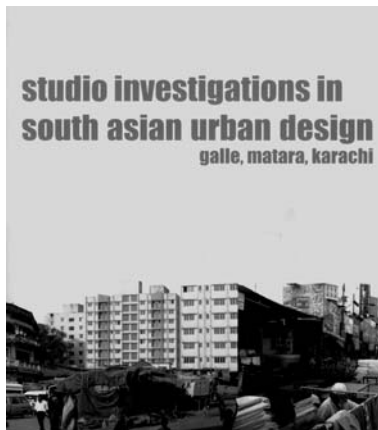
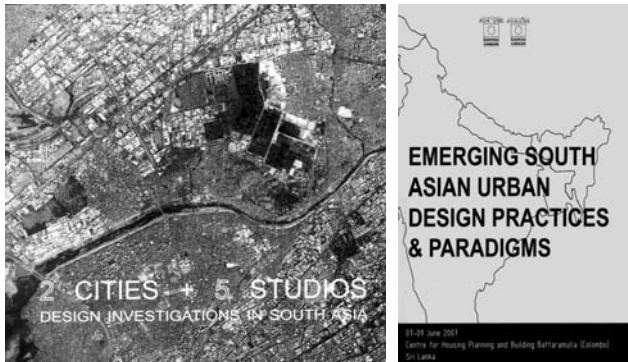


## BOOK REVIEWS

### **Establishing a Relationship between Research, Academics and Professionals**

Publications Produced Under the  
AsiaLink - AsiaUrbs Programmes  
2004 - 2007

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Five publications on current urban design trends in South Asian Cities were taken out as a joint venture between EU and five international universities at the culmination of a three year engagement of the Department of Architecture and Planning, NED University of Engineering and Technology (NED-UET) in the Asia Link Urban and City Design Curriculum Development Project and the Asia Urbs Urban Design Implementation Initiation Projects. Asia Link and Asia Urbs projects have been a partnership between five international universities<sup>1</sup> investigating / debating / discussing emerging urban design and planning practices within South Asia and working towards increasing and developing scope for producing spatially coherent and sustainable forms of urban development. At the end of these projects, professionals and academics involved in them have come together to continue the urban research and design process and form the founding group, the Urban Research and Design Group (URDG) for this initiative. The URDG works within the domain of a Research and Design Cell by the name of Urban Research and Design Cell (URDC).

The URDC intends to continue urban research and design within the Karachi context aiming to maintain a constant dialogue with stakeholders mostly at an academic level, driving towards the vision of a sustainable urban environment.

The main premise of research has been that Urban Design has the capacity to critically address the emergence of what could be labeled as project based paradigm in city making, where it is believed that design professionals involved in the city making need to define new practices that allow their engagement in the definition of Urban Projects or

<sup>1</sup> The partner universities included University of Moratuwa (Colombo, Sri Lanka), CEPT University (Ahmedabad, India), Tue Universiteit (Eindhoven, Netherlands), KU Leuven (Leuven, Belgium) and NED University (Karachi, Pakistan).

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act as Urban Catalytic Projects. The three urban design cases taken up within the context of Karachi studied through consultation between academics, research surveys, professionals and student involvement also part of the publications are:

1. Lyari River Corridor: The Lyari Corridor is undergoing major transformation with the construction of the LEW. The development is far from being 'sustainable' as the LEW has a brutal energy that is uprooting anything and everything coming its way. Although this corridor has the potential to address a number of often neglected issues like ecology, historic settlements, transport, evictions, and resettlements but as has been the precedence in Karachi, the LEW project is being executed as a top down approach without any impact assessments or stakeholder participation.
2. Orangi Housing Settlement: A "Site and Services Scheme" sponsored by the state has been a testing ground for many urban issues in Karachi regarding housing and services.
3. Orangi nalla: The rare open spaces in the city exist in the form of nallas with the Orangi nalla being one such nalla. The question of reclaiming the nalla for multi purpose usage and the role of urban design in the creation of such a space has been the issue at hand.

As part of the Asia Link and Asia Urbs Projects; an International conference was held in Sri Lanka. The five publications generated are added to course materials thus adding to the body of knowledge of urban design and development on Karachi facilitating practice, teaching and research.

These five publications are available in all the libraries of institutions within Pakistan with Architecture and Planning Departments. These are also available in some other relevant institutions. Of the five publications, 'Emerging South Asian Urban Design Practices and Paradigms' documents the proceedings of the International conference held at the Center for Housing, Planning and Building, Battaramulla, Colombo, Sri Lanka in June 2007. This includes the papers read by the paper

presenters including the participants of the Asia Link-Urbs projects, graduates of the linked universities and other professionals.

The two publications namely 'Studio Investigations in South Asian Urban Design - Galle, Matara, Karachi' and '2 Cities and 5 Studios - Design Investigations in South Asia' document and present two cycles of studios of the Asia Link Urban and City Design Curriculum Development Projects, as part of a joint effort of 05 universities (two European and three South Asian Schools). The Asia Link studios served as experimental grounds in which conventional approaches to urban design were confronted and questioned, to endorse a thoughtful approach to teaching where the studios serve as places for data generation and analyzing spaces that is fed back into the urban reality. The urban design studios that were taken up in the five universities took up the case studies in Karachi and Matara, Srilanka and studied the impacts of infrastructure developments on the urban design of the two cities. In the case of Karachi, the impacts of the development of an infrastructure corridor that is the Lyari Expressway (LEW) on the Lyari River Corridor (LRC) was studied and the spot cases of Manghopir Interchange, Sohrab Goth Interchange, Orangi nalla and Lea Market were documented and analyzed.

The two other publications are urban project monographs, "Matara - Structuring Dispersion" (Srilanka) and "Karachi - SITE Town and the Orangi Nalla" (Pakistan). They are part of the concluding work of the Asia-Urbs Capacity Building Project in Urban Design and Sustainable City Development. These publications put together in collaboration among the universities document the existing scenario of each case and analyze them and present future possible directions that can be undertaken for the urban design development of these areas.

*Institutions or individuals interested in getting in touch with the URDG and or copies of these publications can contact Associate Professor Asiya Sadiq at [asadiq@neduet.edu.pk](mailto:asadiq@neduet.edu.pk)*