Case Studies on Urban Innovations in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

City Innovation Systems

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Malaysia’s urban growth and development since independence in 1957, while impressive, is not without the usual urban problems such as traffic congestion, environmental pollution, lack of affordable housing and overcrowded infrastructure. Urban revitalization and regeneration including efforts to enhance the livability of the nation’s major cities have been accorded emphasis in recent years. Despite these efforts, the nation’s major cities are overwhelmed by rapid population increases to accord a liveable and hospitable environment to its residents.

This book provides an insightful account on three case studies on urban innovations covering city redevelopment, housing and governance in Kuala Lumpur. It details the innovative aspects of city redevelopment, provision of city housing and a new organizational mechanism to expedite processing of applications for property development. The book asserts that city revitalization is not only about the clever use of technologies but, more importantly, it must actively engage all parties through innovative approaches in crafting, implementing and improving policies and programmes for the benefit of the community. For this partnership mode of governance to happen, a responsive leadership that is open to new ideas and experimentation is vital. I applaud the authors for this commendable research and for highlighting the importance of innovation in addressing urban problems.

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The problems facing cities especially in this part of the world are mounting. Given limited financial resources, city authorities are challenged to come up with innovative and novel solutions that plague cities from garbage collection to provision of adequate housing and recreational amenities. Malaysia is no exception to these urbanization challenges. Our major cities must be revitalized and regenerated to ensure that they continue to play a central role in the economic and social development of the country. This book presents three case studies on urban innovations (namely, city redevelopment, housing and governance) in Kuala Lumpur. It describes the innovative aspects of city redevelopment, provision of city housing and a new organizational mechanism to expedite processing of applications for property development. The three case studies underscore the importance of openness towards new approaches; political commitment; sustained leadership; competency in integration, negotiation and forging trust; and constant monitoring and evaluation. A consistent theme emerging from the three case studies is the importance of leadership particularly at the city authority. Without such leadership, the innovations that are described in this book will not have been developed in the first place.