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EQUITY IN SUSTAINABILITY: CASE STUDIES DEMONSTRATING THAT SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS MUST INCLUDE PARTICIPATION AND EQUITY PROCESSES

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Statement of the Problem: The mitigation of and adaptation to climate change is often framed within language that involve sustainability and resilience. The increasing speed of which humanity is urbanizing and increasing incomes have equaled greater consumption of resources, thus placing greater focus on sustainability of the built environment. However, the approach of creating sustainable urban spaces have generally been technical in nature and often involved quantitative measurements that exclude the impact on communities. Often times, this has led to the masking of deleterious effects of sustainability projects that include gentrification and displacement. Without the consideration of equity in sustainability, sustainable urban spaces often become unaffordable for segments of the community that are the most vulnerable, and displace people to spaces that rely on greater consumption of resources such as driving, thereby defeating the benefit of sustainable urban spaces.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: A literature review of sustainable neighborhoods and key informant interviews of certain case studies in Latin America. This paper will examine the case studies through the Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CDSH) from work formulated by the World Health Organization (WHO) to focus on the innumerable systems and policies that govern cities and recognize its impacts on health outcomes of people that live within those cities or are displaced.

Findings: The case studies have varying measures of success, even the definition of success are unique to each case study. This challenges the conventional notion of a successful sustainable neighborhood and how it is determined.

Conclusion & Significance: Current definitions and measurements of sustainable urban environments are insufficient in capturing the complexities of cities. The review of these successful case studies incorporates integral principles of participation and equity. Recommendations are made for more comprehensive approaches to developing sustainable healthy neighborhoods.

Biography

Bo Chung is in his final year of a concurrent master program in city planning and public health at the University of California, Berkeley. The focus of his studies has been centered on equity and the need for more comprehensive inclusion in the built environment. Areas of particular interest include community base participatory research, restorative justice in city planning and public health policies, and health in all policies.

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