

Urban Development and Employment: Prospects for Calcutta



Can low-carbon urban development be pro-poor? The case of Kolkata, India

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ABSTRACT Fast-growing cities in the global South have an important role to play in climate change mitigation. However, city governments typically focus on more pressing socioeconomic needs, such as reducing urban poverty. To what extent can social, economic and climate objectives be aligned? Focusing on Kolkata in India, we consider the economic case for low-carbon urban development, and assess whether this pathway could support wider social goals. We find that Kolkata could reduce its energy bill by 8.5 per cent and greenhouse gas emissions by 20.7 per cent in 2025, relative to business-as-usual trends, by exploiting readily available, economically attractive mitigation options. Some of these measures offer significant social benefits, particularly in terms of public health; others jeopardize low-income urban residents' livelihoods, housing and access to affordable services. Our findings demonstrate that municipal mitigation strategies need to be designed and delivered in collaboration with affected communities in order to minimize social costs and – possibly – achieve transformative change.

KEYWORDS climate change / co-benefits / energy / health / mitigation / pro-poor / urban development

I. INTRODUCTION

Economic growth and the accompanying urbanization are linked to rising energy consumption and production of greenhouse gas emissions. Although just over half the world's population lives in urban areas, this demographic accounts for 67–76 per cent of global energy use and 71–76 per cent of global energy-related emissions.⁽¹⁾ Continued population growth, rural-urban migration and the physical expansion of urban boundaries (to bring peri-urban areas into urban areas) are expected to add a further 2.5 billion people to the world's urban population, with just three countries – India, China and Nigeria – accounting for 37 per cent of this growth.⁽²⁾ These trends are likely to increase the share of energy use and emission production taking place in urban areas. Cities in low- and lower-middle income countries therefore have to play a leading role in climate change mitigation to avoid a global temperature rise greater than 1.5°C.

There is growing recognition of the importance of cities as climate actors: notably, the Paris Agreement explicitly welcomes the efforts of

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also a need to manage urban development around the .. to formalize employment of informal waste pickers through cooperation with. Comparative history, Rome, Urban Planning, Social space, Development. 4 Lubell, Urban Development and Employment: The Prospects for Calcutta.

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