

AUDIO SCRIPT

[F1: Female Host; M1: Male Contributor; F2: Female Contributor]

F1: Today we'll hear some pros and cons of urban planning in two Brazilian cities. First, we'll hear from Luis Niel, a freelance journalist based in São Paulo. He has done extensive reporting on the City of São Paulo's Department of Housing and Urban Development's scheme to improve informal urban settlements, also known as *favelas*.

M1: São Paulo is the seventh largest among the world's "megacities," and is the cornerstone of Brazil's booming economy. It is among the world's wealthiest cities; contrast this with a startling statistic: 26 percent of its 11 million residents live in *favelas*, unplanned and chaotic settlements that are stretched to their capacity. Almost 300,000 of São Paulo's residents are prohibited from taking advantage of equal financial and housing opportunities. But there are stepped-up efforts to address this inequality.

The City of São Paulo's Department of Housing and Urban Development has put in place a scheme, leading to a significant investment into housing. Over a decade ago, a special commission was created to examine the residents of the *favelas* and identify the diverse groups living there, and isolate those in most need.

What did the commission find out?

Official Brazilian policy changed in the 1980s, from destroying *favelas* to upgrading them. Experts on the settlement enhancement suggest three criteria are necessary to make the scheme workable. First, is the location OK for human settlement? Second, is the settlement legally registered with civil authorities? And third, do its residents own the land? If not, what can be done to make eventual ownership possible? With these factors in mind, local communities have taken part in the upgrading process, with a community leader acting as mediator between the local residents and the government.

Another key element to São Paulo's urban development has involved transportation. Promoting land development along metro, train, and bus corridors has prohibited otherwise inevitable urban sprawl. In addition, sidewalks have been made wider, creating a more dynamic, accessible street space. As well, São Paulo has an excellent metro: it's cheap, safe, and efficient.

Of course, these types of upgrades demand large investments. While the city is not without its problems, thanks to a combined effort of civil, local, and international organizations, the quality of urban life for São Paulo's residents has improved significantly.

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Unit 2 Assessment

INSIDE LISTENING AND SPEAKING 3

F1: Now, let's listen to Daniela Acosta, social worker and author of *Brasília: A Distinctly Un-Brazilian City*. She will talk about urban planning there, the results of which contrast greatly to those in São Paulo.

F2: Fifty years ago, Brazil unveiled its most spectacular creation: the new capital city of Brasília. It was a perfectly built city of straight, organized streets and post-modern buildings. However, over the past decades, Brasília has transformed into a more chaotic place. It is estimated that unemployment among the city's youth has risen to 40%. Some estimates are as high as 50%.

The half million people that planners imagined populating the city has ballooned into over 2 million. The inevitable result has been crowded streets and transportation, including an insufficient metro line and rundown neighborhoods, problems usually found in cities like São Paulo, Curitiba, or Brazil's former capital, Rio de Janeiro.

So, what went wrong? According to its architect, Oscar Niemeyer, Brasília should have stopped growing long ago. The city's capacity for residents, traffic, and construction has long surpassed its limits. The country's dramatic political history undoubtedly contributed to the city's failure. Instead of the community deciding the course of the city's growth, the government and civil agencies decided. The continued unchecked and unplanned construction, contrary to strategic urban growth, has left its marks on the city. There was hope that, by hosting the World Cup in 2014, at least the city's reputation would improve, resulting in increased tourism. While this was the short-term effect, it did little to enhance the local residents' lives in any significant way.

However, despite the many significant problems, many of Brasília's residents say they never tire of the city's unique architecture and its skyline. Countless times, I have been told that there is no other place like it. At least *that* is something I can agree with.