a needs based way;
- ⊙ medium institutes self-organised bodies undertaking the widest range of activities with hundreds of members, possible all of whom are paid; and
- ⊙ large organisations with membership in the thousands and some paid staff, undertaking most types of support activities.

The types of support activities amongst the professional institutions are: support for planners, training activities and provision of information. Support covered capacity building and policy input as well as advocacy on behalf of members. Training activities and information provision pertained to planning and land use. A summary of planners' accounts of their institution's activities is given in the following box.

Support	<i>“Promoting the art and science of spatial planning...” Planner in UK</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">⊙ Advisory to governing bodies⊙ Capacity building (also government and engineering sector)⊙ Championing good governance⊙ Input to national policy development (rural areas, social policy and landuse)⊙ Network creation⊙ Professional representation⊙ Recognition of achievements	
Training	<i>“Professional training, conferences...” Planner in China</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">⊙ Course Development⊙ Guiding research practice⊙ Organising conferences and workshops⊙ Promoting lifelong learning⊙ Teaching or funding teaching	
Information provision	<i>“Surveys...land information, mapping and aerial photos” Planner in Tanzania</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">⊙ Dissemination of information⊙ Land registry information⊙ Land valuation studies⊙ Publication of periodicals, journals, books⊙ Reporting and developing urban indicators⊙ Research and investigation	

Planning training

Planners working in educational establishments who gave details of their organisation were predominantly university employees. They included directors of education, researchers, lecturers and students, and there were also many people who provided learning and research in the other sectors, especially the private sector.

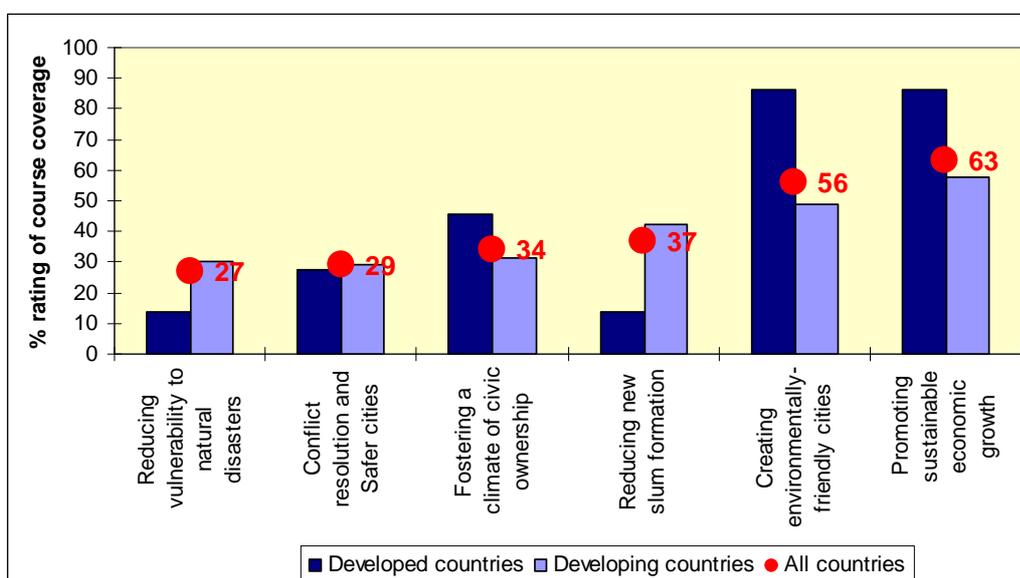
6. Development priorities, training and barriers

Having examined general measures of planning capacity, we turn to the specified priority areas of the Global Planner Network. The GPN² seeks to support planners in enhancing the quality of life in human settlements, particularly by:

- ⊙ Reducing vulnerability to natural disasters
- ⊙ Creating environmentally-friendly cities
- ⊙ Reducing new slum formation
- ⊙ Promoting sustainable economic growth
- ⊙ Conflict resolution and safer cities
- ⊙ Fostering a climate of civic ownership

In their diagnoses of capacity, planners told us about training on these priorities. They indicated (Chart 6) the extent to which courses in their country covered them.

Chart 6: Respondents' rating of training coverage, total average and UN category average



Base: 114 Planners in the Education sector [22 Developing, 92 Developed (UN Categories)]

Overall respondents say that training is most widely available for “promoting sustainable economic growth” and “creating environmentally-friendly cities”. There are some notable differences between the views of the responding planners from developing and developed countries in this group. Respondents in developing countries think that “reduction of slum formation” is better covered than those in developing countries but “promoting sustainable economic growth” and “creating environmentally-friendly cities” is better covered in developed countries.

² GPN: Reinventing Planning: a New Governance Paradigm for Managing Human Settlements

Barriers

Planners perceive various barriers to education in meeting national priorities. As described below, these relate particularly to human resources issues, problems with information availability, cultural factors, financial barriers, and bureaucratic and political issues.

Insufficient teaching capacity is a serious barrier. Respondents from every continent identify a lack of people with the appropriate experience and knowledge to teach the skills for addressing the GPN's key local priorities. Some countries are struggling to find enough planners at all and respondents express themselves as being isolated and unable to prioritise these elements due to high work pressure or other pressing needs.

“There are very few fully trained urban planners” Malawi
“Lack of a mechanism for collaboration of planning schools within and outside the region” Tanzania
“Lack of experts of above fields” Sri Lanka
“Lack of know-how and related personnel/experts/scientists” Greece

Inadequate information, teaching materials, books and media are all barriers to skills development. The language in which material is provided can be a very serious 'block' for the dissemination of some materials. Out of date information also causes problems as knowledge needs to be current and based on the most recent innovations and techniques, for example real concrete statistical data and forecasting methods.

“Access to relevant resources, information in these areas is limited...curricula is not reviewed frequently to take cognizance of changes in various fields/areas” Nigeria
“Lack of availability of data” India

Some respondents said the nature of the planning education in their country acts as a barrier. By separating out the elements across disciplines, or by generalising the skills to a 'standard' format, or creating an educational 'elite' of specialists, students can become cut off from 'holistic' learning which cover local priorities. The newness of many subjects, for which a clear syllabus has not been developed, creates natural hurdles in getting them onto the curricula. On the other hand, once establishments are dedicated to teaching traditional subject matter or when staff are new themselves, it can be difficult to update teaching modules quickly. Short courses also act as a barrier because competition on time for different course material.

“The big obstacle is the very general training.” Brazil
“As courses are somewhat short there is limited scope to include 'non-core'...material” UK
“Emphasis on simply physical development e.g. roads network” Indonesia

Financing training opportunities to teach new skill areas is a fundamental issue. It relates to provision of education materials, payment for teaching staff, and funding for students. There is competition for resources with other topics that are given preference (especially physical planning aspects), and environmental courses which are considered obsolete by respondents but used in their country.

“Budget ...as much to implement the courses as scholarships ...and investigation” Paraguay

Bureaucratic inertia is a recurrent theme. The necessary cooperation and consensus for teaching the kind of skills prioritised by the GPN can be difficult to establish. Dominant academic bodies can resist changes and withhold endorsement for courses. Coordination and sharing of material across sectors is required in all planning education, but most particularly in teaching the new skills prioritised by GPN, but organisational bureaucracy often discourages sharing between professionals and different professions.

*“Urban planning is not recognized socially, thus is difficult to introduce themes in the agenda”
Argentina*

“Planning involves very many areas/fields, the coordination between these fields, the sharing of material is an existing hindrance” China

Implications

Improvements in the provision of planning training should focus on clear priority areas.

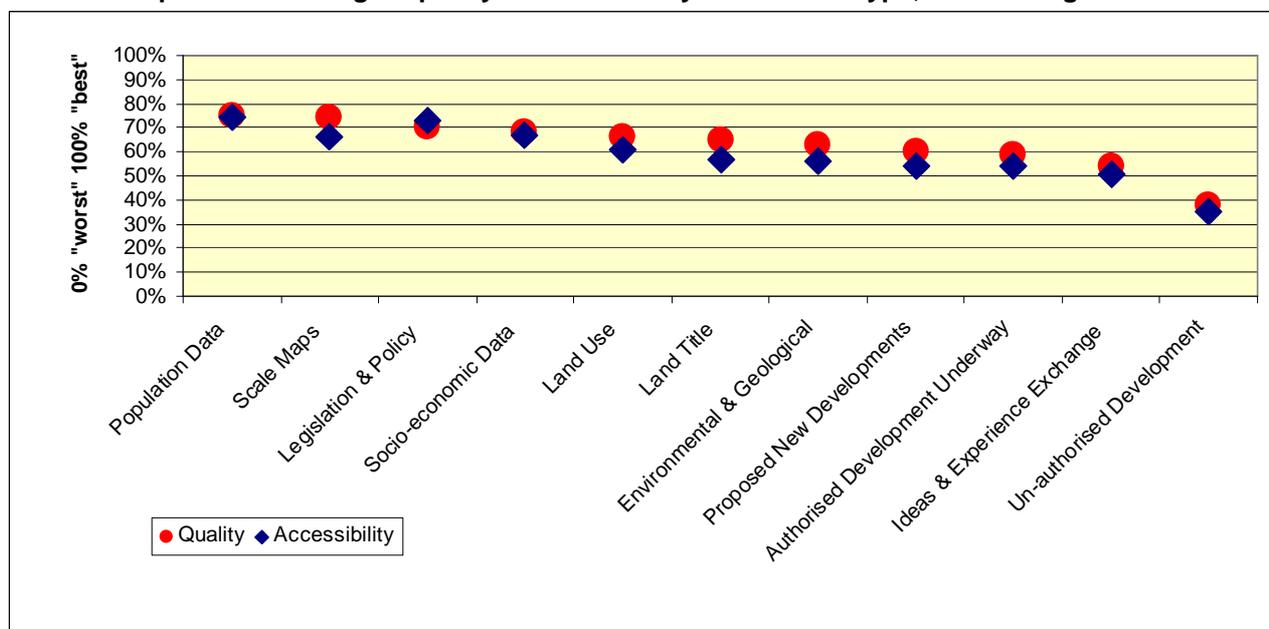
- ⊙ Training that is targeted at local priorities
- ⊙ Provision of relevant and up-to-the minute information
- ⊙ Cooperation between departments and specialisms
- ⊙ Lobbying to get these items on the agenda

7. Information for planning

The final element of capacity which we examine in this report is the availability of relevant information. Information is essential for planners - without it informed decision making is impossible. Planners need to gather some information as part of their daily work – for example views of interested parties (local businesses and residents) or local land uses. It is important for planners to know where to obtain such information and how best to collect it. For other information, such as land title and development proposals, planners are dependent on other specialist professions to provide good quality information in a practical and timely manner. Such information needs to be kept in an easily accessible format.

The self-diagnostic tool lists different “types of information” and respondents rated its quality and availability for their own country (Chart 7). Overall, respondents say the population statistics, trend data and appropriately scaled maps in their country tend to be of higher quality than other information types. Information about unauthorised development stands out as might be expected (average rating equivalent to c.50% of its potential).

Chart 7: Respondents’ rating of quality and availability information type, total average



Base: 560 respondents

Although information about unauthorised developments tends to be poor quality everywhere, it is more surprising that details even of authorised developments are not particularly accessible when compared for example to socio-economic data. Land title, scale maps and relevant environmental or geological information tend also to score badly in some areas, while opportunities for planners to exchange ideas and experience are felt to be low across the board.

Certain ‘other’ types of information are flagged as poor quality (average rating equivalent to <50%). Information needs that planners cited as being particularly deficient in their own countries, include the following:

- ⊙ Current and live data about actual use of land, or ongoing details of project and plan roll-out
- ⊙ Market-related information, particularly land markets, land cost, and financial opportunities for developments

- ⊙ Transparency of government decision-making, including pre-project advice, information about outcomes of hearings, policy development and changes
- ⊙ Spatially mapped or geo-referenced information, for example satellite images alongside national meta-data (economic and demographic), and census mapping
- ⊙ Systemic information particularly land registry data, but also facts about public services capacity and sustainability
- ⊙ Sources of external verification of good practice, particularly about the environment, and planning methodologies
- ⊙ In particular instances: specific amenities, especially transport data, and information about parking and basic amenities

Implications

Low accessibility and poor quality of information impede planners' work, and it leaves them without the resources for effective decision-making. The spheres where information is poor or lacking can be very easily identified by planners locally. Where they remain at a premium, computers with internet access can transform the availability of information. Areas where our responding planners say attention might be focused most usefully are the promotion of spatially mapped national information, the flow of information between the government and planning professionals, and the maintenance of live information about current projects and ideas.

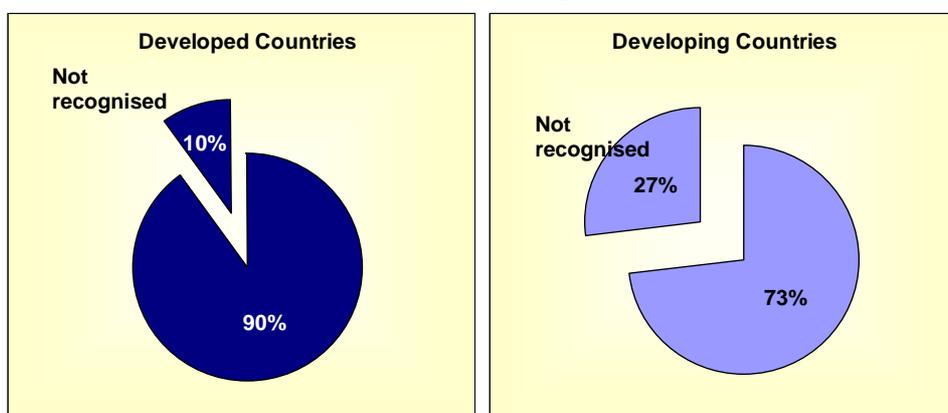
8. Integration of planning into development and society

“more important that building cities is building societies” Planner in Colombia

Respondents remark how planning can play a part in governing countries across the world especially when it is integrated into government departments. It can be used **“as part of strengthening the municipalities and local development” (Planner in Panama)**, or called upon for crisis situations. The less permanent the structure the less impact planning is felt to have.

Recognition of planning’s role may be official or informal, and the significance of recognition may vary in each country. Respondents indicated where they think their role is well recognised (although views about the extent to which this is the case often conflict within countries). As Chart 8 depicts, overall the recognition of planning’s role tends to be lower within developing countries (73% said it was recognised) than it is in developed countries (90%).

Chart 8: Recognition of the role of planning, by UN category



Base: 257 Planners in Professional Institutions [137 Developing, 120 Developed (UN Categories)]

Cultural and historical causes are seen to underpin how planning is (or isn’t) integrated into government departments – but even so, even without official recognition, planners do still operate with effect. As well as identifying areas for improvement, planners highlight instances where the legislative and organisational structures supporting planning work well. Generally speaking, the more central and integrated into government the planners are, the greater the benefits they feel that they can bring to development.

“Planning is not as yet recognised as a warranted profession but is practiced by a number of professional trained planners.” Planner in Malta

Some responding countries have specific planning agencies. These operate at different government levels, but generally the ‘lower’ or more regional they are the less impact they have and the more politically influenced they are felt to be.

“Capacity employed by main local authorities is inadequate and tends to concentrate in approval of development which is so politically influenced.” Planner in Kuwait

Planners work within a breadth of government departments, which demonstrates both the broad utility of planning skills and approaches and the diversity of approaches world wide. The most common areas in which planners work alongside other professionals include architecture and civil engineering, urban design, ecology, sanitation, sociology, economic,

and financial disciplines. Where the social aims of planning are promoted by integration into a government department it is seen to be very beneficial.

“planning as a multidisciplinary activity since the beginning, we worked in coordination with sociologists, engineers, lawyers, professionals working in relation to the environment, economists, among others” Planner in Uruguay

Planning functions are sometimes split over several departments. Because planning is trying to operate in an integrative way, there is an implicit inefficiency in such an arrangement. However, where planning is spread across departments without breaking up the functions between departments, there are integrative benefits for government.

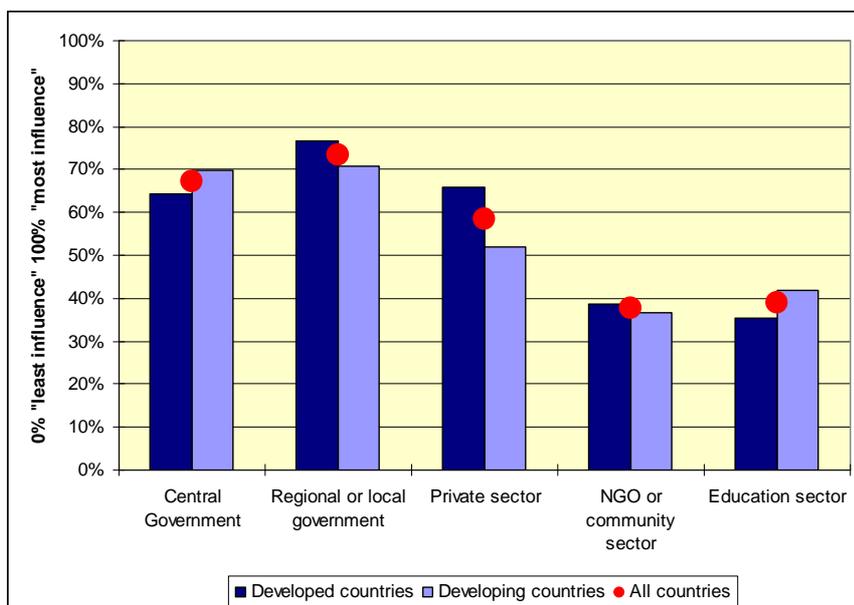
“It is linking with the area of citizen participation, environment, urban design projects and control urban area.” Planner in El Salvador

Another risk inherent in the breadth of planning functions is that non-planning agencies can become more influential than or take precedence over planning agencies. For example, architecture is often either treated as planning or given preference to the broader spatial discipline.

“architecture and engineering are also considered disciplines which include planning” Planner in Italy
“tug of war between planners and other professionals such as architects and land surveyors” Planner in Kuwait

Respondents rated how much influence different sectors have on planning. Chart 9 plots these ratings. Overall they feel regional, local and central government have the most influence on planning, closely followed by the private sector. The NGO, community and education sectors have far less influence on planning.

Chart 9: Respondents’ rating of influence on planning, total average & UN category average



Base: 298 Planners in the Government, Private Sector and Professional Institutions [139 Developing, 159 Developed (UN Categories)]

Respondents identified a number of other sectors that are important to planning in their countries. They say international bodies, the media, private capital, corporations, local land

owners and trans-national investment all have relatively high influence, but that other built environment professionals and individuals have a relatively low influence on planning.

Implications

Planning can become marginalised when it is not at the core of development. When this is the case the lack of recognition of planning persists. Where planning is a recognised core function in development there is an acceptance that it provides benefits to society as a whole. This is particularly true where it can feed into or is integrated into government departments, where it operates at 'higher' levels within governing structures, and where all the planning functions are united under one roof. Mutual professional recognition particularly with other built environment specialists is very beneficial. Local individuals' involvement in planning processes will produce design settlements that flourish.

9. Networks and relationship building

Many respondents highlight in their assessment a need to network with other planners in order to improve their knowledge and skill-base. They offer a number of suggestions of how to build up networks to support planning.

⊙ Promoting Skills

“urban design skills, transport planning skills, disaster management skills, curriculum audit skills” Planner in Swaziland

Planners described ways international organisations can strengthen capacity through the development & provision of planning skills, particularly in the area of practical application of planning theory and practical thinking. Experience exchange with planners in other countries was seen as a useful way to develop these skills. More generally the provision of learning programmes would be helpful. An international planning organisation (especially the GPN) is seen as having potential to provide supra-national skills that can be used internationally. There were many other suggestions how the GPN could help enhance professional development through keep planners better informed about key issues. The development of an international system to recognise planning skills was considered helpful.

Skills that are identified as needing a boost this way include both ‘core’ skills and a range of other specialist skills, including practical ones (management/implementation) and socially-oriented ones (cultural, interpersonal, mediation) of the broad skill base of planning. Many planners said that “planning is about more than just land use” and examples were given of ‘non-core’ areas where skill development was mooted, those related to the economy were very prominent. They felt using networks could help to enhance management skills, which were highly valued, particularly conflict resolution skills.

⊙ Information & Ideas Sharing

“Getting to know other urban planning practices that generated good results in other regions” Planner in Mexico

For many respondents, the main area where international organisations can provide support is by providing information. Some specific areas of information sharing were proposed but many respondents sought more general information management tool such as databases or cadastral systems.

Respondents offer a wealth of ideas for international organisations to help by developing information sources which could be more widely shared. Some of these related to information on the kind of global issues that affect planners throughout the world. This might include change forecasts over the next 20 years (such as the post-oil based economy; population change; environmental and natural resource degradation) or it could include key global questions for example on consumption and resource use, water resources and land scarcity.

Respondents also want access to planning related information at the international or supra-regional level, as a way to deepen their understanding of key development issues at these levels. Individual topics could be provided in a structured international way, and others can be integrated together at the global level to add value. Climate change and environmental planning dominated many of these responses, as planners felt these particular topics are areas where value could be added by pooling cross-border information. “Population growth” and “urban growth” were often paired with the “need for

balance” and “environmental considerations” in development. Concerns about natural resources were associated with many other areas, particularly social aspects.

⊙ Acting as a Node/Creating Hubs

“The ability to cooperate with other people and organisations because the era of globalisation is coming.” Planner in China

Planners across the world also need opportunities to compare experiences through international organisations:

- to allow them to independently forge links with one another,
- to learn without experimenting,
- to discuss concerns about issues on a peer-to-peer basis without recourse to ‘official’ lines.
- to determine best practice examples for their own countries, and
- to feel supported by a wider community who experience the same ‘global issue’ albeit in different ways.

Best practice can be used this way to enhance decision making and in some instances for lobbying.

International exchange and cooperation across sectors & regions include the formation of international practice opportunities, virtual exposure to other contexts, secondment, exchange as well as bilateral regional outreach.

International organisations can “forward networks”, by promoting them and lending them status and credibility. They can provide information services remotely or at central point. They can help forge links with NGOs and synergistic corporations (e.g. who might help in education / awareness campaigns / R&D).

Respondents described sensitivity around means of international exchange and sharing. Some areas were highlighted as **not suitable** for the involvement of international organisations/networks, such as interference in determining local priorities.

⊙ Acting as Political Advocate for the Profession

“Establish Planning Institute for Academia and practitioners” Planner in Cambodia

Various ways in which the international organisations can act on behalf of planners were put forward. These included: reaching out to other organisations; establishing Planning Institutes; helping with legislation; and advising on policy creation and improvements especially in developing countries with relevance to land control. More generally planners feel these bodies can be very useful in political activism and lobbying for the recognition of planning, to raise its profile. They can help to develop new mindsets both within the planning community and in others, to increase the impact of planning and smooth the way for its acceptance.

⊙ Direct Project Involvement

“projects of new urbanism ideas, well living and sustainable (social, ecological, economical) cities” Planner in Brazil

As well as specific actions evident in the points above, there are a handful of specific projects where it was suggested international organisation might get involved or help – for example by engaging in wind farms and desalination plant developments. Elsewhere, general items were mooted – most especially relating to poverty reduction. More direct communications from GPN were also specifically requested.

10. Conclusions

We are very grateful to the community of international planners who contributed to this report for their dedication and professionalism. From their diagnoses, we start to get a handle on the main issues of planning capacity with these key findings. With much attention now being focussed on enhancing planning capacity to deliver better human settlements, the experiences of planners working on this task is extremely valuable. These experiences need to feed into promoting the development goals of the Global Planners Network in working for good quality human settlements.

Planners responding to the self diagnostic tool are clearly keen to increase the contribution they make to promoting sustainable development and they believe they can help improve quality of life in settlements, urban form and structure, environmental strategies and inclusiveness of development.

There are many substantive issues that planners confront, but significant barriers to their effectiveness remain. On the one hand they are working in rapidly changing circumstances to cope with growth or decline or to address the most serious impacts of poverty and inequality or to manage the effects of climate change. On the other hand they continue to encounter institutional and professional hurdles which act as a brake on their work. Most respondents do not seem to perceive these hurdles as being insurmountable, and they see their best means of overcoming them to be by playing a more central role in development, and securing its potential benefits.

Generally respondents feel that planning their skills remain underutilised and so they highlight some new skill areas that are required most immediately. These include regional planning and regional leadership; forward planning and risk projection using technology; partnership building and inclusion of citizens in the processes; and project evaluation.

Respondents' observations on the barriers to training suggest three key ways in which training for development goals can be strengthened. Firstly, relevant and up-to-the minute information can be provided for use in training. Departments and professional specialisms can cooperate to bring their areas of knowledge to the table. Individuals can lobby to promote the importance of the GPN goals and to put these items on the agenda.

GPN Goals
Reducing vulnerability to natural disasters
Creating environmentally-friendly cities
Reducing new slum formation
Promoting sustainable economic growth
Conflict resolution and safer cities
Fostering a climate of civic ownership

Poor accessibility and inferior quality of information is another concern that can severely disempower planners, and information priorities need to be identified by planners locally. Areas in which attention should be particularly focused are the promotion of spatially mapped national information, the flow of information between the government and all types of planners, and the maintenance of good information on current development and planning resources.

Mutual professional recognition particularly with other built environment specialists, who are frequently acting as planners, is very beneficial. The involvement of local people in the planning processes is vital, and will ensure that settlements and rural areas will endure.

The approaches that planning provides are not always at the core of decision-making about development. This appears particularly to be the case in those countries where there is a lack of recognition of the merits of planning. Where planning is a recognised core function in development it can benefit society as a whole. This is particularly true where it can feed into or is integrated into government departments, where it operates at 'higher' levels within governing structures, and where all the planning functions are united under one roof.

APPENDIX

Countries and number of respondents

Afghanistan	7	Botswana	1	Finland	2	Kenya	6	Paraguay	3	Switzerland	1
Albania	2	Brazil	70	France	11	Kuwait	1	Peru	17	Tanzania	4
Algeria	5	Brunei	2	FYR Macedonia	2	Laos	1	Philippines	9	Thailand	2
American Samoa	3	Bulgaria	6	Germany	23	Madagascar	1	Poland	9	Trinidad	6
Andorra	4	Cambodia	3	Ghana	6	Malawi	4	Portugal	3	Turkey	6
Antigua and Barbuda	1	Canada	37	Gibraltar	1	Malaysia	6	Romania	6	UAE	5
Argentina	43	Chile	24	Greece	3	Malta	11	Russia	4	Uganda	3
Armenia	1	China	50	Guatemala	6	Mauritius	3	Rwanda	1	United Kingdom	175
Australia	146	Colombia	63	Honduras	2	Mexico	65	Saudi Arabia	1	Uruguay	12
Austria	2	Cook Islands	1	Hong Kong	14	Morocco	1	Serbia	5	US Virgin Islands	1
Bahamas	1	Costa Rica	10	Hungary	3	Namibia	2	Singapore	6	USA	54
Bahrain	4	Croatia	1	Iceland	1	Nepal	4	Slovakia	1	Vanuatu	1
Bangladesh	6	Cyprus	3	India	29	Netherlands	7	Solomon Islands	1	Venezuela	6
Barbados	3	Denmark	7	Indonesia	6	New Zealand	18	South Africa	34	Viet Nam	1
Belgium	6	Djibouti	1	Iran	4	Nicaragua	3	Spain	11	Yemen	2
Benin	1	Dominican Republic	1	Iraq	1	Niger	1	Sri Lanka	12	Zambia	1
Bermuda	2	Ecuador	15	Ireland	4	Nigeria	16	Sudan	3	Zimbabwe	1
Bhutan	1	Egypt	1	Israel	2	Norway	6	Suriname	1		
Bolivia	10	El Salvador	7	Italy	11	Pakistan	6	Swaziland	1		
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3	Ethiopia	3	Jordan	1	Panama	6	Sweden	2		

Notes

1. All findings are true for the responding sample at the 99% confidence level but we do not suggest extrapolating or projecting from these numbers.
2. Not all planners responded to each question. Full tables for each question will be made available with technical details on www.rtpi.org.uk/international.
3. For further information or queries about anything in this report, please write to globalplanning@rtpi.org.uk.



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