

Rapid Urbanization

Video Contest: Background Reading



Consider narrowing your video's focus by concentrating on a subtheme within your topic. Listed below are just a few of the possible subthemes for videos relating human population growth to rapid urbanization.

Water and Sanitation

Rapid urbanization presents significant challenges to urban water and sanitation management in developed and developing countries. In 2011, one in every four city residents worldwide lived without access to improved sanitation facilities and 27% of the urban dwellers in the developing world did not have access to piped water at home. The total of number of people living in cities without safe water and adequate sanitation has continually increased because infrastructure improvements have not kept up with rapid urbanization rates. Consequently, city dwellers are at risk of damaging health issues, such as waterborne illnesses like diarrheal disease, which is one of the leading causes of death among children under the age of five. The environment, economic growth, and development of cities depend on a healthy population, reaffirming the need for improved access to clean water and sanitation.

Slums and informal settlements

The failure of urban planning and investment in infrastructure in the face of rapid urbanization has resulted in the development of slums and informal settlements in cities across the globe. According to UN Habitat, around 33% of the urban population in the developing world, or about 863 million people, lived in slums in 2012. Residents of slums and informal settlements suffer from poor housing (often made of materials unable to withstand natural disasters), inadequate access to safe water and sanitation, overcrowding, and a constant risk of being removed from their homes. A lack of investments and political will to improve these informal settlements has created enduring problems for slum dwellers.

Sprawl

Urban sprawl, prevalent in both developed and developing countries, is a specific form of urbanization where populations move away from central urban areas into spread-out, low density, and usually car-dependent communities. This is often due to improved infrastructure and affordable housing outside of city centers, along with lower crime rates and increased space for families to live. However, this phenomenon can be detrimental to both communities and the environment. New construction can destroy wildlife habitat and introduce non-native invasive plants and animals. The dependency on cars intensifies noise, traffic, air pollution, and reduces the potential for exercise.

Migration

Migration from rural areas to urban centers has increased significantly in the last few decades so that today, more than half of the world's population live in cities. Many social, political, and environmental factors drive this urban migration in both the developed and developing world. People often migrate to

cities in search of better job prospects and food security. However, this rapid influx of people into cities can exacerbate the problems of poverty, slum development, and social disruption that often affect the most vulnerable segments of the population. Understanding the complexity of migration processes are crucial for improved policies linked to rapid urbanization, urban planning, service provision, environmental sustainability, and development.

Sources:

<http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/sgsm15898.doc.htm>

<http://www.conserve-energy-future.com/causes-and-effects-of-urban-sprawl.php>

<http://www.sswm.info/content/water-sanitation-and-urbanisation>

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/745habitat.pdf>