Integrating GIS and Urban Geography in the Classroom (& Beyond)

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Department of Geography: part of Columbian College of Arts & Sciences, but physically located within the Elliott School of International Affairs

Faculty: 7 full time, ~10 part time

Majors:

Grads:
The Urban Laboratory

- GIS and Urban Geography @GW
- The conundrum
- Reflect methodological gleanings from SPACE
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Field opportunities for students

• *Locally*
  – Dedicated field courses: Environmental Science/Studies
  – Study in Metro DC
    • Lead in the water supply
    • Urban redevelopment in aging inner suburbs

• *Study Abroad*
  – Summer courses
  – Curriculum linking field exploration with service learning
An international agenda for urban planning using GIS

• World Urban Forum – Barcelona, Sept 2004
• Gleanings from WUF: [quotes]
• Way forward: UN-Habitat
1000 Cities Program

- Encourages development of capacity at the municipal level to use GIS in urban planning
- MOU signed Feb 2003 between UN-Habitat and ESRI in to distribute 1000 copies of ArcGIS software to applicants from developing countries; $15 million software grant
- Progress thus far
  - Over 100 cities have applied, over 70 packages sent out
- Cities apply for the software grant; some training is provided by UN-Habitat in the form of regional workshops; local initiative is required
- Millennium Development Goal Target 11: improving the lives of 100 million slum dwellers by 2020
Emerging pieces: Nairobi as quintessential LDC urban place

• **Nairobi**, Kenya
  – A regional metropolis being loved to death
  – Over half of population in slums
  – Overstressed infrastructure

• A serious challenge to municipal planning efforts
  – JICA project: 15 out of 674 km² completed
  – Local government is simply ignoring the problem

• Opportunities for collaboration:
  – UN-Habitat, GROOTS Int’l, RCMRD
Mathare, a slum in Nairobi, Kenya, December 2004
All dressed up... and *somewhere* to go

- Convergence (?) of field techniques, geospatial science & technology, and a market for information
- “What are we looking for again?”
- Cities as study sites
  - Micro-data availability
  - Assessment of conditions
  - Practicalities of international field-based education
- Eliciting ideas for service learning that uses geospatial technologies to answer big questions
Thank you

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