

Accelerating Urban Inclusion for a Just Recovery

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2/4

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Foreword



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No city in the world has escaped the chaos and disruption of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Multiple lockdowns, disrupted supply chains, trade and investments, loss of employment and overburdened health systems have characterized urban life over the past two years. The pandemic has amplified existing inequalities in access to basic services and exposed the fragility of our models of social protection. This has deepened the exclusion of many of the poorest and most vulnerable people – particularly women, children and youth, elderly people, disabled people¹ and those living in slums and informal settlements.

At the same time, cities are global centres of culture, innovation, livelihood opportunities and economic growth. They can address many of the challenges the world faces and be a driving force for a just recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. To achieve this, we need to harness the power of urbanization and ensure the well-planned development of cities.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New Urban Agenda and the Paris Agreement² are crucial guiding tools in shaping sustainable, inclusive and resilient urban development. The objective is a barrier-free city, valuing all people, their needs and

contributions equally, and jointly and cohesively addressing the spatial, social and economic dimensions of urban development. In such a city as this, every citizen enjoys the benefits of equality and has an opportunity to live and grow. The United Nations “Decade of Action” to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals calls for greater synergies, with the needs and rights of the most vulnerable in our urban communities at the heart of policies and interventions. Only then can we truly “build back better”, leaving no one and no place behind.

As inclusive cities involve a complex web of spatial, social and economic factors, this report addresses the vulnerabilities of key groups that are all too often ignored, rendered voiceless or left unseen by delving into the manifold dimensions of urban inclusion, and discusses the sustainability of interventions through proper financing. This is accompanied by case studies from around the world, allowing cities to share their perspective and showing pathways to achieve urban inclusion.

The contributors hope that the readers of this report will gain a deepened understanding of how to achieve urban inclusion, and that the report will inspire local, positive action in cities around the globe.

Executive summary

Cities cannot achieve a just recovery without understanding and addressing the barriers to urban inclusion faced by citizens.

The COVID-19 pandemic has drawn attention to and at times worsened stark inequalities in cities around the world. Cities' resilience to both acute crises such as COVID-19 and long-term challenges including climate change depends in great part on their ability to encourage urban inclusion, for example, in terms of access to housing, mobility, public services and economic opportunity.

Different groups – including women, low-income residents, ethnic and religious minorities, disabled people, migrants, refugees and others – face distinct barriers to urban inclusion. Cities must understand and respond to the unique vulnerabilities – including intersecting vulnerabilities – faced by all urban dwellers.

Cities everywhere, including in low-income and conflict-affected countries, have developed innovative approaches to achieving greater inclusion, spurred on in part by the pandemic. Such initiatives may take varied forms and may emerge from government bodies, the private sector or civic organizations, but all successful initiatives actively involve the communities they serve.

Thinking through the various dimensions of urban inclusion can help cities devise approaches relevant to their context, such as:

- Spatial inclusion involves land use planning and urban and transport design that enhance safety and accessibility for all urban residents, regardless of where they live.

- Digital inclusion involves reliable access to the internet, affordable devices and digital skills training, and has become vital for accessing services, education and employment, especially during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Social and institutional inclusion involves removing barriers to participation by vulnerable groups in the economic, educational, political and cultural life of their cities, and ensuring that representatives of these groups occupy positions of leadership and influence.
- Economic inclusion involves providing access to jobs, training and banking through targeted programmes and services.

To ensure urban inclusion, cities must have sound, sustainable municipal finance systems in place. This requires making intergovernmental fiscal transfers more transparent and predictable, and strengthening local revenue collection, including through land value capture, taxation and service fees, as locally appropriate.

Leadership across the public and private sectors is essential to urban inclusion. Leaders must be willing to listen to and learn from local residents, and “crowd in” resources from all available sources.

This report, co-written by experts from international organizations, private corporations, government bodies and academic institutions, makes the urgent case for greater urban inclusion, and aims to provide guidance and inspiration for cities on how to achieve it.

1

New urgency in the need for urban inclusion

As the world continues to urbanize, cities provide new opportunities for economic advancement, social interaction and cultural enrichment for many residents.





When urban communities are engaged in policy-making, and empowered with financial resources, the results are more inclusive and durable. Let's put our communities at the heart of the cities of the future.

António Guterres, UN Secretary-General

However, as the COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare, poorly managed cities are also sites of economic inequality and social exclusion. Without enhanced efforts towards inclusion, urban environments will continue to reflect old and new inequities and prejudices, stunting potential benefits for future generations.

An inclusive city is a place in which spatial, social and economic necessities and amenities – including access to land, housing, infrastructure, services, good jobs, equal rights and opportunities to build assets and wealth – are affordable and accessible for residents.³ This report shows that the pandemic has made urban inclusion more urgent than ever and discusses how to improve it through a just, equitable recovery.

The need for greater urban inclusion has long been evident. Globally, more than 1 billion urban residents – including half of the urban population in sub-Saharan Africa, one-third in India and one-quarter in China⁴ – live in slumlike conditions, lacking adequate shelter, security, clean water or sanitation.⁵ A survey found the median housing price-to-income ratio to be greater than 3 – the affordability benchmark – in over 90% of 200 cities worldwide.⁶ Even in wealthy countries, the cost of housing is a burden to many, with one in three low-income tenants in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries spending more than 40% of their income on rent, and 16% living in overcrowded conditions.⁷ Millennials everywhere are spending more on housing than any previous generation.^{8,9} In less developed countries, cities are significantly less affordable for residents at the median income level than in more developed countries.^{10,11} For example, the World Bank found housing costs relative to GDP to be 55% higher for African households than in other regions.¹²

Many groups face barriers to enjoying the benefits of urban life. For women, the combined burden of paid and unpaid work is often much higher than for men, and women also face threats of violence and abuse in many cities.¹³ The urban poor, particularly migrants and refugees, often lack the formal addresses or documents needed to vote, enrol their children in school or apply for jobs.¹⁴ Internal and international migrants and refugees frequently face discrimination, hostility and exclusion.¹⁵ Urban dwellers with some form of disability, numbering more than half a billion, face societal prejudice and inaccessible urban design.¹⁶ Racial, ethnic, religious and sexual minorities, as well as elderly

people, are often systematically excluded from economic opportunities and decision-making. Indigenous urban residents are commonly excluded from employment or restricted to insecure and exploitative work.¹⁷ Some of the severest forms of urban exclusion lie at the intersection of these issues. For example, a low-income Indigenous disabled woman faces multiple concurrent and compounding forms of exclusion.

The devastating and inequitable toll of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world's cities has heightened the critical importance of inclusion. Early on, many experts believed urban density made all cities vulnerable to contagion, but over time it has become clear that some cities fared worse than others based on employment patterns, overcrowding and inadequate provision of services.^{18,19} Further, the virus preyed on urban residents who were already vulnerable, many of whom could not afford to stay home from work for more than a few days. This was especially true for the 2 billion workers in the informal sector, who account for 61% of the world's working population.²⁰ Even in wealthy countries, only between 20% and 50% of jobs can be performed remotely, with marginalized groups particularly unlikely to be able to work from home.²¹ Those in informal or insecure jobs – including “gig economy” workers in wealthy countries – have not received the support provided to full-time, formal employees.

Many of the burdens of the pandemic have fallen disproportionately on those on the lowest incomes. Contagion risk increases in overcrowded conditions, or when sharing water and sanitation amenities (or in their absence). Whereas some wealthy city dwellers had the resources to escape to safer places, this was not an option for most urban residents.

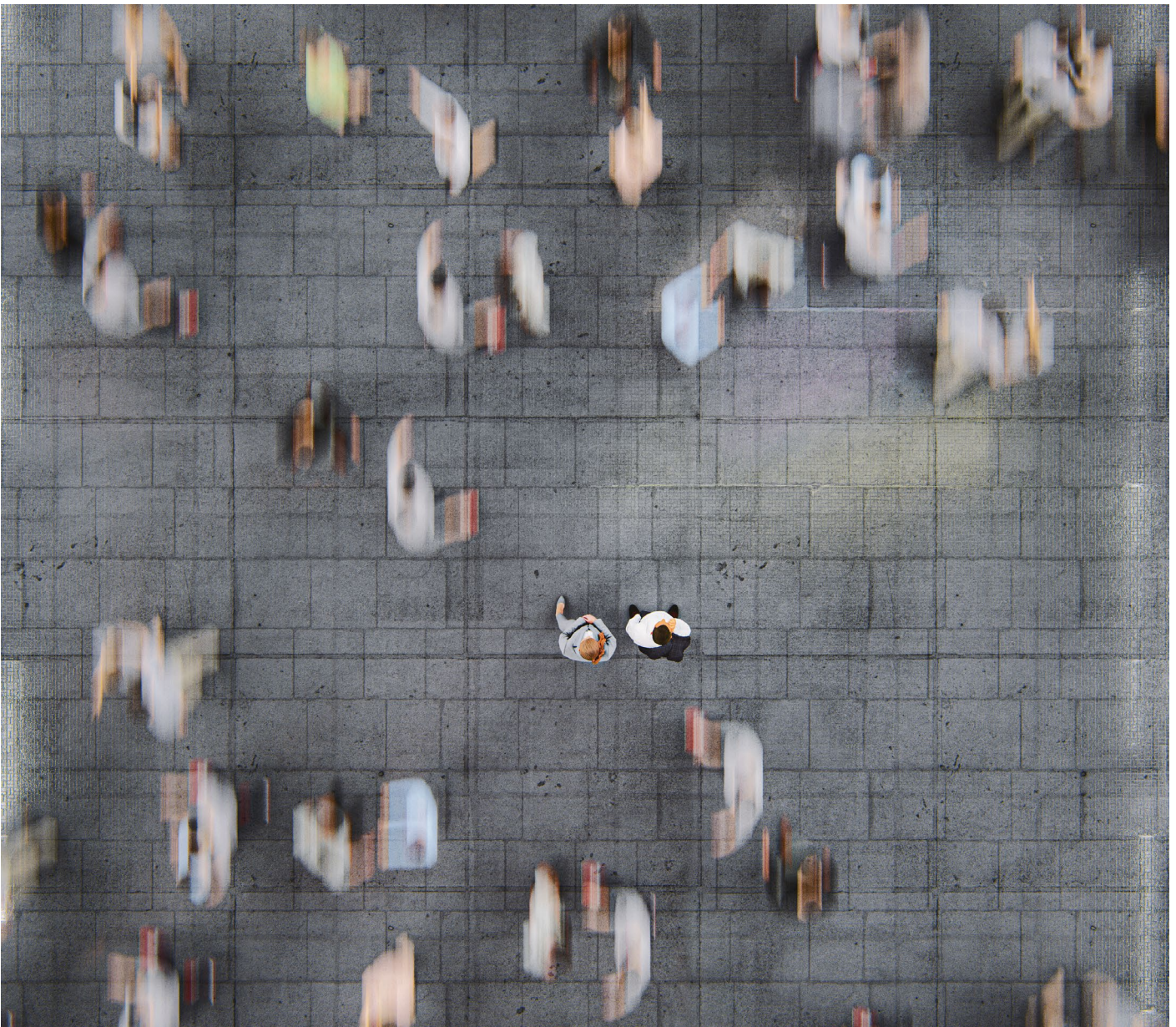
COVID-19 lockdowns have also coincided with alarming spikes in domestic violence towards women, including in Australia,²² India,²³ Mexico,²⁴ the United States²⁵ and elsewhere. Some researchers have called this surge in domestic violence “a pandemic within a pandemic”.²⁶

This report digs deeper into the vulnerabilities experienced by affected groups before and during the pandemic and explores various dimensions of urban inclusion. Drawing on case studies from around the world, it aims to provide inspiration and practical guidance to urban leaders, increasing the likelihood of an inclusive, just recovery.

2

Addressing the vulnerabilities of key groups

City leaders reacted, often with lightning speed, to the unprecedented challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. But COVID-19 also trained a spotlight on urban inequalities that significantly affected who survived and who became a tragic statistic.



2.1 Women



As a society, we cannot hope to achieve the global goals as they pertain to ending poverty, achieving good health or economic growth without the participation of women. An equitable recovery for cities is only possible if women have many seats at the table.

Penny Abeywardena, Commissioner for International Affairs,
City of New York (2014–2021)

The design and management of modern cities pose significant and unequal challenges for women. The theory and practice of **city planning and design** have long been dominated by male professionals, and resulting urban policies and features of the built environment are unsurprisingly gender-insensitive. Women frequently make multiple daily trips, combining walking and public transport, to meet employment, social and family responsibilities, while male mobility is often limited to commuting between the household and the workplace, predominantly by car.²⁷ Public transport often fails to take women's needs into consideration, as seen in the design of routes,²⁸ frequency of service, accessibility and onboard safety.²⁹ This makes it harder for women to access economic opportunities and participate in the labour force.

Urban design must consider women's safety in the realms of both **public space and housing**. For example, women's safety audits can inform the design of safe public parks, based on parameters such as lighting, visibility and overcrowding. City authorities can also prioritize women by promoting higher standards and better infrastructure for health and hygiene (e.g. through better access to latrines).³⁰ In India, for instance, women and girls with poor access to sanitation facilities are twice as likely to experience sexual violence and run significantly higher risk of diarrhoeal disease.³¹ Cities can also help ensure digital connectivity, basic housing rights, inheritance laws and security of tenure for women, which can be highly discriminatory in some countries.

Women have significantly less access to **economic opportunities** than men. Globally, urban women perform most of the unpaid, informal care work (e.g. approximately 70% in Latin America, 35–50% in South Asia).³² While this may provide

greater flexibility in some contexts, it also entails tremendous disadvantages, including low wages, lack of social protection and barriers to accessing finance. Even in the developed world, the gender wage gap persists.

Gender inequalities with respect to **participation and governance** are equally alarming. Female participation in political spheres remains limited. For example, in Latin America and the Caribbean, less than 15% of all elected mayors are female;³³ in US cities with more than 30,000 residents, the figure is just 22%.³⁴

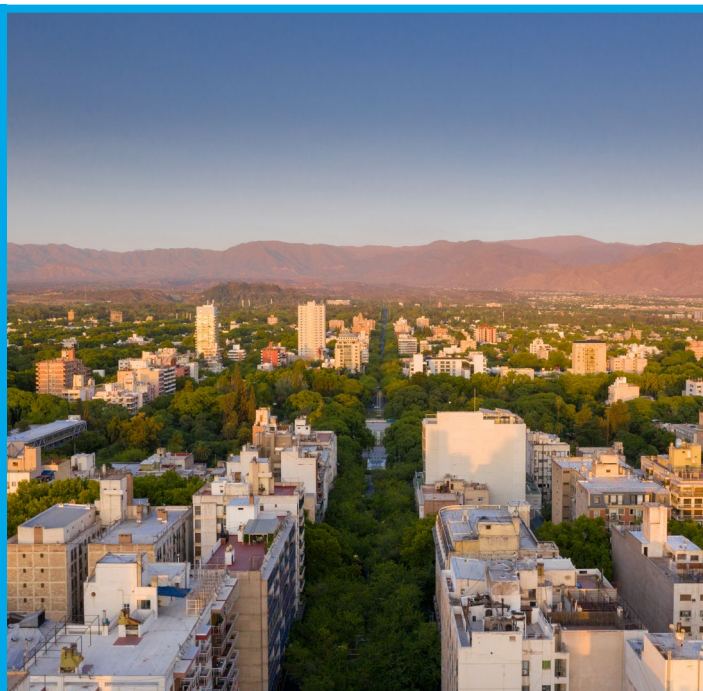
Risks are compounded when multiple vulnerability factors intersect, particularly in the face of poverty. For example, few cities offer appropriate shelter, plus legal and psychological support for poor women facing violence or homelessness. Female-headed households are more likely to be poor than male-headed households – twice as likely (30.6% vs. 14.8%) in the US.³⁵ In Bangladesh, over 95% of female-headed households live below the poverty line.³⁶ Migrant and internally displaced women are particularly vulnerable, facing exploitation, trafficking, violence and stigmatization.

The pandemic and corresponding response measures affected women on multiple fronts. For one, domestic violence and sexual harassment increased dramatically. Women also faced the highest risk of contagion in many contexts, given their status as front-line workers compromising the majority of both the formal and informal health sector (e.g. in Latin America, half of all doctors and more than 80% of all nurses are women).³⁷ Women were also at greater risk of dropping out of the labour force due to prolonged confinement, home-schooling, disruptions to the childcare sector and other care and support demands.



CASE STUDY 1

Mendoza, Argentina: participatory design to create a public space that serves all genders equitably



Introduction and problem

On the boundary of Mendoza, Argentina,^{38,39,40} lies the informal settlement, or *barrio*, of La Favorita. With more than 10,000 residents, La Favorita is home to almost 10% of the city's population. It dates back to the 1940s, when it first began to house people fleeing political oppression in Chile, Peru and Bolivia. In part due to this history, La Favorita is well-organized, with a variety of local organizations and unions.

At the heart of the *barrio*, the central plaza – Plaza Aliar – was upgraded with new paths, plants, lights, rubbish bins, water fountains and playground equipment. Despite these improvements, the plaza is underused – some women and LGBTQIA+ residents have explained that the openness of its layout leaves them feeling unsafe, uncomfortable and exposed when using amenities. The men who dominate the space, often in the context of drug and alcohol use, exacerbate these feelings of lack of safety. Also, the rough football pitch at the western end of the plaza prioritizes games for boys and men, while the small playground at the eastern edge of the plaza is too close to traffic, and many children have been hit by motor vehicles.

Solution

In 2018, Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI) worked with the Municipality of Mendoza, the Argentine Ministry of Interior, Public Works and Housing, and students from Harvard's Graduate School of Design (GSD) to assess the needs of La Favorita's residents through a gendered lens. They provided recommendations for a gender-inclusive redesign of Plaza Aliar, envisioning equal roles for people of all genders in shaping their community.

The team worked directly with female residents to evaluate the plaza and envisage improvements. The participatory methodology included a series of activities focused on: developing a shared understanding of gender issues in urban planning; examining the *barrio*'s public spaces; identifying urban environmental challenges and potential solutions; and collectively prioritizing those potential solutions. Once the needs, challenges and initial visions were established, the project team worked with women to develop six proposals for the redevelopment of the plaza that were presented to the community for feedback and voting.

The chosen plan envisions Plaza Aliar as a multifunctional space comprising individual "rooms" linked together with a cohesive design and flow. A variety of amenities serve multiple needs, including:

- A small central plaza surrounded by all-day active uses to provide "eyes on the space" and enhance safety for women
- A structure to serve as an open-air community centre for various uses, including less-exposed Zumba classes to increase the comfort of participating women
- A pitch laid out for a variety of uses, including hockey and football
- A playground surrounded by raised seating from which caregivers can watch their children
- A community market in which women can buy and sell produce
- A protected bus shelter where women can wait safely
- An amphitheatre with stepped seating for community events
- A grove across from the popular local library that is amenable to a variety of uses

Together, these gender-inclusive features provide for women's safety, social opportunity and capital.

Outcomes, scaling and learnings

Mendoza prepared for construction of the plaza, with groundbreaking activity taking place in 2020. Among the plan's key achievements is the adoption of recommendations crafted directly by and for the women of La Favorita, with government partners buying into a gender-inclusive process and product. Other municipal partners have been inspired to implement similar gender-inclusive participatory processes in future planning and design projects, and the Argentine government will incorporate these practices into its national upgrading protocol. Over half of the world's population are women, girls and sexual and gender minorities. Their needs, desires, knowledge and skills are untapped resources for urban planners, designers and cities overall.

2.2 Low-income residents



If low-income residents are not taken care of, a pandemic such as COVID could push half a billion more people into poverty.

James Anderson, Director of Government Innovation,
Bloomberg Philanthropies

The COVID-19 pandemic made it clear that the welfare of our cities depends on the health and well-being of every resident, family, street and neighbourhood, while also highlighting the systemic inequalities between rich and poor. The impact of COVID-19 has been felt most deeply in the world's poorest regions. Many people were socially and spatially displaced as they lost their jobs – construction workers, drivers, cleaners, hospitality staff, restaurant and airport workers, etc. Even those on low incomes who kept their jobs were rarely in a position to avoid transmission by working from home. Poor people in the informal sector, a significant fraction in many contexts, faced elevated risks, given that they often live hand-to-mouth without steady income or safety nets. Low-income residents are also more likely to live in slums and informal settlements, in substandard housing with poor water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure, and without secure tenure.

In the absence of action to help those on low incomes, another pandemic could push half a billion more people into poverty. Long-term, holistic solutions must be instituted to finally bridge age-old divides. These solutions can take many forms (e.g. SDGs applied at the local level, social safety nets, upskilling, health promotion), but

fundamentally involve adopting poverty reduction as a key performance indicator across governments, involving those on low incomes in policy design and implementation, and creating self-sustaining feedback cycles to ensure the issues concerning low-income residents are addressed. Getting there will take dedicated financing and, importantly, a realization by national, state and provincial governments that a full and just post-pandemic recovery depends critically on investments in cities and urban infrastructure.

While cities will never have the budgets or the power to solve these tremendous problems on their own, they are uniquely positioned to convene and tap the creative and financial capital of their communities. Working in conjunction with businesses, the public sector and non-profit agencies, cities can deploy collective energy in the service of common goals, such as ending homelessness, bolstering economic opportunity or tackling racial injustice.

While almost everyone has been adversely affected by the pandemic, urban policy-makers must focus on protecting the livelihoods of the most disadvantaged. Without targeted measures, the inequality gap will continue to widen.





CASE STUDY 2

Buenos Aires supporting its low-income residents during COVID-19



Introduction and problem

In Buenos Aires City,⁴¹ 97% of households have access to basic services, yet 57 low-income neighbourhoods – home to around 73,000 families – are not fully integrated into the city.⁴² The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed persistent inequality gaps.

Solution

The integration of Barrio 31 and promotion of equal opportunities

In the past five years, the Buenos Aires city government has transformed one of these low-income neighbourhoods, Barrio 31, by building more than 1,000 new homes and improving existing housing. The city government also began to regularize property title deeds and connections to basic services such as water, gas and electricity. In addition, 970 families living under the Illia Highway were relocated to new housing. Once resettlement is complete, this marginal zone will be transformed into a new public space connecting all the sectors of the neighbourhood.

The project includes construction of more than 17,000 linear metres of infrastructure, the creation of parks and squares, the provision of public transport (with three bus lines), the creation and operation of three new health centres and two educational centres, the construction of the new Ministry of Education in the neighbourhood and promotion of the neighbourhood economy and support for entrepreneurs.

In May 2021, UNESCO honoured Buenos Aires with the Linking Cities 2021 award in recognition of its urbanization and integration process in Barrio 31.

Integration policies in the face of COVID-19

At the beginning of the pandemic, the city government acted jointly with social organizations from each neighbourhood and the national Ministry of Health to deploy new strategies to combat the virus in low-income neighbourhoods. In part, this work was possible thanks to the infrastructure progress made by

local government in previous years, including opening up streets in low-income neighbourhoods to enable emergency services to access them and the construction of health centres.

Educational and economic development promotion policies

Education is the fundamental tool to achieve inclusion throughout Buenos Aires. According to the United Nations, school closures due to the health crisis affected 1.6 billion students, of whom 24 million could drop out.⁴³ In this regard, Buenos Aires was strongly committed to continuing face-to-face classes in the 2021 school year, and to leaving no student behind.

By identifying and directing resources towards 6,500 primary school children who dropped out of school, and 9,000 secondary school children who did not achieve their expected level of learning, the city ensured students' attendance at school and guaranteed quality learning in order to provide them with long-term prospects.

Outcomes, scaling and learnings

The head of Buenos Aires' government pledged to promote formal employment and support entrepreneurs as key strategies to stimulate the economy and encourage growth in low-income neighbourhoods along with the rest of the city. In 2020, the legislature passed the Law for the Promotion of the Social and People-Based Economy, which strengthens and encourages work in low-income neighbourhoods. The regulation has resulted in the expansion of the formal business network, with more than 500,000 people who were previously in informal employment switching to formal employment, and established a system for access to credit, participation in public procurement and certain tax benefits.

Buenos Aires aims to ensure that by 2030 all men and women, especially those who are poor and vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services (including microfinance).

2.3 Disabled people



We must develop a critical path to ensure that disabled voices and perspectives can exemplify the philosophy of ‘nothing about us, without us’ in the co-creation of policy and new practices.

Sinéad Burke, Chief Executive Officer, Tilting the Lens

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the need to develop a more integrated, equitable and accessible approach to designing public and private spaces. This is most evident in cities, which are exemplars of best practice in addressing the interconnectedness among people, places and policies. In the TED talk “Why We Need Universal Design”, designer Michael Nesmith notes that “disability drives innovation, it forces you to come up with new solutions”.⁴⁴ This provokes questions about who we believe the public to be, and how the built environment empowers or accommodates an increasingly diverse and ageing society.

Friday, 3 December 2021 marked the 40th anniversary of United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. In 2020, advocacy and policy negotiations were underpinned by the theme of “‘building back better’: towards a disability-inclusive, accessible and sustainable post COVID-19 World”.⁴⁵ Key talking points included the responsibility of governments, city and local governments and civil society to reopen work, cultural and social spaces with a focus on accessibility. This was in response to the World Health Organization (WHO)’s findings on how the

pandemic exacerbated the vulnerability of the disabled community. Systematic barriers resulted in some disabled people experiencing challenges in implementing basic hygiene measures, enacting social distancing and accessing public health information.⁴⁶ One year later, research conducted in the UK by the Office for National Statistics indicates that six out of every 10 people who died from COVID-19 were disabled.⁴⁷

This stark reality requires a strategic focus. Danlami Bashau, the Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, notes that: “States must work to mitigate [the pandemic’s] immediate and short-term effects, and also plan better for future crises to make sure that no one is left behind.” Gerard Quinn, the UN’s Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, states that: “Only through the adoption of a human rights approach will we achieve equitable and resilient societies.”

Stakeholders must feel empowered to continuously ask and act upon the enquiry, “Is this accessible?” We must ensure that disabled voices and perspectives help co-create new policy and practices.





CASE STUDY 3

Dubai and Abu Dhabi's strategic disability and accessibility plans



The rapidly urbanizing city states of Dubai⁴⁸ and Abu Dhabi have made concerted efforts to align their ambitious urban development plans with the SDGs and ensure their cities are accessible for all. The history of support for disabled people in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) goes back to the 1980s when the first centre for disabled children was established. In 2008, the UAE ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Then, in 2014, legal, institutional, physical and social reforms led to the passage of Dubai Law No. 2 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, followed one year later by the launch of the Dubai Disability Strategy. A Higher Committee for the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was established to: (1) oversee the implementation of the law; (2) meet the CRPD obligations and SDG targets; and (3) create a governance model for inclusive healthcare, education, employment and social protection services.

The aim was to make Dubai an inclusive, barrier-free, rights-based society that promotes and protects disabled people, referred to in the UAE as “people of determination”, echoing the phrase coined in October 2017 by Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and ruler of Dubai. The launch of the UAE disability national strategy in 2017, followed in 2020 by Abu

Dhabi's ambitious disability strategy, means the country now recognizes that “people of determination” are entitled to all rights and privileges, must be respected and treated with dignity and have potential as empowered and productive members of society.

Urbanization provides opportunities in Dubai and Abu Dhabi for social inclusion and equitable access to services and livelihoods. The city states can showcase efforts to combat social exclusion and marginalization, and discuss how their innovative universal design projects are creating a new paradigm for inclusive urban development. To operationalize the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs to “leave no one behind”, local and regional governments should structure policies around inclusive human rights instruments, including the CRPD, SDGs, the New Urban Agenda and the WHO Age-Friendly Cities and Communities framework. Dubai's journey has helped shape quality standards for inclusion and accessibility, which underpin the Cities4All Global Compact on Inclusive and Accessible Cities.⁴⁹ Its six principles – non-discrimination, participation, accessibility, inclusive urban policies and programmes, capacity-building, and data for development – can lead to tangible shifts in social equity and resilience in cities.

2.4 Migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons



If we want to deal with migration issues effectively, the voice of cities must be heard on international platforms.

Yvonne Aki-Sawyers, Mayor of Freetown, Sierra Leone

As of 2019, the International Organization for Migration estimates that there are around 272 million international migrants in the world, representing 3.5% of the global population, with one in five living in the top 20 “global cities”.⁵⁰ While international migration receives a great deal of attention, the number of internal (i.e. within-country) migrants is much larger – an estimated 763 million.⁵¹ All told, migrants make up more than 1 billion people, or one-seventh of the world's population. Most people

migrate in search of better economic opportunities or for reasons related to work, family and education. Others leave their homes and countries for a range of compelling – and sometimes tragic – reasons, such as conflict or the threat of conflict, drought, disaster, political instability, safety and security concerns (including ethnic, religious, racial or cultural persecution), slavery or bonded labour or inadequate or limited urban services and infrastructure (including healthcare, education, utilities and transport).



Migration is highly place-specific, with different patterns emerging in different countries and regions, and even within countries:

- In 2013 about 27% of the United States population lived in a state in which they were not born. In contrast, just 15% of the population was born outside the country, making interstate migration practically double the size of international migration around that time.⁵² Some large cities, such as Los Angeles and New York City, have net outflows of American citizens, which are more than compensated for by international migration flows.
- Latin America has seen considerable internal displacement over the past half-century. For example, the political and economic crisis in Venezuela has fuelled massive emigration: in 2021, 4.1 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants were registered across South America, with 43% in neighbouring Colombia.^{53,54}
- Africa's urban growth rate is nearly 11 times greater than that of Europe. Most African migration remains in the region, with at least 21 million Africans (likely a significant undercount) living in other African countries, and particularly in large urban centres. Europe, the Middle East and North America are other common destinations.⁵⁵
- In India, interstate migration doubled in 2001–2011 compared to the previous decade, growing by 4.5% annually, with about 5–6 million migrants a year. Internal migration flows in India are driven by economic inequities among states. Bihar, with one of the highest outflows of domestic migrants, has a per-capita income roughly equivalent to Somalia's (approximately \$520) and a birth rate of 3.4 children per woman, while Kerala, a destination for in-migrants, has a per-capita income four times that of Bihar (approximately \$2,350) and a birth rate of 1.6 children per woman (on a par with Denmark).⁵⁶
- Over the past 30 years, China's urban population has increased from 22.9% to 56.8% of its current 1.3 billion citizens. The World Bank estimates that over 75% of China's population – about 1 billion people – will be living in its cities by 2030. China has become a major source and destination country for international migrants in recent years: 10 million Chinese work overseas, and China hosts more than 1 million international migrants.⁵⁷ It also experiences the most extensive internal migration of any country (as of 2020, nearly 376 million people lived somewhere other than their household registration area), with labour flowing from rural to urban areas, from the interior to the coast and from western and central to eastern provinces.⁵⁸
- In Europe as of January 2016, 19.3 million people were living in a different EU member state from the one in which they were born. Meanwhile, 2.7 million people entered the EU from non-EU countries in 2019, contributing to the 23 million (5.1%) of people living in the EU who are non-EU citizens.⁵⁹ Prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic, migrants were often in more vulnerable situations than their native-born counterparts in terms of both their economic position and access to basic services. For example, in most countries, the unemployment rate is higher for foreign-born persons than native-born – this gap reached 2.7% in OECD countries and 3.8% in the European Union in 2019.⁶⁰

“ COVID-19 has disproportionately affected migrant populations. In several OECD countries, migrants were twice as likely to be infected as native-born residents.

Cities are the predominant destination for most of the world's migrants, given their economic energy and job opportunities, cultural and intellectual vitality and quality of life. Across the OECD member countries, migrants account for an average of 20% of all key workers in capital regions,⁶¹ and in some cases, for a much higher proportion – in Brussels, for instance, about 62% of the population is foreign-born.⁶²

COVID-19 has disproportionately affected migrant populations. In several OECD countries, migrants were twice as likely to be infected as native-born residents – a finding potentially explained by work and housing conditions. The pandemic imposed a disproportionately negative toll on immigrants' labour market outcomes. In Sweden, almost 60% of the initial increase in unemployment was among immigrants.⁶³ Moreover, the informal nature of much immigrant employment limits access to safety nets such as unemployment benefits. In India, lost jobs and depleted earnings in March and April 2021 led to a huge outflow of interstate migrants, as they returned to their villages and smaller towns. The pandemic will undoubtedly continue to alter future migration patterns, regionally and globally, as it continues to evolve.

COVID-19 has also brought into sharp focus the extent to which economies depend on migrants. As countries rebuild, local policy-makers must limit the detrimental effects of the pandemic on migrants to leverage their participation in the recovery. In many contexts, communication campaigns that recognize the “essential jobs” undertaken by migrants and their contribution to local economies will be essential.⁶⁴ Countries can also create opportunities for locals and migrants to interact, inspired by the

OECD's checklist of 12 priorities, which guides policy-makers on how to better integrate migrants.⁶⁵ Many other effective initiatives already exist in local authorities around the world and can be shared through city networks and other means.

City governments must do a better job of characterizing inevitable migration, using appropriate instruments to inform policy decisions and government schemes, while providing better public services to migrants – including housing, healthcare, education, utilities and transport. Among key needs for cities are evidence-based coverage of migrant affairs, clearly defined policies on migrant rights and active participation of migrant communities. Integrated, forward-looking urban planning, a coherent, collaborative approach at all levels of government and responsive, outward-looking, action-oriented leadership are critical to achieving these goals.⁶⁶

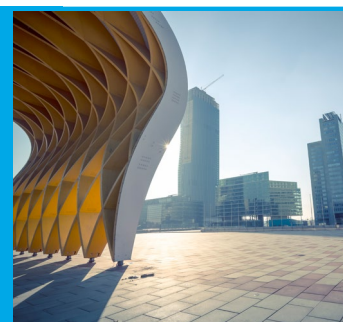
The COVID-19 pandemic hit cities hard, especially in terms of health and economic outcomes among migrant populations. Evidence from the first lockdown in European countries reveals that job losses were concentrated among ethnic minorities.⁶⁷ Yet, at the same time, migrants provided core front-line services during lockdown. Indeed, the crisis revealed the extent to which economies, especially in urban areas, depend on migrants. Studies have also shown that integrated migrants boost host economies through innovation and investment. Implementing tools to monitor migrant integration and access to local public services will therefore assist cities during recovery, and **is a matter of both social justice and strategic investment.**





CASE STUDY 4

Monitoring migrant integration and diversity policies to inform the design of evidence-based integration



Vienna is a fast-growing city of 1.9 million inhabitants, long boosted by foreign immigration. In 2020, 37% of Vienna's population had been born abroad and 46% had a migrant background (first or second generation).⁶⁸ As a federal province (*Bundesland*), Vienna has additional powers compared with other cities. Since 1971, it has adopted policies to support the integration of newcomers and reap the benefits of immigration. Today, this is overseen by a dedicated municipal department (MA 17), which also produces the *Vienna Integration and Diversity Monitoring Report*, a triannual report produced since 2007.⁶⁹

The report uses existing statistical sources, including official registers and labour force surveys, to compile 60 indicators in seven policy areas:

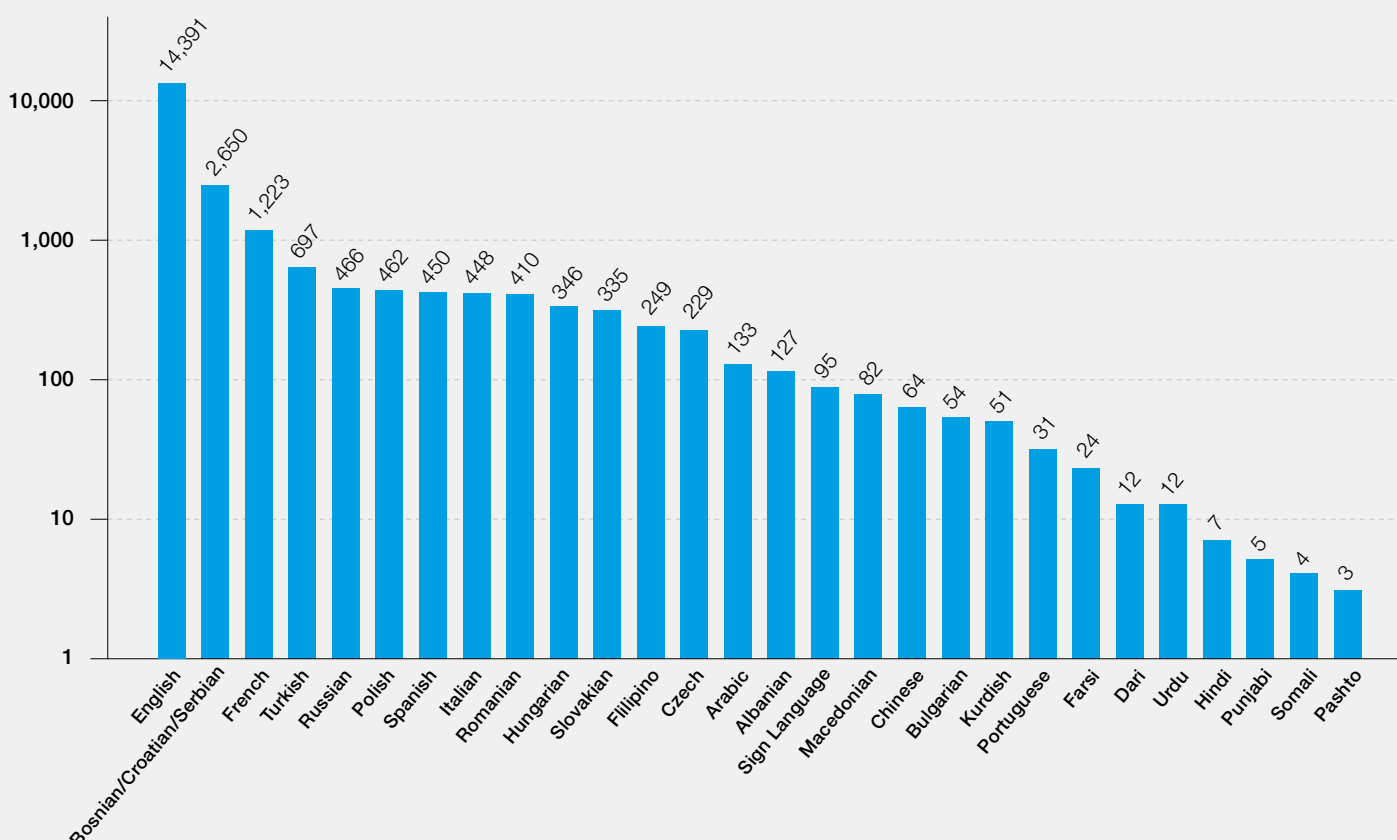
- Equality and participation
- Education

- Employment and labour market access
- Income and social security
- Health
- Housing
- Public space and coexistence

Ongoing diversity monitoring since 2009 allows for comparisons to previous years, providing a good evidence-based proxy for assessing the impact of integration and diversity policies and identifying obstacles. For instance, it led Viennese authorities to conclude that a high share of the city's residents (30% at the beginning of 2020) were excluded from voting in local, regional or national elections due to national legal restrictions on the voting rights of third-country nationals. In response, Vienna introduced petition rights in 2013 – independent of nationality – to allow non-citizens to participate in local politics.

FIGURE 1 | Language skills among staff members who responded to the City of Vienna Integration and Diversity Survey 2019

Language skills of staff members



Question 3.1.2: How many of your staff members speak the following languages? Evaluation and chart: UIV – Urban Innovation Vienna GmbH
 Source: City of Vienna – Integration and Diversity: Diversity Monitoring 2019.



CASE STUDY 5

Welcoming newcomers and refugees to Bristol, UK

Introduction and problem

Bristol, UK,⁷⁰ faces significant challenges with regard to immigrants, including:

- **Helping refugees find work quickly.** Many Bristol jobs are high-skilled and require high levels of technical English and qualifications, which can present challenges for migrants, particularly refugees.
- **Engaging all communities when promoting the inclusion of newcomers.** Migrants are concentrated in the inner city, and the outskirts of Bristol are much less diverse. People in these outer-lying areas report that they feel “left behind” by rapid economic change and cut adrift from the city. They were the most likely of voters in the Bristol area to support leaving the EU in the Brexit referendum of 2016. Low-diversity areas thus need a new narrative.
- **Facilitating public dialogue and socialization to support integration around commonality.** A local study showed a direct correlation between the frequency and depth of contact with migrants and the degree of positivity towards migration.

Solution

The city of Bristol is committed to welcoming newcomers and refugees. For example:

Bristol is part of [City of Sanctuary UK](#),⁷¹ a network of “welcoming places of safety for all and proud to offer sanctuary to all who need it”.

In December 2020, Bristol City Council officially signed the EUROCITIES Integrating Cities Charter, committing to develop interconnected policies on the integration of migrants at the local level.

Bristol’s 2019 Refugee and Asylum Seekers Strategy reaffirms the need to develop and implement actions “encouraging volunteering, particularly amongst young refugees and asylum seekers”. The city calls on young volunteers to welcome newly arrived families and help them orient themselves in their new home and community.

Bristol City Council is taking part in the Young People’s Immigration Forum, hosted by the charity Bristol Refugee Rights. This forum gathers local stakeholders who support young people with insecure immigration status. Through this partnership, the charity also supports the city council in its work with looked-after children and care leavers.

The Creative Youth Network works with the city council to help migrant teenagers reach their full potential. Since January 2020, the city also partly funds Integrating Migrant People through Activities to Connect & Thrive (IMPACT), designed to support 300 Bristol refugees and non-EU migrants integrate into UK society and deliver volunteer opportunities for 45 young migrants or refugees. The Bristol Resettlement Team supports resettled refugees (50% women) with work and training opportunities.⁷²





CASE STUDY 6

Achieving durable solutions for displaced communities through community-led and government-driven approaches in Somalia

Introduction and problem

Displacement affects 2.9 million Somalis, or one in every five people in the country, with far-reaching negative consequences for human security. Decades-long insecurity has contributed to a shortage of livelihood opportunities, weak state institutions and low resilience in the face of frequent natural disasters. The vast majority of internally displaced persons (IDPs) reside and intend to remain in urban areas, causing an unprecedented spike in Somalia's urbanization rates, and highlighting the need to find durable solutions⁷³ to the crisis.

Baidoa City, one of the largest secondary cities in Somalia, is affected by displacement and rapid urbanization. It has the largest proportion of IDPs per capita. Until 2015–2016 it was a small enclave in a large territory controlled by the insurgent group Al-Shabab; in 2020, 55,000 IDP households were counted in the area, constituting a majority of the urban population.

Solutions

The “Midnimo” (Unity) approach⁷⁴ was implemented in Somalia from 2017 to 2021 in selected urban centres in four federal member states: Jubaland, South West State, Hirshabelle and Galmudug. Midnimo is a community-based planning approach that emphasizes inclusive and participatory community engagement and promotes rights such as access to protection and basic urban services.

Planning and community engagement

In the planning phase, urban profiling, whereby specific aspects of the city are modelled to help prediction, is being used; this is a tool that analyses and documents factors that determine the development potential of urban settlements. These findings are then used to engage the public and decision-makers in a participatory process for future development.

In Somalia, community consultations include focus groups representing various social groups and communities. Urban profiling complements the process of developing community

action plans, which play a central role in shaping community priorities into implementable projects on community infrastructure, health, livelihoods, education and security.

Impacts and benefits

This project has strengthened local ownership of public assets and increased the legitimacy of local and state authorities. It has also improved basic urban and social services by restoring, extending and constructing assets such as schools and hospitals, and boosted local economic and development. Examples include the restoration and extension of Baidoa mental healthcare facility (the only one of its kind in South West State, serving more than 2.5 million people), the construction of a 3.3km access road to the Barwaaqo IDP resettlement site, the upgrading of the Dr Ayub football ground in Baidoa and the building of Kerowfogi bridge at Salamey village.

Further efforts include unlocking development opportunities, and a government- and UN-coordinated resettlement scheme for more than 2,000 IDP families to Baidoa-North (Barwaaqo site). To some extent, the road construction enabled the relocation scheme, which was combined with a planned city extension approach, rather than looking at the two processes separately.

Experiences and lessons learned

Spatial connectivity and accessibility are part of a human rights-centred approach, given that these factors improve living standards and access to essential services in marginalized communities. For instance, the construction of roads connecting remote IDP sites with the urban core in Baidoa enabled marginalized communities to access services.

An inclusive approach involving government and community leaders also helps articulate and prioritize immediate community needs. Those processes leverage other existing resources to ensure the expansion and stability of interventions and contribute to the greater social cohesion of urban communities affected by displacement.





2.5 Older residents



COVID-19 has revealed the extreme vulnerability of the ageing population in our cities. More than ever the community must keep a watch on the elderly. They need accessibility to healthcare services, mobility and connectivity and, as far as resources allow, they should be assisted with digital learning, a great enabler.

Chan Heng Chee, Professor, Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities, Singapore University of Technology and Design; Ambassador at Large Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Founding Chair, Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities, Singapore University of Technology and Design (2012–2021)

Since 2018, the world has contained more people aged 65 and older than children under five.⁷⁵ According to the UN, from 2019 until 2050, “the share of older persons is projected at least to double in four regions: Northern Africa and Western Asia, Central and Southern Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Eastern and South-Eastern Asia”. Crucially, the new elderly population will largely comprise women in the oldest age groups, given the gender gap in longevity and the fact that the fastest-growing demographic is those 80 and over (including centenarians).

Elderly people experience significant vulnerabilities, including financial insecurity, poverty and social and physical isolation. In many regions this is exacerbated by families having fewer children, with more single-parent households, which leads to reduced financial and social support and a higher risk of isolation. Older residents are more likely to confine themselves at home, whether for physical reasons, lack of social networks or elevated perceptions of risk. This has undesirable consequences, as in Japan where some 30,000 elderly people a year die solitary deaths, often not discovered until long after.⁷⁶ These factors are worse for women, who tend to have fewer financial resources due to lower average educational attainment and

workforce participation over the course of their life, and who often outlive their spouses.

Older people are generally more vulnerable than others from a health perspective: they are more likely to have pre-existing health conditions, are less physiologically resistant to certain stressors (e.g. heat) and may be mobility-impaired, and thus less able to avoid acute risks. They often experience frailty and loss of functional capacity, while physical and social isolation further reduce their resilience. All of these factors may contribute to mental health issues.

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed new vulnerabilities for elderly people. Not only do older residents experience far higher risks of serious illness and death from infection, but without adequate social support they may also face significant barriers to medical care, including vaccines. Elderly individuals tend to have less experience with and access to digital technology, complicating tracking and vaccination efforts in some countries. Physical isolation and mobility impairment have made lockdowns even more challenging for elderly populations than for others. In some countries, ethical debates have arisen over lockdown and vaccine prioritization decisions, pitting the interests of older individuals against those of medical personnel and other essential workers.

“ New York City has launched Age-Friendly NYC and uses an ‘age-in-everything’ lens to determine how city life might be more responsive to older residents.

The pandemic has made clear the critical importance of planning designing cities with older residents in mind. Many countries and cities have already taken important steps in this direction:

- Singapore has developed a multistakeholder Action Plan for Successful Ageing, emphasizing financial security, affordable care and opportunities for active, healthy lifestyles.
- Japan has implemented a Platinum Society⁷⁷ to celebrate centenarians and create a technology-enabled, age-free society where all are encouraged to stay healthy and to continue to play active roles in the workforce and society.
- New York City has launched Age-Friendly NYC and uses an “age-in-everything” lens to determine how city life might be more responsive to older residents, including

infrastructure, recreation, social services, housing, empowerment and volunteering.

- Azerbaijan has used social media (e.g. videos on social networks, online webinars and peer-to-peer discussions) to help older residents organize their leisure time and protect against COVID-19.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, Buenos Aires created a programme to provide hotels and other facilities in which elderly people could isolate, particularly in vulnerable neighbourhoods.

In the wake of COVID-19, we have a unique opportunity to reimagine urban development to support all individuals, including day-care, health and mobility facilities for older residents who increasingly represent the face of urban life.



CASE STUDY 7

Intergenerational harmony at Kampung Admiralty



Kampung Admiralty⁷⁸

Singapore has one of the most rapidly ageing populations in the world. The number of people aged over 65 years is expected to grow to one in four by 2030,⁷⁹ and the spatial inclusion of older people will be increasingly necessary in this highly urbanized city-state to avoid adverse outcomes such as social exclusion and isolation, which were exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic for many older adults.

Singapore is no stranger to developing intergenerational spaces that foster interaction.⁸⁰ Throughout its modern history, the public housing estates, where more than 80% of Singapore’s population lives, have included spaces where different generations can meet spontaneously. For example, many housing estates have playgrounds adjoining senior fitness corners and childcare centres, with informal social spaces for older residents nearby.

The Ministry of Health’s Action Plan for Successful Ageing⁸¹ envisages a city for all ages, where intergenerational harmony is actively cultivated. This vision was realized in 2018 through the development of Kampung Admiralty,⁸² the city-state’s first

integrated vertical retirement village. This complex houses residents aged 55 and older, and allows them to “age in place” while remaining well integrated into the wider community via easy access to public transport. This enables the public (of different generations) to visit and use the facilities. Furthermore, the compound’s Active Ageing Hub is co-located with a childcare centre, enabling different generations to participate in storytelling, crafts and other intergenerational bonding sessions.⁸³

Although relatively new, some Kampung Admiralty residents have already reported a better quality of life, including feeling more empowered.⁸⁴ The space meets the basic requirements for inclusion – non-residents are welcome to visit, residents enjoy the options for social interaction and it is easily accessible.

As the global population ages, cities across the world will need to start planning more integrated and intergenerational spaces such as Kampung Admiralty as part of their wider city strategy, with careful and strategic co-location practices and event programming.



CASE STUDY 8

Using technology to combat isolation among elderly residents in Barcelona



In Barcelona,⁸⁵ city officials are combating what they describe as an “epidemic of loneliness” among older residents with an innovative programme designed to foster connections.

Vincles, Catalan for “bonds”, is a service offered by Barcelona City Council’s Area of Social Rights, in partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies. The goals of the *Vincles* initiative are threefold: encourage relationships among older people, offer participation tools and create a support network. Users are selected based on self-reported feelings of loneliness and are given digital tablets designed for older residents. The 2014 Mayor’s Challenge-winning project has had remarkable success in allowing older people to form connections – not only with their loved ones but also with people in similar circumstances.

The core element of *Vincles* is an app that enables users to communicate through phone calls, audio messages, photos and videos. But what sets the app apart is its innovative design, specifically geared towards older users. Large buttons are designed to aid those with visual impairments, and the interface is streamlined and easy to use. Furthermore, group

facilitators encourage participation from anyone who may be hesitant to join group interactions. The *Vincles* programme also incorporates in-person components, including trainings and social outings to city-sponsored events. During COVID-19, the project rapidly added access to critical public-health information, healthcare services and psychological support. Doctors, nurses and police officers directly answered more than 4,500 user-generated questions, creating a sense of safety during uncertain times.

The *Vincles* app has 3,188 elderly users, 80% of whom reported an improvement in self-esteem from learning to use the tablet. Furthermore, 70% of users extended their friend network, and 60% said their general state of mind improved. The benefits are even more marked among the app’s most vulnerable users: 72% of those who had reported feelings of extreme loneliness indicated that *Vincles* reduced their sense of isolation.

The project continues, with future improvements including integration with telehealth services and other city-run social programmes.

2.6 Children and youth



Young people should be at the forefront of the creation of inclusive urban environments.

Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Undersecretary-General of the United Nations; Executive Director, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Four out of every 10 people globally are younger than 25,⁸⁶ and by 2030 up to 60% of all urban dwellers will be under 18, with the preponderance in developing contexts. Even while the populations of cities in the Global South grow ever younger, urban environments remain tailored to non-disabled male adults.⁸⁷ Children and young people are often not considered, with their needs unexpressed and therefore under-represented in urban planning and broader governance – and rarely acknowledged in real-world initiatives and development policy.

These challenges have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. One-third of the world’s schoolchildren (463 million) were unable to access remote learning due to inadequate technology or digital infrastructure, and at-home conditions are often not conducive to learning.⁸⁸ Girls are especially vulnerable in the absence of regular schooling.

Infrastructure planning and investment must address the needs of children and youth, including by meaningfully engaging them in decision-making and urban planning, as promoted by the New Urban Agenda and Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is important for society as a whole, as good town planning should meet everyone’s needs – including those of children and youth – to create an inclusive and integrated society. Children and youth should be actively contributing to planning as they often have different needs from adults; for instance, when it comes to how they engage with environments, they need spaces and facilities to enable them to play. Young people should be at the forefront of creating inclusive urban environments, supported by broad partnerships advocating for their needs and rights. Those needs must be studied and safeguarded in policies, laws and real participatory mechanisms, with adequate budgets for promotion and implementation.⁸⁹

An example of the pivotal role young people can play comes from a coalition of youth-led groups, supported by UN-Habitat, that established handwashing stations in Kenyan informal settlements. This initiative enabled more than 2.5 million handwashes, contributing tremendously to slowing the spread of COVID-19.⁹⁰ Local

authorities in Kenya also recognize the importance of ensuring that youth can safely reach destinations and access services during the pandemic; this has been a key consideration in implementing infrastructure for non-motorized transport as an alternative to crowded public services.



CASE STUDY 9

Public space and engagement of young people in Palestine



Introduction and problem

East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip⁹¹ have been deeply affected by a 10-year economic blockade and repeated cycles of violence, resulting in severe material and human losses: 73% of residents in East Jerusalem live below the poverty line and there is a shortage of safe and inclusive public spaces. The needs and rights of the population – especially women and young people, who make up over 70% of residents – are rarely considered in post-conflict reconstruction. Accordingly, UN-Habitat has, since 2014, been supporting local governments in Palestine to design, create and manage inclusive and accessible public spaces for everyone to enjoy, especially youth. UN-Habitat's work on public spaces contributes to SDG 11, ensuring that no one and no place is left behind.

Solution

In 2014, UN-Habitat surveyed hundreds of spaces in East Jerusalem, Area C and the Gaza Strip and selected six for upgrading. Innovative participatory approaches included Block by Block, which uses the computer game *Minecraft* to design real-life three-dimensional environments. More than 40 community members, including many young girls, engaged in this process to create new spaces that reflect their key issues and aspirations.

Local leadership, planning and community engagement

The Block by Block workshops gave residents a voice in their neighbourhood's rehabilitation. In addition to the Block by Block approach, UN-Habitat has been building the capacity

of local governments and community organizations. In East Jerusalem, where the political situation allows for only limited engagement with local authorities, initiatives were driven by the communities themselves. In the Gaza Strip, local government led the process in close collaboration with the communities, local planners and designers.

Impacts, benefits and scale-up

To date, 13 public spaces have been completed, with 10 in progress. These initiatives have significantly increased the safety, well-being and overall quality of life of more than 139,500 residents.

UN-Habitat is supporting national and local governments in scaling up to five additional cities, while providing recommendations for the development of national- and city-level policy and strategy. It has also developed a placemaking design guide and a mobile safety app, to provide guidance on design solutions that make spaces safer and more inclusive for youth, women and girls.

Experiences and lessons learned

The Block by Block approach has changed the power relationships between communities – especially the most vulnerable groups – and professionals such as architects and urban planners. UN-Habitat's projects in Palestine contribute to developing an integrated, multisectoral approach that helps local governments focus on their most vulnerable residents. They show that innovative solutions and digitalization can help create a more inclusive society that respects the civic engagement and democratic rights of all city dwellers.

2.7 Informal sector

“ Over a billion people living in slums and informal settlements in the developing world have faced particular health risks because of substandard housing conditions and lack of infrastructure and basic services, especially water, sanitation and access to healthcare.

Sameh Wahba, Regional Director, Sustainable Development, Europe and Central Asia Region, World Bank; Global Director, Urban, Disaster Risk Management, Resilience and Land Global Practice, World Bank Group (2019–2022)

The informal sector comprises more than half of the global labour force and more than 90% of micro and small enterprises (MSEs), with millions of informal economic units and hundreds of millions of informal workers in labour markets around the world.⁹² Work in the informal economy is often characterized by small or undefined workplaces, unsafe and unhealthy working conditions, low levels of skill and productivity, low or irregular incomes, long working hours and lack of access to information, markets, finance, training and technology. The informal sector, upon which so many urban dwellers and workers in low- and middle-income countries depend, is seldom considered during city planning and development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a particularly hard toll on informal-sector workers.⁹³ For example, 56% of people working in urban areas at the height of the pandemic in Nigeria – primarily in the informal sector – stopped working in 2020 due to COVID-19.⁹⁴ In Kenya, 1.7 million people, mostly aged 20–29, lost their jobs.^{95,96} Affected households have faced multifaceted challenges, such as increases in food prices, threats of eviction and disrupted access to services.⁹⁷

Prolonged social distancing and lockdowns have left informal workers vulnerable to COVID-19 infection. In Jakarta, members of the richest decile of the population reduced their mobility during lockdown by 20% more than the poorest decile, mainly because they could afford to work from home.⁹⁸ Unstable jobs and a lack of access to safety nets or savings forced informal-sector workers to continue going to (and searching for) work, often commuting by overcrowded transport options that exposed them to high viral transmission risk. Given that cities are integrated labour markets, the rapid spread of COVID-19 in poorer neighbourhoods likely seeded further outbreaks in higher-income areas, thus posing risks for the entire urban population.⁹⁹

Almost 1 billion people living in slums and informal settlements in the developing world have faced elevated health risks because of substandard housing conditions and a lack of infrastructure and basic services – especially water, sanitation and access to healthcare. Moreover, overcrowding and lack of public space in slums and informal settlements render social distancing unfeasible, further compounding the problem. In Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and one of Africa’s largest cities, some 12 million people (84% of the population) live in areas that are predicted by the World Bank to be hotspots for contagion risk, given overcrowding and a lack of basic services.¹⁰⁰

The pandemic also disproportionately affects certain informal occupations. For example, lockdowns prevented waste pickers from working, which translated into lost income. When they did work, they were exposed to additional health risks from handling contaminated materials. In Ahmedabad, strict lockdown measures resulted in 98% of waste pickers losing their jobs. Less than half were able to resume work due to increased health concerns, and one-third reported hunger because of lack of income and food price increases.¹⁰¹ Women in informal employment were more likely to lose their jobs, and domestic violence increased.^{102,103}

As long as informal workers are not recognized as economic actors and not incorporated into economic and urban planning, they remain outside the protective arm – but within the punitive reach – of government.¹⁰⁴ From the initial phases of city planning and development, the urban informal sector should be recognized and incorporated in a way that protects the rights of people who depend on this sector for their livelihoods. A combination of more pro-poor urban planning and collective action is of paramount importance in formalizing the informal sector.





CASE STUDY 10

Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Initiative in Mwanza's informal settlements, Tanzania

Introduction and problem

Mwanza is the second-largest city in Tanzania,¹⁰⁵ with a population of around 1 million. As much as 75% of the population lives in unplanned settlements. Beside lacking basic facilities such as roads, schools, sanitation and water, these settlements are on steep, rocky hills where it is almost impossible to provide sanitation services. For the 40,000 students who live in Mwanza, more than half of whom are girls and young women, the lack of access to proper sanitation impedes their ability to attend school due to safety issues. The Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation Initiative is working to ensure the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation (WASH) for all, in line with SDG 6.

Solution

The project involves extending and upgrading the water supply and sanitation in Mwanza, as well as supplying water to the satellite towns of Misungwi, Magu and Lamadi and improving sanitation in the towns of Bukoba and Musoma.

UN-Habitat implemented a youth-led survey with the community to ensure their voice and concerns were heard. This innovative engagement method provided new data about their standard of living, housing and basic infrastructure services, which became the baseline from which the project was designed, implemented and evaluated.

UN-Habitat also supported the development and implementation of a stakeholder engagement plan, which ensured the active involvement of local beneficiaries in project planning and development.

Impacts, benefits and scale-up

To date, 32,263 pupils and 832 teachers have gained access to clean water and improved sanitation in Mwanza City through the construction of school toilets and the connection of household toilets to the sewerage system. More than 2,500 people from 415 households in three informal settlements have also benefited, and expansion has been approved to include up to seven additional informal settlements.

Experiences and lessons learned

The active engagement of all relevant WASH stakeholders, from the regional to the community level, was key to ensuring the project's sustainability. An open, transparent and accountable dialogue with stakeholders allowed for early and effective identification, assessment and management of the environmental and social risks, impacts and opportunities. The experience demonstrates that giving stakeholders a voice throughout all phases of a project results in better outcomes.



For the 40,000 students who live in Mwanza, more than half of whom are girls and young women, the lack of access to proper sanitation impedes their ability to attend school due to safety issues.

2.8 Racial, ethnic and religious minorities



COVID pandemic lockdowns have exacerbated pre-existing dynamics of socioeconomic structural inequality, as in many cities people from minority communities are disproportionately engaged in the service sector and more likely to lose their jobs. It is vital that cities work with our communities to change this.

Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol, Bristol City Council

Racial and ethnic inequality is a topic at the forefront of many city leaders' minds, particularly in places where the Black Lives Matter movement has shone a fresh light on long-standing injustice. Racial inequality in cities is usually complex and multifaceted, encompassing everything from education to housing, health to employment, and experiences with the police and justice system to representation in city leadership. The pandemic has deepened pre-established dynamics of socioeconomic inequality and exposed the uncomfortable truth that health status is an outcome of broader structural, social and economic conditions. It is essential that cities and communities collaborate to change this.

The deep-rooted and interdependent nature of challenges relating to inequality makes tackling them a complex task. Successful action requires deep analysis, informed by direct experience of the problems and collaboration between the public, private and voluntary sectors. It also requires all stakeholders to be reflective, to learn from real-world experience and adjust accordingly.

Issues of race and ethnicity cannot be separated from social mobility and class. Social immobility

locks in intergenerational poverty and exclusion, and racial inequality locks in historical inequalities. These undermine programmes designed to bring people together. Washington, DC, is an example of how damaging racial segregation and poverty overlap and persist, even in the capital city of the United States. The least-poor DC neighbourhoods (those with less than 10% of families living below the poverty line) include 94% of the city's majority-white neighbourhoods but only 22% of its majority-Black neighbourhoods.¹⁰⁶

Religious diversity has been accelerated by migration. History provides enough examples of inter-religious tension and strife for city leaders to be conscious of the potential for conflict. But religious communities and institutions can also be enormous assets for cities, providing social and economic hubs and creating opportunities for partnership on shared goals. Crucial to unlocking this potential is the strength of relationships – between different religious groups, and between these groups and city government. Patient, ongoing dialogue and relationship-building are key to developing trust, unearthing common ground and identifying potential points of tension in advance.





CASE STUDY 11

BeOnBoard, a disruptive equality, diversity and inclusion (ED&I) talent and leadership development agency

Introduction and problem

BeOnBoard¹⁰⁷ is based in Bristol, UK. Within the city of Bristol, 91 different languages are spoken, making it the South-West of England region's most diverse city; this is often cited as a major reason for it being one of the best places to live, work and study in the UK and Europe. Despite this, many city organizations have persistently failed to tap into this diverse knowledge and talent pool. In fact, while Bristol is one of the UK's wealthiest cities (generating £15 billion per year), the Joseph Rowntree Trust found that all ethnic minority groups in Bristol experience significant employment inequality when compared to white British people. This has increased the urgency of the need to accelerate change and increase diversity in leadership.

Solution

BeOnBoard was founded in 2018 by social entrepreneur Kalpna Woolf, a British Asian woman with experience of overcoming structural racism in her work and personal life. On the basis of her own experiences, she set up BeOnBoard to increase boardroom diversity, disrupting the leadership pipeline by introducing high-calibre, board-ready talent from diverse backgrounds. Embracing diversity unlocks inclusive strategic decision-making, innovation, resilience and profitability.

BeOnBoard believes that a key solution to creating sustainable and inclusive change in Bristol is advancing a new generation of leaders from culturally diverse backgrounds, and positioning them in key roles in boardroom and C-suite teams.

Impact

BeOnBoard has helped more than 65 organizations rethink their equality, diversity and inclusion practices and has trained more than 300 leaders from under-represented groups, many of whom have gone on to join and diversify boardrooms across the region.

Recommendations and lessons

BeOnBoard's work aligns with the SDGs to reduce inequalities, the UK's [Parker Review](#) targets on boardroom ethnicity and Bristol's One City Plan¹⁰⁸ goals, namely:

- To develop positive action programmes (such as BeOnBoard) to increase minority representation in managerial positions by 2026.
- To ensure that the proportion of women, minority, LGBTQIA+ and disabled staff in organizations with more than 250 staff and city leadership reflects the city's diversity.

Bristol's communities are demanding change and fairer representation. Good governance, brought to organizations by a truly representative and diverse leadership, is now paramount. Greater diversity requires intentional practices and interventions beyond simple compliance. At a minimum it will take time, adequate resources, stronger legislation, targets, penalties, incentives and a new breed of brave, determined and inclusive leaders of all shapes and sizes.



Bristol's communities are demanding change and fairer representation. Good governance, brought to organizations by a truly representative and diverse leadership, is now paramount.



2.9 Indigenous communities



Indigenous persons are confronted with structural imbalances... Governments need to work with local leaders and communities to implement culturally appropriate policies to end inequality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

Tatiana Gallego-Lizon, Urban Expert

The challenges faced by Indigenous communities in places with a history of settlement by European colonizers, such as the Americas, Australia and New Zealand, are often recognized. However, many other countries also have distinct populations whose members practise traditional ways of life and face similar issues, such as the Adivasis of India, Indigenous communities in the Philippines, Irish Travellers and others.

Indigenous communities continue to move to urban areas at an unprecedented pace. Although data disaggregated by ethnic origin is still scarce, as are comparative studies on these residents' living conditions, Indigenous communities consistently experience major

disparities in terms of wages, employment, skills and education, and are vulnerable to a range of social and economic factors that affect their human rights. Numerous causes contribute to Indigenous communities moving to urban areas, such as land dispossession, poverty, militarization, natural disasters, climate change, lack of employment opportunities, deterioration of traditional livelihoods and the prospect of a better life in cities.¹⁰⁹

Indigenous people face additional challenges in urban areas, including limited access to educational, health, cultural and social services, inadequate housing and different forms of poverty and marginalization.

Poverty, housing and access to basic services

While cities offer better access to health, education and employment, Indigenous people have generally benefited less than others. For example, in Latin America and the Caribbean, where 8% of the population is estimated to be Indigenous, half live in urban areas, representing 14% of the poor and 17% of the extremely poor, with 36% living in slums.¹¹⁰ In Canada, 24% of Indigenous people live in poverty, compared to 13% of the non-Indigenous population, and more than one in three Indigenous households is food-insecure.¹¹¹ In Australia, Indigenous people in

major cities were 2.7 times more likely to be living in overcrowded conditions than non-Indigenous people.¹¹² In the Philippines, 65% of migrants from Indigenous areas suffer from extreme poverty.¹¹³ A lack of suitable, safe and affordable transport systems further hampers their access to critical basic services such as healthcare.¹¹⁴ In general, urban Indigenous people are less able to afford housing and live in lower-quality housing than others. Their houses are characterized by poor standards, overcrowding and a lack of access to social services.

Employment and economy

Although cities can increase Indigenous people's access to markets and employment opportunities, they are at a disadvantage. Shifting from a rural to an urban setting often results in lower-skill, lower-paying jobs in the informal sector. In countries such as Bolivia and Ecuador, the probability of informality is 12% greater for urban Indigenous groups.¹¹⁵ But even for those who completed tertiary education, earnings are often significantly lower for professionals of Indigenous descent. For Indigenous women, the wage gap is even greater compared to

non-Indigenous female groups – up to 60% in the case of Bolivia.¹¹⁶ Indigenous populations are often exposed to unacceptable forms of work that deny their fundamental rights, putting their lives, health, human dignity and security at risk.¹¹⁷ According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), “Current violations of fundamental rights can take the form of, for example, denial of citizenship, bonded labour and human trafficking or restricted access to education and health services. Often, women are more affected by such violations than men.”¹¹⁸



Conflicting priorities, identity and participation in political life

Political participation at the national level has raised awareness of Indigenous peoples' issues in many countries, leading to important constitutional changes. However, voices representing the interests and rights of Indigenous groups at the subnational level are often still weak. Strengthening those

voices could help forge or preserve group identities, advance the quality of life for urban Indigenous communities and result in programmes that are culturally appropriate to the group's needs (e.g. social housing).

Indigenous groups and COVID-19

Indigenous groups in urban settings can be more vulnerable to communicable diseases such as COVID-19 because of poor living conditions, limited access to basic services or language barriers. Indigenous populations also commonly live in areas where inadequate public transport and distance from work make them more

vulnerable to the risk of infection and disease – at least two to three times more than other populations.¹¹⁹ Indigenous people engaged in low-skill, informal employment activities are less likely to have worked from home during the pandemic, as their occupations can rarely be conducted remotely.

Moving towards a culturally inclusive urbanization

Governments must work with local leaders and communities to implement culturally appropriate policies that end inequality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. One example is the “home languages radios” initiative in Argentina, Chile and Nigeria, where Indigenous cultures in each country have developed radio programming to maintain their native languages.¹²⁰ Greater efforts are also needed to ensure Indigenous urban people achieve SDGs 1–8 and 10 through culturally accessible

policies. Initiatives should support and sustain their identity to give them a sense of dignity while also helping them gain access to health, social, cultural, recreational and educational services and employment. Cities have always been a home for those in search of inclusion and diversity. As such, Indigenous voices and cultural values have an important role to play as drivers of urban community development, including planning of the urban form.¹²¹

2.10 LGBTQIA+ residents



Inclusion of gender and sexual diversity is not just about glitter and Pride parades. It's about feeling accepted and welcomed on the street, in school, in the workplace and in government policy.

Naheed Nenshi, Mayor of Calgary, Canada (2010–2021)

LGBTQIA+ people¹²² are often vulnerable to urban violence and may not be afforded an equal right to enjoy urban space. Between 2014 and 2020, 1,292 LGBTQIA+ persons were murdered in Latin America and the Caribbean because of their sexual orientation.¹²³ In Brazil in 2020, 60% of LGBTQIA+ deaths happened in public spaces, and 70% at night.¹²⁴ Because LGBTQIA+ people suffer high rates of rejection by their family, they are particularly prone to homelessness. According to several studies in the United States, LGBTQIA+ youth experience more than double the homelessness risk of heterosexual, cisgender youth.¹²⁵ This situation was aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic, as LGBTQIA+ people experiencing homelessness necessarily rely on social housing and shelter programmes, and this accommodation may be located in areas that are unsafe for stigmatized populations or may require house-sharing, which creates unsafe conditions.

Access to public facilities

One example of urban discrimination towards transgender people is with respect to access to public toilets. Gender-specific toilets (explicitly identifying one toilet for women and another for men) may lead to symbolic and physical violence

against transgender people, who may avoid these spaces for fear of disapproving looks, hurtful jokes, harassment and even physical aggression. Several initiatives have invited urban planners to design public spaces and facilities to address these concerns, through regulations such as Brazil's Draft Law on Public Access to Bathrooms for trans people and cross-dressers.¹²⁶ Such anti-discrimination regulations may extend to other aspects of urban life, such as access to housing.

Urban voice

The LGBTQIA+ community needs empowering tools for its voice to be included in urban governance structures. For example, LGBT citizenship centres in Brazil are public facilities where legal, social and psychological services are offered to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, and which advocate for public policies to combat homophobia and transphobia and promote LGBTQIA+ citizenship. In addition to adequate institutional structures, some countries have quotas for LGBTQIA+ political representatives, to ensure that policy-makers are more representative. For instance, in September 2020, the Argentinean government announced a 1% quota for transgender and transsexual persons in national public servant roles.

2.11 People affected by 'time poverty'



Only a concerted effort by society, government and private stakeholders will allow everyone to reach their full potential and create truly inclusive urban environments – without time poverty restricting labour market or societal participation, or the empowerment of vulnerable groups.

Niels Lund, Vice-President, Global Prevention and Health Promotion, Novo Nordisk

Time-poor individuals and families often make behavioural choices based on limited time availability rather than what is most healthy or beneficial.¹²⁷ For example, time poverty can lead to unhealthy dietary practices and low physical activity, which contributes to damaging health outcomes such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. While some time-poor people have high average incomes, time poverty mostly affects people of low socioeconomic status.¹²⁸ Such groups are unable to pay their way

out of such constraints, and to provide for their families they often have to work in multiple jobs with long commutes because they live on the periphery of urban areas and have poor transport options.¹²⁹

Time poverty is also strongly gendered. Women are typically responsible for domestic tasks and spend about twice as much time as men on unpaid work – some 4.5 hours each day. This leaves little time for formal employment or for

pursuing self-care through medical or other critical services.^{130,131} Similarly, young adults and single parents experience disproportionate levels of time poverty.¹³² For instance, a study in 44 countries shows that more than two-thirds of those tasked with fetching water are women and children.¹³³ Childcare duties also usually fall to women, requiring them to pay for care if they are to have any chance of accessing income-generating opportunities. A South Korean childcare voucher system – initially for low-income families but made universal in 2013 – has lifted 200,000 individuals out of time poverty and income poverty.¹³⁴

To tackle widening disparities and unsustainable outcomes related to time poverty, changes to social norms, economic incentives and policies must allow all people, especially women and youth, to invest in their own human and social capital.¹³⁵ This will contribute to meeting SDG 5, which aims to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. Governments play a crucial role in shaping such enabling frameworks, and some of the pressure on time-poor groups can also be alleviated by innovation, education, technology and easy access to healthcare.¹³⁶ The private sector can also play a crucial role.



CASE STUDY 12

Cities Changing Diabetes programme in Houston, USA



Introduction and problem

Houston¹³⁷ has accommodated its rapid population growth through a sprawling urban landscape interconnected by highways. This has resulted in people seeking accommodation far from the city centre, meaning longer commuting times, negative health implications and environmental pollution. In this context, 57% of commuters drive to work alone and 1.5% of the population uses active transport such as walking or cycling. The wide use of cars is leading to people increasingly following inactive lifestyles with unhealthy diets – and to an obesity rate of 31.4% among Houston’s adults – among the highest rates in the country. The diabetes projection model estimates that 15.6% of Houston’s adult population (aged 20–79) has diabetes today, a figure that could reach 21.1% by 2045 if no action is taken.¹³⁸

Solution

Cities Changing Diabetes, run by University College London and the University of Texas School of Public Health, conducted a diabetes vulnerability assessment of sociocultural factors underpinning the risk of type 2 diabetes among residents of three different Houston neighbourhoods. The study revealed various vulnerabilities, including low health literacy, long commutes, unhealthy food traditions and living in neighbourhoods undergoing constant change. Researchers were surprised to learn that the risk of diabetes transcends

economic status, with some young professionals especially vulnerable because they were too busy to make time for a healthy diet and exercise.

In 2017, Cities Changing Diabetes kicked off the Congregational Health Leadership Programme, a Faith and Diabetes initiative focused on religious congregations, which includes a six-week train-the-trainer course that prepares two members from each participating congregation to implement evidence-based primary prevention programmes and a 10-week lifestyle change programme for members already diagnosed with diabetes. The curriculum consists of five components, delivered at no cost: self-management and treatment; prevention and awareness; religious belief, practice and health; leadership and communication; and evaluation techniques and principles.

Outcomes, scaling and learnings

By focusing on vulnerable, and not just poor, populations, Cities Changing Diabetes was able to serve a larger base. Going forward, Houston will collaborate in a Healthy Cities Research Hub with programme partners in Mexico City and Vancouver. The initiative, focused on social and environmental determinants of health in urban settings throughout North America, will facilitate knowledge exchange, drive action-oriented research and evaluate community-based interventions.¹³⁹

2.12 People in vulnerable occupations



The years to come call for a shared sense of what's possible – a mindset shift from serving the process to serving the citizen, and taking a new, systemic approach to improving every resident's way of life.

José Siri, Urban Health Consultant, World Health Organization; Senior Science Lead – Cities, Urbanization & Health for Our Planet Our Health Programme, The Wellcome Trust (2019–2021)

Occupation is a fundamental determinant of urban health and well-being, directly influencing exposure to a variety of hazards. Decent jobs help guard against hazards associated with poverty – or with joblessness itself – and improve broader economic health. COVID-19 has underscored the heightened risks faced by certain workers, laying bare tensions between the essential nature of some work and the actions societies take to protect those who do it. Waste pickers, construction and sanitation workers and people on hourly contracts (especially those in the arts, services, restaurants, etc.) have less employment security and fewer safety nets.

Occupation often directly influences exposure. For example, industrial workers may be exposed to toxic agents, and manual labourers to accidents and injuries. Workers sometimes face mental health challenges from adverse conditions both during work and while travelling there and back. For example, informal workers may face harassment from local authorities in public spaces – such as being stopped, questioned and searched – and women sometimes experience difficulties on public transport, including sexual harassment. During COVID-19, workers in health, food processing, retail, transport and delivery, waste management and other areas experienced heightened risks of infection and severe outcomes.

Climate can also magnify some risks: for example, workers in tropical factories, construction and agriculture often face extreme heat; high temperatures necessitate climate-controlled buildings, which if poorly managed can increase exposure to infectious agents or toxins. Climate-related risks will grow and emerge, as with, for example, outdoor workers are likely to be exposed to more climate-sensitive infectious diseases, which can then be passed on to the wider population.

Most occupational hazards are inequitably distributed, with socioeconomically disadvantaged and marginalized groups bearing the greatest risks. Gender can be relevant in either direction: some high-risk manual labour positions are male-dominated, while women have experienced higher exposure to COVID-19. Occupational health and safety regulations are critical to managing such risks, but provisions are often weak or lacking in informal contexts in the developing world.

Vulnerability also depends on job precarity, since joblessness exposes individuals to health

and social risks associated with poverty and can carry significant stigma. For individuals, job uncertainty may depend on supply and demand for particular skills, the health of local job markets or substitutability in specific roles. Industry-wide, it can result from social or technological change or can follow in the wake of acute crises. During COVID-19, workers in cultural and creative industries, tourism and brick-and-mortar retail experienced significant unemployment.

The pandemic also highlighted digitalization's role in resilience for many economic activities, while underscoring the inequitable distribution of risks between those able to work from home and those whose work requires physical proximity – one aspect of the digital divide. Climate change will raise similar issues: acute events and climate-related trends will cause significant economic shocks and turnover, with the burden falling predominantly on low-skilled labourers and poor and marginalized communities.

Individual job security and employability tends to correlate with education, skills/expertise and specialization – although specialization can be a drawback when change forces a rebalancing of priorities or re-evaluation of risks. For example, climate change solutions imply significant reallocation of labour from traditional high-emission industries to new net-zero alternatives. Strong labour laws and robust social safety nets are critical to protecting the vulnerable, and significant resources are often needed for worker retraining to limit precarity. Informal employment – an important source of work in developing economies – is generally more precarious than formal employment, precisely because legal or regulatory safeguards and social support are lacking.

Occupational vulnerability and uncertainty raise complex operational and ethical issues. Indeed, during the COVID-19 crisis, significant debate has centred on the trade-offs between the essential nature of certain workers and their high exposure to COVID-19, low pay and low job security. Urban leaders will need to address similar tensions as they work towards the cities of tomorrow.

COVID-19 gave us a shared sense of the seemingly impossible, with an unthinkable number of livelihoods upturned and lives lost. The immediate future calls for a shared sense of what's possible – a new approach to improving city residents' way of life, one that puts the citizen at its heart.

“ During COVID-19, workers in health, food processing, retail, transport and delivery, waste management and other areas experienced heightened risks of infection and severe outcomes

3

Dimensions of urban inclusion

Cities have traditionally been places of opportunity, where poor migrants from rural areas come in search of better jobs and services. But such opportunities depend on how well the urbanization process is managed, especially regarding urban inclusion policies.



3.1 Spatial inclusion



The provision of affordable land and housing to the urban poor and vulnerable groups is key for enabling spatial inclusion in cities

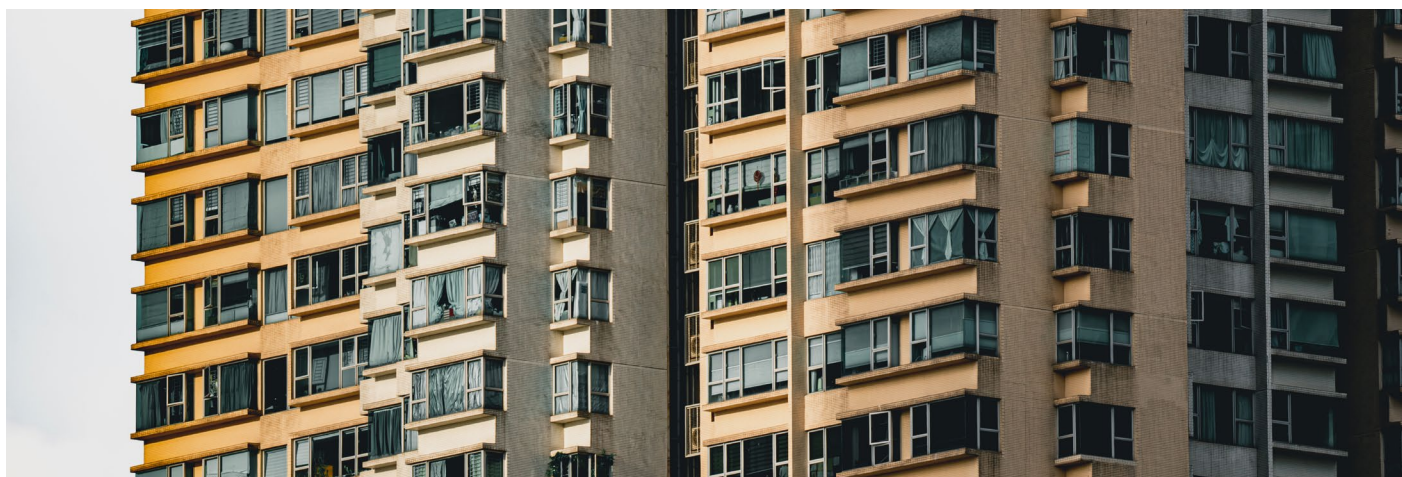
Sameh Wahba, Regional Director, Sustainable Development, Europe and Central Asia Region, World Bank; Global Director, Urban, Disaster Risk Management, Resilience and Land Global Practice, World Bank Group (2019–2022)

Cities have traditionally been places where poor migrants from rural areas come seeking better jobs and services. In China alone, more than 200 million rural migrants are currently estimated to work in urban areas.¹⁴⁰ Globally, roughly 80% of internally displaced people and 60% of refugees make their home in cities.¹⁴¹ However, the extent to which such opportunities materialize for the urban poor and vulnerable groups depends on how well the urbanization process has been managed, especially regarding access to land, affordable housing and basic urban services. Stark spatial inequalities within cities have served to reinforce socioeconomic exclusion of the urban poor and marginalized.

In particular, the urban poor and other vulnerable groups have limited access to land with secure tenure. Only about 30% of the global population has a registered land title.¹⁴² The resulting spatial inequalities are compounded by poor planning and zoning regulations. Where they exist, land development regulations in many developing-world cities are too often rigid and ill-adapted to the realities

of the urban poor. Low development densities and “rights of way”, allowing the owner of one property to cross another, have an exclusionary effect on the urban poor. The situation is similar in some developed countries, including in the US, where exclusionary zoning policies such as large minimum plot sizes often price out those on low incomes. This entails the formation of exclusive gated communities, reinforcing racial and socioeconomic segregation.¹⁴³

Lack of access to affordable land and housing combines with weak property rights to make urban residents worse off. Limited-income households are often pushed to urban peripheries, where land is more affordable but far from job centres, and where there is limited access to infrastructure and urban services. In China, rural migrant workers are ineligible for public housing or affordable housing programmes because of the limitations imposed by the *hukou* (household registration) system. They end up settling in urban fringes, with long and expensive journeys to work – often more than 20km, which can take up to four hours per day.¹⁴⁴



At the same time, the urban poor living in overcrowded slums and informal settlements are highly exposed to multiple risks: environmental hazards, natural and man-made disasters, and health crises such as COVID-19. Examples include the low-lying areas in Dakar where residents are exposed to flooding risks, and the slums that have formed on rubbish dump sites such as Tandale in Dar es Salaam.

Ineffective land use planning and a lack of public investment results in many imbalances within

cities. Poorer neighbourhoods across the globe have a below-average number of streets and open green areas, and those few open areas are often poorly managed, deteriorate rapidly and attract crime or waste dumping.¹⁴⁵ Unequal distribution of public space also mirrors unequal access to basic urban services and infrastructure such as water, sanitation and public health facilities. This situation greatly disadvantages the urban poor because their livelihoods depend on public spaces and streets – for play, walking to work and as sites in which informal vendors can work.

“ Inclusionary zoning policies that require developers to provide affordable housing as a condition for approval of market-rate development can counterbalance the effects of gentrification and increasing property values.

Another dimension of spatial exclusion is that cities are often not gender-informed or inclusive. From the outset, women and sexual minorities are under-represented in the design and planning processes. Globally, women and children spend some 200 million hours each day collecting water, which significantly decreases girls' school attendance and women's job participation.¹⁴⁶ In Ghana, halving the time girls spend on collecting water increases their average school attendance rate by 2.4%.¹⁴⁷ It is also hard for women to find public toilets or rest areas, which complicates their journeys and increases health concerns such as urinary tract infections (UTI). In Dhaka, Bangladesh, where there are only 57 public toilets across a city of 20 million people, an unsurprising 79% of women experience UTIs.¹⁴⁸ In some cities, the poor quality of public transportation and the frequent harassment to which women are exposed dissuades them from returning to the labour force. Indeed, a study of public transport worldwide found a 15–95% prevalence of sexual harassment, with higher rates of offence in emerging economies where cultural and gender norms perceive public space as a male domain.¹⁴⁹

Other vulnerable population groups are also spatially excluded in the city. Older people and those who are mobility-challenged are at a disadvantage from a lack of walkable streets, and from barriers to mobility that complicate access to public facilities including healthcare, schools, community centres and private buildings. This spatial exclusion extends to the digital world, as well. In Botswana, Eswatini and Lesotho, only 8% of households with disabled people can afford internet costs.¹⁵⁰ Taken together, these factors expose poor and vulnerable groups to multifaceted exclusion within cities, which contributes to increasing urban crime and social upheaval.¹⁵¹

Reversing the trends

To reverse such deep-rooted spatial exclusions, the urban poor and vulnerable must be actively engaged throughout the planning and design processes. The built environment and service delivery systems must be conceived and managed

in a way that is safe and accessible for all.¹⁵² With adequate built-up space, overcrowding can be transformed to a liveable density.¹⁵³ The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that cities with similar densities and economic development fared significantly differently in their planning, emergency preparedness and response capacity, reflecting on their ability to protect the poor and vulnerable from such a crisis.¹⁵⁴ The main priorities for urban planners and policy-makers need to be the equitable spatial distribution of decent public spaces and facilities across all neighbourhoods, and targeted investments in improving living conditions in slums and informal settlements – starting with securing land, property tenure and ensuring access to basic urban services.

Providing affordable land and housing to the urban poor and vulnerable groups is key for enabling spatial inclusion in cities. Flexible land use planning standards and development regulations would enable the introduction of higher densities and mixed-use developments, and allow a wide range of plot sizes to meet diverse needs – including small plots that those on low incomes could afford. Similarly, inclusionary zoning policies that require developers to provide affordable housing as a condition for approval of market-rate development can counterbalance the effects of gentrification and increasing property values.

Adopting inclusive designs for all buildings and open spaces, so-called “universal design”, is critical. In many cities in developing countries, universal design standards may be considered an unnecessary and/or unwarranted expense. However, some studies have found that applying universal design standards to a new building would cost only 0.1–0.3% of the total design and construction costs.¹⁵⁵ Such minimal investment would bring substantial socioeconomic benefits not only to people at risk of exclusion but also to the broader city itself by improving the overall accessibility to economic opportunities, service delivery systems and social engagement.





CASE STUDY 13

The inclusive design of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park

Introduction and problem

In 2005, London won the bid to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012. This created an opportunity to accelerate the regeneration of East London. The ambition from the very beginning was to create an Olympic Park site and venues that set a benchmark for inclusive design.¹⁵⁶

Solution

To be truly inclusive required commitment, resources and a framework for implementation. At the country- and citywide level there was legislation, regulation and policy in place to support the creation of inclusive developments. Inclusive design was enshrined in local planning policy as a key priority for the development agency (the London Legacy Development Corporation [LLDC]) and required technical inclusive design standards to be applied on all development projects. Delivery against these standards could be tracked to check that implementation was meeting expectations. Resources were also available in the form of an inclusive design manager at LLDC. An independent disability advisory panel was engaged at all key stages of development.

Impact and benefits for stakeholders

Good, inclusive infrastructure benefits everyone, since our abilities and support needs change throughout our lifetimes. Specific inclusive design features and facilities were provided across the park for disabled and older people, such as accessible car parking, toilets and changing rooms; but the principles of inclusive design were applied throughout the project to help create a place where all citizens can feel welcome and be independent.

Lessons and recommendations for other cities

- Have a clear and robust framework for delivery that includes policy and standards.
- Show commitment to inclusive design at a senior level (i.e. within local government).
- Engage and listen to users throughout the process, including disabled and older people.
- Have accountability for delivery.
- Clearly demonstrate that this approach and its outcomes benefit everyone.



↩ Good directional design supports neurodiverse people, and also makes navigation easier for everyone
Image credit: London Legacy Development Corporation

↑ The disability advisory panel ensured the Olympic Stadium supported assistance and guide dog users who might be at a stadium event for long periods, by providing a dedicated space for their dogs to go to the toilet and get water
Image credit: Iain McKinnon

↪ An external passenger lift supports wheelchair users and many others, including older people and families with prams/buggies
Image credit: London Legacy Development Corporation



3.2 Digital inclusion



Any transformative technology is of no value if it isn't available to people, or they don't know how to use it. Business leaders, along with governments, intergovernmental organizations and the wider public have a moral and economic obligation to power a digitally inclusive future for all.

Guy Diedrich, Senior Vice-President and Global Innovation Officer, Cisco

The expanding capabilities of technology have the potential to either create opportunities or deepen inequities. Over the past few decades, technology has helped further economic globalization and lifted people around the world out of poverty. But this progress has not been even. Many communities are still being left behind.

COVID-19 disrupted economies, education, community health and safety, and livelihoods. It also proved that dependence on technology is more prevalent than ever, and that connectivity is pivotal to creating a society and economy in which all citizens thrive.

Digital communications infrastructure is critical to equality, as is demonstrated by the fact that higher internet usage often correlates with lower levels of inequality. Yet nearly half of the world remains unconnected.¹⁵⁷ In the US alone, there are nearly 30 million people with no high-speed internet access, and 40% of tribal lands have no connectivity or

basic wireless services.¹⁵⁸ Globally, women are 23% less likely than men to use mobile internet, and some 327 million fewer women than men have a smartphone.¹⁵⁹ In developing countries, a mere 35% of the population has broadband access, but raising internet penetration to 75% would add \$2 trillion to their GDPs and create more than 140 million jobs.¹⁶⁰ The situation propagates a chasm between the connected and the unconnected – the digital divide.

We must build out infrastructure and opportunities

Broadband access and affordability pose ongoing barriers to economic opportunity and social well-being. Global internet access could lift half a billion people out of abject poverty, enabling a potential \$6.7 trillion contribution to the global economy.¹⁶¹ Bolstering mobile broadband is particularly relevant in Africa, where it is the primary method of digital access. In 2017, there were 34 active mobile broadband subscriptions per 100 residents across the region, compared to just 0.4 for fixed broadband.¹⁶²

“ The full range of stakeholders must develop solutions to deliver cost-effective broadband networking, quality healthcare and education, critical social services and efficient transport systems.

Fortunately, we are seeing public-private partnerships setting up access points to bring reliable wireless connectivity to under-served communities. Smart spectrum policy, which allows innovative shared use of radio spectrum and avoids harmful interference, is also important to bridge the divide. For example, non-profit MuralNet and Cisco partnered to open unused Federal Communications Commission (FCC) spectrum for rural regions in the US, and created a Sustainable Tribal Networks programme to provide consistent internet access and services to federally recognized sovereign Native American tribes.¹⁶³

However, access means nothing if service is unaffordable. The United Nations target for affordable internet is 2% of monthly income for 1 gigabyte of data. Unfortunately, there are strong global disparities in meeting this benchmark. For example, in 2019, 1 gigabyte of mobile data in Argentina was equal to 0.66% of monthly GNI per capita, whereas in Zimbabwe it was 10.06%.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, many of those who are digitally invisible live in poverty and lack funds to purchase a computer or mobile device, let alone pay a service provider. Companies must innovate and transform the economics of networking to connect more people and reach under-served communities.

To thrive in today's information age, individuals need digital skills

Investing in digital infrastructure alone is not enough. Some 23% of adults internationally are not digitally literate.¹⁶⁵ Educational institutions must embed digital skills in the everyday curriculum, and the

private sector can help inspire students through education and job placement programmes. For example, Cisco's [Networking Academy](#) partners with educational and community institutions – including Camden Dream Centre in New Jersey (US), INSPIREtech Canada, technological universities in Mexico and the Open University (UK) – to provide citizens with access to digital skills training.

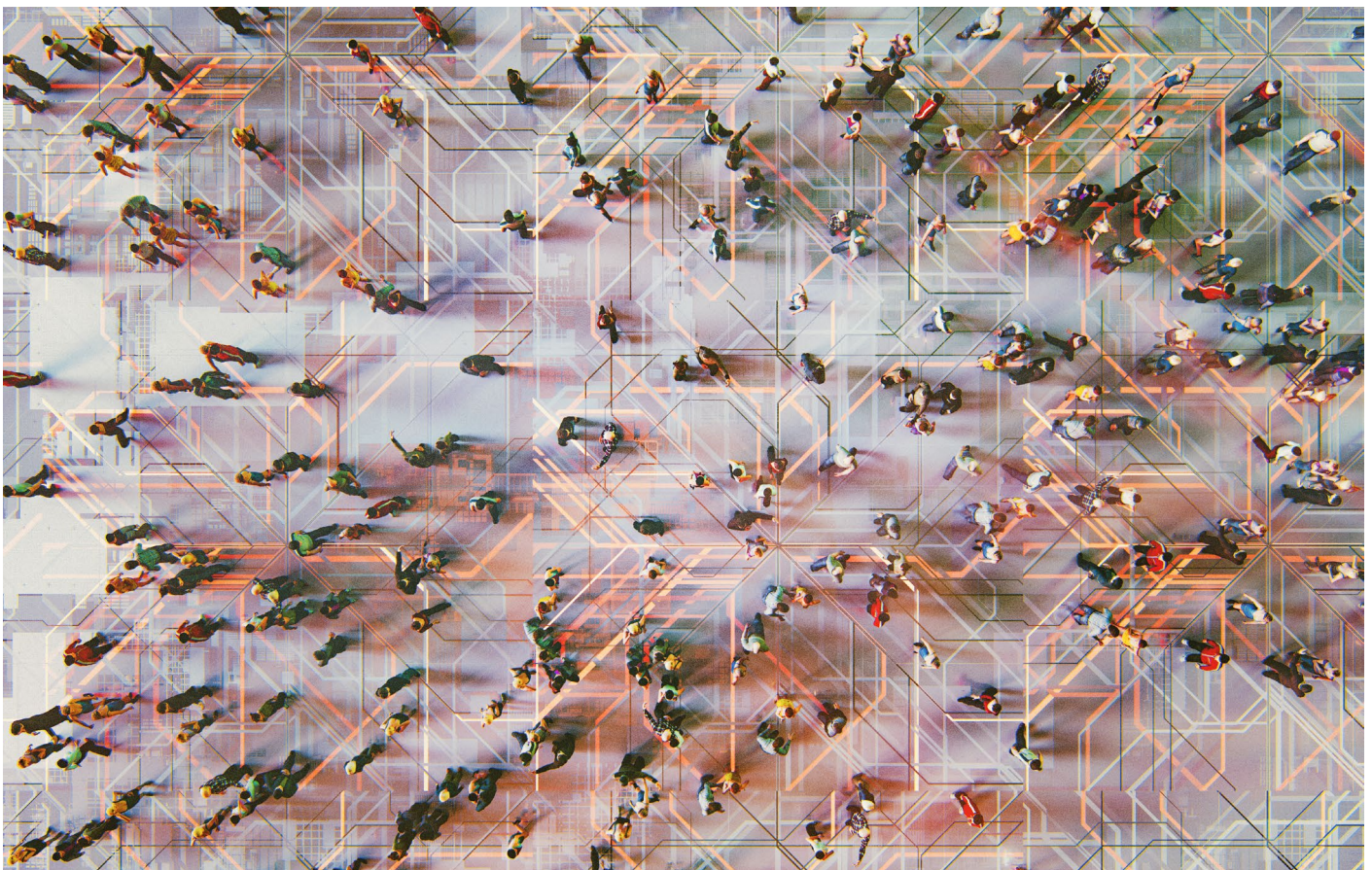
The way forward

The full range of stakeholders must develop solutions to deliver cost-effective broadband networking, quality healthcare and education, critical social services and efficient transport systems. Job creation and business resiliency are also fundamental to economic inclusion. Increased public and private investment are needed in infrastructure modernization and the cloud, cybersecurity and privacy technologies, 5G and Wi-Fi 6 connectivity, and digital and collaboration tools.

Technology is not the end-all solution

Without the right policies, regulations, institutions, investments and societal support, cities will not make the most of the benefits of technology. There is a need to directly engage with communities and take their specific needs into account, focusing on those at risk of being left behind, and addressing data privacy, surveillance/collateral uses and other issues.

As stressed by Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres, digital inclusion will be essential to building a strong recovery in a post-pandemic world.¹⁶⁶



3.3 Inclusive infrastructure

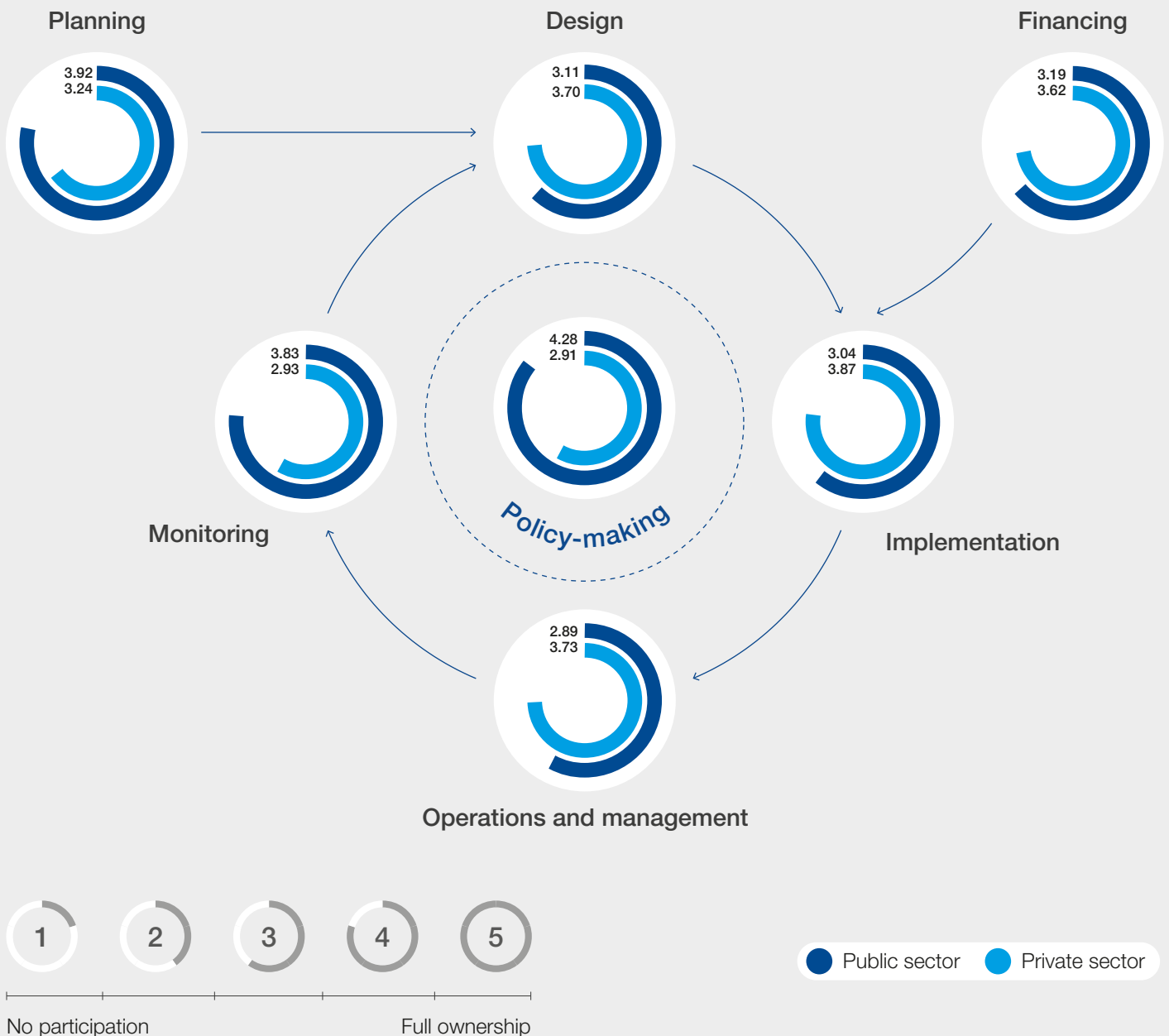
“Urban infrastructure must help remove the barriers that separate us from one another and ensure that poor, vulnerable and socially excluded populations have opportunities to thrive in our increasingly urban world. We cannot address our urban and global challenges unless we ensure that no individual, community or social group is barred from the benefits of inclusive urban infrastructure.

Chris Marlin, Head of Strategy and Business Operations, CNN

The Global Infrastructure Hub defines inclusive infrastructure as “infrastructure development that enhances positive outcomes in social inclusivity, and that ensures that no individual, community or social group is left behind or prevented from

benefiting from improved infrastructure”.¹⁶⁷ Developing inclusive infrastructure requires paying attention to inclusion at every stage of the policy-making process and project life cycle.

FIGURE 2 The project life cycle



Source: World Economic Forum, Shaping the Future of Urban Development and Services Initiative, Global Survey on Urban Services (October-December 2015)

“ Infrastructure performance should be monitored not only in technical terms or in terms of its aggregate benefit but also with regard to how it affects vulnerable groups.

Even with the best intentions, infrastructure can fall short in its inclusion goals if the institutions, policies and processes behind the development are not themselves inclusive, and do not reflect the diverse needs of the public. Research into how different urban residents use infrastructure can help inform inclusive decisions from the start.

Participation of diverse groups at the project identification stage ensures alignment with the priorities of those who will be affected by the infrastructure. Often, the need for a particular type of infrastructure is taken for granted, and stakeholder engagement begins only at the planning and design phase, when it is too late to reconsider what is actually needed. The need for inclusion in the planning and design phases is outlined in the next section. The project implementation, operations and management phases can present further opportunities for greater inclusion; for instance, by ensuring fair and transparent procurement practices and providing employment opportunities to excluded groups such as disabled people, refugees and others. Training programmes targeted at specific underemployed groups may be included as a component of the project.

Infrastructure performance should be monitored not only in technical terms or in terms of its aggregate benefit but also with regard to how it affects vulnerable groups. For example, a public transport system may perform well in terms of vehicle performance and the number of passengers transported per hour. However, it is important to measure other metrics, including women and children’s perception of safety, the ability of wheelchair users to move through the system, the affordability of tickets for the poorest

residents, whether the system serves low-income neighbourhoods and whether the land value increases resulting from the construction of the system are causing displacement. This requires the gathering of data disaggregated by gender, age, disability status and other characteristics.

Decommissioning a piece of infrastructure may be necessary for technical reasons, but nonetheless may adversely affect those who rely on that infrastructure or are employed in its operation. A decommissioning plan must take these impacts into account, and find ways to mitigate them. Conversely, decommissioning certain types of infrastructure may have beneficial effects for inclusion. For example, elevated highways in the United States have often physically segregated low-income and minority populations from the rest of the city. Some cities are now dismantling these highways and replacing them with infrastructure that has greater benefits for adjacent residents, such as linear parks.

Ensuring inclusion at every stage of a project’s life cycle may require: hiring specialists in public engagement or consultants on the needs of specific groups; using online platforms to increase transparency in procurement; training staff in inclusive practices; conducting surveys of users; and other efforts. Given that urban infrastructure projects can be technically complex and financially costly, there are many challenges in completing a project and making it operational. In addressing these challenges, it is easy to treat inclusion as a secondary part of the process. However, an expensive and technically complex urban infrastructure project is wasted if it fails to serve all urban residents.





CASE STUDY 14

Mapping areas vulnerable to COVID-19 in urban centres in Texas

In early 2020 – at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic – local public health officials in Texas investigated ways to increase hospital capacity. In fact, there was a high level of uncertainty regarding how the pandemic would develop. To help reduce this concern, scholars at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston mapped and planned a tool for COVID-19 that matches up the likelihood of severe cases with nearby hospital capacity.¹⁶⁸

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identified age and underlying medical conditions as risk factors for hospitalization and critical care.¹⁶⁹ Those aged over 60, or with heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma, diabetes, kidney disease, obesity or stroke risk, were expected to make up at least two-thirds of the cases needing a hospital bed or critical care.

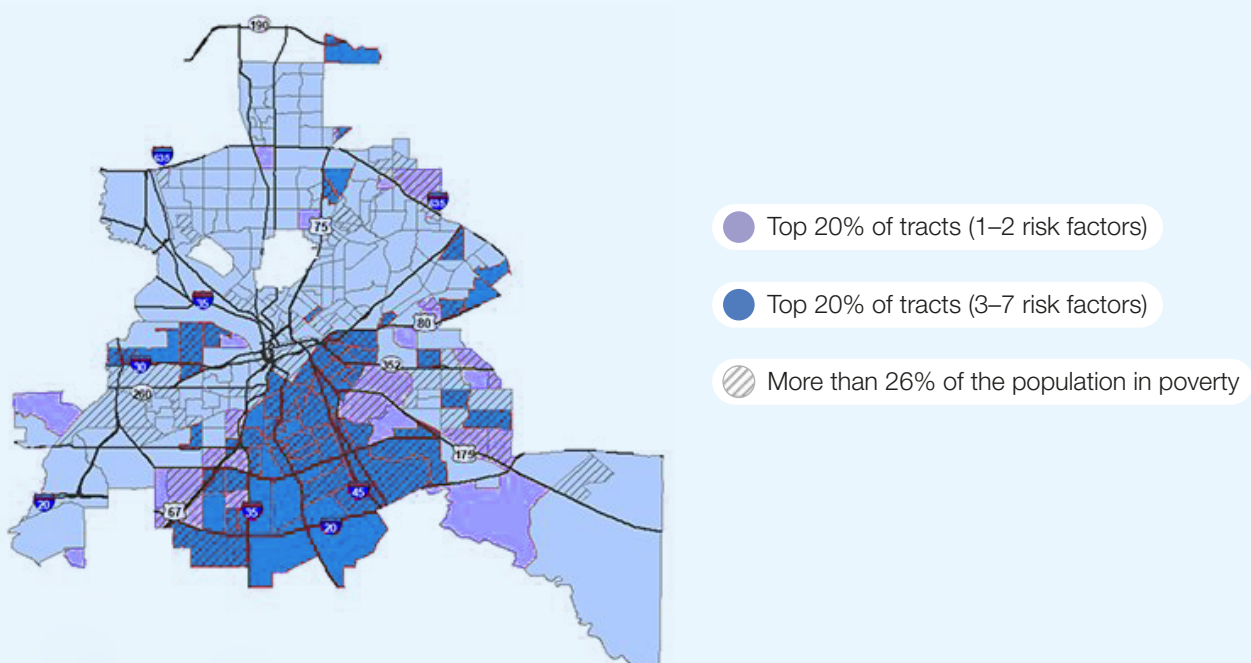
From previous work in Houston, it was expected that many of these chronic conditions were likely to be disproportionately concentrated in areas of lower income. The twofold purpose was to identify the most vulnerable areas in which severe cases requiring hospitalization were most likely to emerge, and also to designate areas where the social safety net was most likely to be stressed. Maps of these high-risk areas assisted in prioritizing surge hospital capacity, and in targeting additional precautionary measures to prevent fatalities.

The risk factors for severe COVID-19 infection were extended to other metro areas in Texas, drawing data from two federal sources – the US Census Bureau’s American Community Survey 5-Year Summary from 2019,¹⁷⁰ and the CDC’s 500 Cities Project, which offers chronic disease data based on self-reports from the annual Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey. This data was available at the census-tract level for the 500 largest cities in the US.¹⁷¹ The tracts for each city were ranked separately to identify the top 20% with the highest risk values.

The map shows the areas of Dallas with the highest concentrations of risk factors for severe COVID-19 disease. The tan areas fall in the highest 20% (of 304 city tracts) for one to two of the risk factors. The areas shown in red are in the highest 20% for prevalence of three to seven risk factors – where COVID cases are the most likely to need hospitalization, based on CDC guidelines. Note that the hatched areas, showing the highest concentrations of residents in poverty, coincide with many of the red areas at highest risk of severe disease. These red, hatched areas, many located in the central south and south-west of the city, represent the areas of greatest need for financial support and medical care.

While these risk factor definitions were neither exhaustive nor definitive, they represented the best of what had been learned to date. Mapping these risk patterns supported decisions made by health authorities, hospitals and service organizations.¹⁷²

FIGURE 3 Areas of Dallas with the highest concentrations of risk factors for severe COVID-19





CASE STUDY 15

Bogotá's Solidarity Rent Scheme



To help mitigate the COVID-19 crisis in Bogotá, Colombia, the Secretariat of UN-Habitat launched the city's [Solidarity Rent Scheme](#) in May 2020. It was designed to support vulnerable households in different sectors of the city particularly affected by poor housing, such as the neighbourhood of Altos de la Estancia located in the district of Ciudad Bolívar, a sprawling hilltop shanty town on the southern flank of Bogotá with a high landslide risk. Many of the neighbourhood's 1 million residents had been displaced by Colombia's civil war, which forced 7 million people from their homes. Others had fled an economic collapse in neighbouring Venezuela. The area is also occupied by homeless locals, migrants, peasants, Indigenous people and unemployed workers living in precarious conditions. Many inhabitants work in the informal economy, which employs 60% of Colombians. Before the quarantine they worked as cleaners, nannies and construction workers, but lost all of their income during the pandemic. As a result, the residents of Altos de la Estancia found themselves in a challenging economic situation, struggling to pay rent.

Bogotá's Solidarity Rent Scheme helped vulnerable groups (e.g. elderly people, migrants, victims of armed conflicts, households

headed by women) by paying their rent, which enabled people to remain in their homes during the mandatory quarantine period. The programme ran for three months and benefited more than 450 households in Altos de la Estancia. The city also tried to help facilitate the process of applying for the subsidy, with information on requirements, conditions and procedures available on the city's website.

Although the programme gave many vulnerable families temporary relief, it helped only a limited number of households. There was also confusion around registration and eligibility, despite the city's efforts. One of the main challenges was ensuring that people without internet access or a bank account could receive the financial support.

After Colombia's public health emergency period was extended to the end of August, Bogotá scaled its Solidarity Rent Scheme programme by launching "Bogotá Solidaria en Casa", which has benefited more than 800,000 vulnerable households. The mayor also prohibited evictions during lockdown to help those who could not pay their rent.

3.4 Social and institutional inclusion



Cities are full of intricate social networks that help bind people together and provide important resources in times of stress. These networks provide a structure for human action and interaction, and consequently maximize human agency. Strengthening the social infrastructure of a city is a key tool for increasing a city's overall resilience. It enhances the lives of all people, especially people who often live at the margins, like disabled people, older persons and other marginalized groups."

Victor Santiago Pineda, President, World Enabled

There are many emerging opportunities and strategies to improve and scale up the provision of inclusive social and institutional services, spanning health coverage, social safety nets, vocational training and affordable housing. How do we build social infrastructure based on the principles of equity and social and racial justice? How can we confront and combat implicit biases?

How social infrastructure facilitates human activity

The design, development and maintenance of social infrastructure articulates the values of a society and creates opportunities to prioritize marginalized individuals and give all people full access to community life. According to law firm Herbert Smith Freehills, "Social infrastructure enhances

social well-being, and furthers economic growth by providing basic services and facilities that allow businesses to develop and flourish.”¹⁷³

Social infrastructure is the tangible manifestation of the social contract, and makes material the social contract’s promises and responsibilities. The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the reality that the social contract is rapidly being rewritten. Recognizing this, what infrastructure is needed for a “great reset”?¹⁷⁴ It must span networks, governance, human interaction, security, safety and the equitable distribution of resources – including water, power and access to digital services.

A city’s physical infrastructure can be designed and built to either promote or prevent certain groups from accessing it, and is an important determinant of inequity. The same is true of social infrastructure, and applies to the networks of spaces, facilities, institutions and groups that create or deny opportunities for social connection. A city lacking in social infrastructure limits the interactions, exchanges and ultimately the potential of its people.

Equity and social justice

It is the responsibility of governments, institutions, decision-makers and city leaders to reduce inequity by prioritizing the needs of those who are routinely excluded from accessing infrastructure or services within their cities.

Equity moves beyond notions of equality by incorporating policies that can respond to differences. Equity drives decision-making towards policies that actively seek to reduce the exclusion of certain members of society. Equity is also intersectional, with many overlaps in the pursuit of equitable cities, social justice, community engagement and environmental issues.

We need to move beyond cities based on arbitrary norms, where some people or behaviours do not conform – resulting in them being excluded – and transform them into places that accommodate everyone. Political will is required to protect individual liberties, choices and lifestyles. Leaders’ rhetoric and actions by cultural institutions, the community and civil society groups can help effect this transformation.



“ Governments need to develop agile regulatory structures that include specific standards, procurement policies and guidelines to ensure the accessibility and useability of apps, websites and other digital products and services.

The principle of non-discrimination

Non-discrimination relates to the protection of the human rights of all persons – an indivisible part of international human rights law – and specifically Article 26 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The principle seeks “to guarantee that human rights are exercised without discrimination of any kind based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or viewpoints, national or social origin, property, birth or another status such as disability, age, marital and family status, sexual orientation and gender identity, health status, place of residence, economic and social situation”.¹⁷⁵

Stigma and discrimination are among the main barriers to lifting disabled women, men and children out of poverty, dependence and social exclusion. A human rights-based approach to disability regards any limitations imposed by social and physical environments on disabled people as human rights violations. However, these rights are often violated due to ignorance, a lack of information or implicit biases. Regarding bias, socialization pressures us to fit into certain roles, which then create unconscious implicit biases that reinforce stereotypes and influence our perceptions, judgements, decisions and actions.

Implicit biases about disabled people are pervasive. They lead to discrimination by causing us to see and judge people’s traits as being more or less desirable, or to judge them as being more or less valuable to society. Biases also lead policy-makers to assume that all disabled people can be grouped together. As a result, disabled people tend to be over-represented by wheelchair users, and under-represented by people with intellectual or invisible disabilities.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution

To understand the future of cities, it’s important to understand that we are in the midst of the Fourth Industrial Revolution – the digital revolution. It is characterized by a combination of technologies including digital devices, biosensors, robotics, big data and artificial intelligence (AI). These link and crosscut the physical, digital and biological spheres.¹⁷⁶ These technologies will shape how we live, and will help determine who is going to be included and excluded by the digital transformation of our cities.

We are transforming faster than we are regulating that transformation, and must therefore prioritize the prevention of social harm and avoid the reinforcement of inequalities on marginalized groups most at risk of exclusion. We need to create a set of norms to ensure that transformative and disruptive technologies are used virtuously, in an inclusive and transparent way. It is also crucial to monitor the social impact of these technologies as they are deployed. This should occur in policy sandboxes as we experiment with the uses, benefits and potential drawbacks of these technologies.

The DisCo framework

The ramifications of poor urban planning can be severe. Poorly planned cities create a range of physical barriers that limit mobility options, as well as digital barriers that limit access to information, preventing some citizens from being able to enjoy their full range of rights. Such barriers can place disabled and older people in challenging or even dangerous situations, by limiting access to health services, employment, education or protective services.

To address urban planning failures, multidimensional and cross-sectional analysis is needed. This is the aim of frameworks such as the Disability Convention (DisCo) Urban Policy assessment framework.¹⁷⁷ It can help structure data-collection efforts and aid city managers in aligning local efforts with international normative frameworks.

The DisCo framework includes five interrelated pillars for evaluation and assessment of inclusive urban development:

1. Legislative measures
2. Executive and budgetary support
3. Administrative and coordinating capacity
4. Attitudes towards disabled people in urban life
5. Participation of disabled people in urban development

These five pillars can help stakeholders identify the key areas addressed by a project, and conduct rapid assessments at the neighbourhood, city or national level using the framework’s evaluative criteria.

Enhancing social and institutional inclusion

There are numerous ways in which urban governments, institutions and community groups can boost social infrastructure, improve health outcomes and promote authentic citizen participation in both decision-making and infrastructure and service delivery. Governments need to develop agile regulatory structures that include specific standards, procurement policies and guidelines to ensure the accessibility and useability of apps, websites and other digital products and services. Local governments should monitor and assess the impact of emerging technologies on citizens, especially disabled people and those most at risk of exclusion. Governments should also collaborate with a broad range of actors, including technology companies, civil society organizations, academia, policy-makers and disabled people’s organizations, to design and perform life-cycle impact assessments of disruptive technologies such as AI.



CASE STUDY 16

Istanbul 'pay-it-forward'



At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, 25% of Istanbul households applied for social aid.¹⁷⁸ The city tripled its social assistance budget, but it was still unable to meet the growing demand. To face this challenge, council employees devised Askida Fatura, or “pay-it-forward”, a programme that anonymously matches people burdened by unpaid utility bills and other needs with those willing to provide financial assistance.¹⁷⁹

Using an online platform to match donors with those in need, Askida Fatura is grounded in a Turkish tradition in which bakery

customers would purchase two loaves of bread but ask the baker to leave one “on the hook”; these extra loaves of bread were then made available at no charge to people unable to afford them.

To date, Askida Fatura has facilitated payment of utility bills worth \$14 million¹⁸⁰ and has expanded to include additional support packages for university students and new mothers. The programme is currently being replicated in 15 Turkish cities and, in future, aims to promote social solidarity among residents even beyond times of crisis.

Strengthening social infrastructure

Social infrastructure encompasses the networks of connections and spaces that maintain communal life – from social spaces such as parks and swimming pools to vital services such as public transport. Strengthening social infrastructure is a key tool for increasing a city’s overall resilience. It enhances the lives of everyone, especially those who often live at the margins, such as older and disabled people. Robust social infrastructure affords opportunities for participation in public life, and contributes to building a sense of belonging.

The standards, regulations and best practices for social infrastructure vary widely among cities around the world. Procurement policies that mandate accessibility standards, coupled with transparency, accountability and the rule of law, have been shown to be key factors in delivering inclusive public services. The COVID-19 pandemic, combined with existing social, political and economic pressures, has significantly reshaped the direction of urban life. By prioritizing social infrastructure within the urban planning process, it is possible to dramatically improve the lived experience of millions of marginalized people around the world.





CASE STUDY 17

Abjad Sociocultural Centre – a sociocultural hub for youth and women in Bab Al Tabbaneh, Lebanon



Introduction and problem

Tripoli is the largest city in northern Lebanon, and the second largest in the country. The population of more than 730,000 has grown by 17% due to the influx of refugees since the start of the Syrian war. Tripoli is the city most affected by the war in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. There is a history locally of conflict and tension rooted in different neighbourhoods' political and religious affiliations, and the population increase has exacerbated these tensions and created severe competition for jobs and basic urban services. Prior to the economic crisis of 2020–2021, up to 69% of Lebanese and Palestinian populations in Tripoli subsisted on less than \$4 per day. The increased population has resulted in further deterioration of livelihood opportunities, putting both host and refugee populations into survival mode.¹⁸¹

Solution

UN-Habitat, together with UN Women and UNICEF, established the first multipurpose community centre serving the neighbourhoods of Tabbaneh and Jabal Mohsen, two communities that have engaged in sectarian conflict for years.¹⁸² The Abjad Centre is a sanctuary and safe space for vulnerable women, youth and children seeking support, protection and personal development. It seeks to improve human security through personal and economic empowerment, for both the host and refugee communities. The residents in the surrounding neighbourhoods benefit from a variety of activities offered by the centre, such as life skills, vocational training and cultural and prevention programmes based on human security principles. It is an all-inclusive centre that combines a variety of facilities in one: classes, computer lab, cinema, theatre, referral desk (which refers members for specific services such as health, legal or education) and a case management room.

Local leadership, planning and community engagement

The community was consulted from inception to opening and continues to be involved in the running and maintenance of the centre. Prominent individuals in the community such as artists, architects, writers and others from Tripoli serve as advisers to the centre and participate in a “knowledge-sharing cycle”. This ensures that local experts and community members are fully engaged in the development of relevant programmes. The centre's board of advisers includes representatives

from local organizations working in the area, a municipality representative and local and international development and/or cultural experts. This ensures strong local ownership and the sustainability of the centre.

Impacts and benefits

Since opening in 2018, the centre has served more than 5,000 people, including 3,597 refugees and 2,853 women. It has provided legal protection to more than 150 Syrian refugees and 400 community families in Tripoli, certifying marriages and registering newborns to help prevent statelessness. The centre has also helped protect households from eviction – increasingly common due to Lebanon's worsening economic situation and compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of the centre engage in the arts, theatre and intercultural dialogue workshops that provide space and platforms for self-expression. In 2020, the centre added a club for extracurricular youth activities.

The centre is a model of inclusive and collaborative local development, reducing community tensions and improving social cohesion between host and refugee populations. It improves the capacity of local authorities in Tripoli, extending principles of good governance to all communities. Its programmes and activities involve women and youth groups in defining their security needs and priorities. They collectively identify viable solutions and coping strategies that are endorsed by local authorities and put into action. The centre has also been a place for many stakeholders to develop their social inclusion activities, including local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private-sector actors and individuals from the community.

Experiences, lessons learned and scale-up

The Abjad Centre has brought together community representatives to ensure everyone can peacefully access services that protect their rights and help them develop job skills. Its success shows that this model could be replicated in other cities experiencing similar problems. The participatory approach ensures that all stakeholders are actively involved and informed about the centre's activities. It demonstrates how impactful a place for joint dialogue can be in reducing community tensions, especially for different vulnerable population groups.



CASE STUDY 18

Stepping Up

Introduction and problem

In Bristol, UK, a lack of diversity at senior leadership levels across the public and private sectors was recognized, supported by findings from [Baroness McGregor-Smith's report, The Time for Talking Is Over. Now Is the Time to Act.](#)¹⁸³ The report found that systemic and transformational change was needed to enable a fair and transparent workplace in which diversity could flourish, to ensure that equal-opportunity paths to senior leadership positions existed and to make certain that role models could be found for all citizens.

Solution

Stepping Up¹⁸⁴ is a diversity leadership talent pipeline for disabled, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities and women in Bristol and the South-West region of England. The programme began in January 2018 and has won five local and national awards. It runs for one year and culminates with an award to participants.

Impact and benefits for stakeholders (specifically citizens)

Stepping Up has won the backing of senior business leaders and improved the diversity representation on more than 50 non-executive and executive boards in both the private and public sectors.

The success of the programme was noted by an independent evaluation company, which commented on: the ground-breaking and award-winning mentoring initiative; the delivery of a sophisticated modular programme underpinned by

academic rigour; the links to a self-funding MBA through the apprenticeship levy; the development of a diverse alumni programme; and the desire to replicate it among organizations across the UK.

Lessons

- The logistical obstacles included engaging more than 60 employers to search for diverse leadership talent, and offering (pro bono) mentors, venues, speakers and stretch assignments.¹⁸⁵
- Negotiations with employers over learning contracts were difficult, since the programme requires 30 study days, release of staff, sign-up to a learning agreement and fees for participants.
- Overcoming barriers required high-level political, influencing and communication skills to align such a complex range of partners and participants.

Recommendations

- Be clear about the funding and costs, and develop a funding model, e.g. securing funding from employers and other agencies through a fee levied to employers for their employees to participate in the programme.
- Establish interest before proceeding formally.
- Gather data to support this positive action programme.
- Establish the level of leadership entry point for participants – senior/mid-level?
- Establish buy-in from senior leadership.





3.5 Economic inclusion



Cities create hubs of innovation, and generate an outsized share of national wealth. But increasingly, we see signs that the benefits of urban economies are not broadly shared among city residents.

Miguel Gamiño, Executive Vice-President, Global Cities, Mastercard

Cities play a crucial role in empowering financial inclusion, and have long been drivers of economic growth and catalysts for progressive societal change. They create hubs of innovation, and generate an outsized share of national wealth. The benefits of urban economies are not usually shared among city residents. In fact, there is an increase in income inequalities, especially in the largest cities. Poverty continues despite gains in productivity, and economic mobility appears blocked for many urban residents.¹⁸⁶ According to the United Nations, more than 61% of the world's employed population – 2 billion people – earn their livelihoods in the informal sector.¹⁸⁷ For workers, informality means low-paying, irregular jobs, and a lack of social protection, workers' rights or decent working conditions. For enterprises, informality means low productivity and a lack of access to finance. Poor-quality jobs have stagnant low-end wages and unpredictable hours, lack job security and offer limited-to-no career pathways. Poor job quality is widespread and growing in high-income countries, and globalization and technological advances may further erode wages and job security at the bottom.¹⁸⁸ COVID-19 has affected cities in an even more dramatic way, exacerbating inequalities, altering where and how we work, straining digital infrastructure and devastating local economies and tax revenues.

In Brazil, the government designed and started the coronavoucher programme,¹⁸⁹ which is an emergency subsidy for low-income informal workers to be distributed by the state-owned bank Caixa Econômica Federal (CEF). The system operates through the Caixa Tem app, which gives residents the option of choosing how to receive their funds. The programme – as of 5 August 2021 – has provided 66 million people with a subsidy, an estimated 36 million of them previously unbanked. This means that more than 17% of Latin America's unbanked population¹⁹⁰ has been brought into the financial system in a matter of months.

In Makati, Philippines, the local government and the Department of Social Welfare and Development have implemented GCash Prepaid Mastercard to deliver critical financial assistance to more than 90,000 residents. It is the first city in the Philippines to distribute aid digitally, which is a major milestone. Increased collaboration between governments and the private sector could lay the foundation for more seamless distribution of government benefits, greater access to lending programmes and even digitized currency. But none of this is possible if we do fail to ensure digital inclusion.

“ Making the economy work for everyone means developing affordable financial products and services that meet the needs of the unbanked and underbanked.

Although significant progress in delivering access to financial services has been made in recent years, 1.7 billion people still do not have access to a bank account.¹⁹¹ This means they are unable to make or collect payments digitally, which excludes them from participating fully in the global economy. The use of cash involves several costs:

- People without a bank account pay four times more in fees to access their money than those with a bank account; moreover, they pay \$4 higher fees per month for cash access on average than those with formal financial services.
- The unbanked do not benefit from the full range of fraud protections that federally insured banks and credit unions offer.
- It is difficult for those without bank accounts to build and maintain an emergency fund or build credit.
- US retail businesses lose about \$40 billion annually due to cash theft. This affects mainly “mom-and-pop” enterprises, many of which operate in poor neighbourhoods and rural areas. These businesses, which are cash-dependent and small, cannot afford sophisticated security and cash transportation services.¹⁹²

Individuals with no form of documented identity also lack access to a bank account. They are invisible to the financial system, and so they live on cash. Making the economy work for everyone means developing affordable financial products and services that meet the needs of the unbanked and underbanked. One positive development is that COVID-19 has drastically accelerated partnerships between governments and the private sector that have made financial services more inclusive and brought more people into the formal economy.

Continuous job creation is essential to advance inclusive urban development. People living in metropolitan areas have on average a 21% higher income¹⁹³ than the rest of the country, but income inequality also tends to be higher in cities. While opportunities for well-educated workers are increasing in many cities, less-educated residents often have lower-income, lower-skilled jobs.¹⁹⁴ Cities can spur job access through training for the future of work, and expanding access for all segments of society. This can help increase home ownership and sustainable wealth creation. When handled properly, urbanization has the potential to create opportunities for a better life, provide a pathway out of poverty, and act as an engine of economic growth. Transition to the formal economy is critical to ensure protection of workers’ rights and decent working conditions.



CASE STUDY 19

Economic inclusion of disabled people through remote work job redesign



Introduction and problem

In Singapore, only about three out of 10 disabled people are employed.¹⁹⁵ Barriers to employment include prejudice from employers and society, inaccessible built environments and the lack of adoption of telecommuting.¹⁹⁶

Solution

Remote work (telecommuting) can benefit disabled people and change perceptions about their employability and productivity. Genashtim is a for-profit social enterprise registered in Singapore and run by a Malaysian living in Australia. It employs disabled people in several Asian countries and pioneered telecommuting before the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁹⁷ Genashtim employees work productively in a variety of administrative, coaching and technical roles, such as developing educational content, teaching English and providing technical database support.

Four key factors enable disabled people and the company to work remotely effectively. First is the willingness to train disabled people regardless of disability or qualifications. As long as a disabled person is willing to learn, they can be trained task by task via telecommuting. Second is the mixing of people of different types of disabilities to collaborate on projects. For example, a person with a visual impairment can be paired with a disabled person without a visual impairment to handle

non-visual and visual tasks respectively. Third is the use of time-tracking software, such as Time Doctor, to help disabled managers and employees manage their schedule and prove to clients that they are working effectively. This is important because it challenges the false narrative that a disabled person may do less work when they are telecommuting. Fourth is the use of readily available and affordable assistive technologies to enable disabled people to do the same tasks that able-bodied employees usually do.

Impact and benefits for citizens

Effective remote working can enable disabled people to find gainful employment and provides the country with a larger pool of skilled human capital. It also creates a kinder and more inclusive work environment, and changes employer mindsets. This inclusiveness can improve an employee’s loyalty to the company and reduce counterproductive work behaviour.

Lessons and recommendations

Remote working can be a viable way for disabled people to participate in the workforce. Disabled people should not be discriminated against – they should be given a chance to train task by task. Sharing job roles between disabled people can be effective, and with assistive technologies, disabled people are just as productive as able-bodied workers.



CASE STUDY 20

Lisbon tackles gentrification and displacement

Lisbon, Portugal,¹⁹⁸ benefits enormously from its millions of tourists. But due to regulation issues between tenants and landlords, the courts have disincentivized landlords from renting. Airbnb-style holiday rentals have taken over a third of Lisbon's city-centre properties, pushing up rental prices and hollowing out communities, with essential workers and their families increasingly forced out.

In July 2020, Lisbon launched a Safe Rent Programme ([Renda Segura](#)) that has replaced short-term tourist rentals in the city centre with long-term rentals for residents. The programme enables property owners and private investors to lease their properties to the municipality for a minimum of five years. The city finds tenants through an affordable housing programme targeting young people and middle-class families and offers a subsidized rent capped at a third of the household's net income. This enables priced-out workers and families to return to the city centre.

Lisbon faces a severe shortage of affordable housing. Housing market prices are increasing by up to 50% per year in some areas, while household income rises only 2.5% annually. Low- and middle-income households are especially affected, with free-market rent "unaffordable" for more than 80% of families (i.e. costing more than 30% of a family's disposable income).

The Lisbon municipality has partnered with private companies that own and manage the residential buildings. The city of Lisbon rents the buildings from the private partners and sublets them at subsidized rates. Tenancy requests that meet income qualifications enter a random selection system. The city establishes quality standards, finances structural urbanization work, promotes tenders to select private partners, provides data on housing demand and manages the ongoing partnership.

The programme has increased Lisbon's affordable housing by 6,000 units. It tackles gentrification by providing long-term rentals, of various sizes and at affordable prices, in city-centre locations well served by public transport, local commerce, public facilities and green spaces. By targeting more socially vulnerable families and middle-income households, it has also strengthened Lisbon's social and territorial cohesion. One of the main programme goals is to enable residents to carry out their daily activities within a 10-minute walk from home in order to reduce pressure on the transport system and improve resident well-being, as well as the environment.

With the tourism industry significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the programme offers reliable income during these difficult and uncertain times to Lisbon property owners who had previously been letting property to tourists.



The programme tackles gentrification by providing long-term rentals, of various sizes and at affordable prices, in city-centre locations well served by public transport, local commerce, public facilities and green spaces.



CASE STUDY 21

Bancuadra in Medellín

For millions of people in Medellín, Colombia,¹⁹⁹ paying for something as inexpensive as a bus ticket means securing an illegal loan that will likely result in massive debt. More than 60% of the city's 2.5 million residents have few options other than borrowing from loan sharks, who charge as much as 800% interest. When they cannot pay back the money, these residents face intimidation, threats and a perpetual cycle of poverty.

City officials, in partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies, are working to break this cycle through a programme called *Bancuadra*, or “tiny bank”. Launched in 2016 with a \$1 million grant from Bloomberg, the initiative is a safe and affordable microlending programme that also incorporates training in financial literacy. This reduces local reliance on illegal loans while also fostering a culture of financial empowerment. Rather than issue loans to individuals, *Bancuadra* gives small grants to “trust networks” of five to 10 people who know one another. Each individual receives an initial sum of about \$62 at 0.91% interest, and they are not eligible for another loan until the entire network repays its debt. This structure cultivates both an environment of collective accountability, and a support network if someone falls behind on payments.

Bancuadra has already had a remarkable impact among participants. The loans have enabled borrowers to save

an estimated \$787 each per year on interest, and 97% of participants have now paid back their loans in full. Furthermore, 69% of participants reported greater ability to stock their businesses. Participants used the loans for a variety of purposes: 44% settled previous debts, 14% paid education expenses, 13% covered rent or utilities and 8% invested in business. Participants are now 14% less likely to use loan sharks and 6% more likely to have savings than non-participants, cultivating long-term financial stability beyond the scope of the loans themselves.

Bancuadra's success has inspired initiative director Liliana Galeano to expand the programme, with a concentration on equity. Future phases will focus on incorporating women, who are statistically more likely to have large portions of their income tied up in illegal loans, and on young people and residents of certain neighbourhoods who are more vulnerable to predatory illegal lending.

Bancuadra is working to reduce its operating costs by increasing the number of individuals in a “trust network” to six to 10 people, and by paying the programme's financial operator per loan rather than per network. *Bancuadra* has become cost effective and financially feasible for Medellín to operate, which demonstrates its replicability potential.



4

City perspectives

The Global Future Council asked cities around the world what challenges they face with regard to urban inclusion, what issues COVID-19 has brought to the surface and what initiatives they have undertaken to address these challenges.



“ Cities’ responses highlighted the intersectional nature of challenges for urban residents facing multiple forms of exclusion.

Their responses, presented in edited form below, reveal that affordable housing is a challenge for nearly all cities, from Rio de Janeiro with its large informal settlements to relatively wealthy Berlin. Several cities mentioned the specific challenges faced by migrants, both rural-to-urban migrants and international immigrants and refugees. The pandemic has exacerbated social isolation and healthcare challenges for elderly people, particularly in cities with rapidly ageing populations such as Fukuoka. Several cities, including Berlin, Bristol,

Izmir, Fukuoka and Johannesburg, acknowledge the exclusion of disabled urban residents, and many are working to address the issue. Economic exclusion due to gender was highlighted in responses from Amman, Melbourne and Rio de Janeiro, while Izmir and Helsinki touched on the challenges faced by youth and children, particularly how their education and employment have been impeded by the pandemic. The responses also highlighted the intersectional nature of challenges for urban residents facing multiple forms of exclusion.

Amman, Jordan

With a population of approximately 4 million, Amman is one of the biggest cities in the Arab world. It hosts a large number of migrant workers and refugees from different countries, making cultural and economic integration a challenge. Amman struggles with limited financial resources, strategic planning expertise and control over essential services including water supply, electricity and education.

City leaders acknowledge the need for greater social inclusion and are seeking to develop promotional programmes, especially for women. Amman has undertaken several initiatives towards greater social inclusion, such as improvements in public transport, green space and cultural amenities. The city has participated in the preparation of toolkits for urban inclusion and the

inclusion of women in Arab cities. It has launched a “child-friendly city” initiative, including “child municipal councils” that allow adolescents to participate in decision-making.

COVID-19 has worsened several challenges for the city, and created new ones. Remote working has caused public transport ridership and revenue to plummet, forcing service cuts. Shutdown measures have taken an economic toll, especially on poor, marginalized and vulnerable groups including women. Many private-sector companies have struggled to pay employees. Daily wage workers, many of whom are refugees and migrants, have had no income. Technological obstacles to remote learning have slowed the educational progress of students.



Berlin, Germany

With nearly 4 million residents, Berlin is the EU's most populous single city. Although it is a wealthy city, it faces several challenges related to urban inclusion. In recent years, the housing market has seen rents rising disproportionately to incomes, and vacancy rates have dramatically reduced. Housing problems primarily affect those on low incomes, many of whom receive social welfare payments. Another major challenge is the inclusion of homeless people in the legal framework and this can often be a major hurdle to receiving benefits.

Although more than 100,000 flats were built between 2010 and 2019, this is still not sufficient to provide housing for all, especially in the lower price segment. Berlin Senate policy therefore places a strong focus on preserving existing housing and expanding emergency housing assistance and legal aid for people who are threatened with losing their home. For people living on the street, Berlin offers accommodation and counselling.



“ **Designing inclusive social spaces is an important goal for Berlin, which aims to implement the fundamental demands of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**

Approximately 624,000 people with recognized disabilities live in Berlin, of whom approximately 408,000 are classed as severely disabled. Disabled people encounter many barriers and restrictions to participation in social spaces, preventing them from leading self-determined and independent lives. They are also at above-average risk of poverty and exclusion. Designing inclusive social spaces is an important goal for Berlin, which aims to implement the fundamental demands of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. An essential building block is improvement of the education and participation opportunities for children, adolescents and young adults, mainly from low-income and migrant families.

Citywide neighbourhood centres are important social spaces for Berliners, financed by the Senate and located in all districts. In recent years, many have become more aware of issues of inclusion and participation. Under project “STZ inklusiv”, these district centres are being made more accessible, with barrier-free entry, further staff training and access to social media. In addition, project ideas for more inclusive social spaces are being developed, using a person-centred and structural approach that involves important local actors.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted many existing problems. For people living on the streets, the strict contact restrictions and lack of accommodation were a major issue. Restrictions on public life led to many losing their sources

of income (day labour work, begging, collecting bottles and returning them for a fee). Health access was lacking, especially regarding infection protection and vaccinations. In response, the state of Berlin created more than 700 placements in facilities at very short notice, accepted people without reservation and provided a 24/7 stay with full board and social worker support.

The pandemic has shown how important inclusive social spaces are for disabled people. Their contact with other people is limited, they often belong to vulnerable groups, they may require specialized care due to the nature of their disability and they are particularly dependent on neighbourly help and barrier-free access.

In addition, people with physical, mental, intellectual or sensory disabilities are particularly exposed to the risk of poverty, especially when employment opportunities and social participation is restricted. The proportion of disabled people at risk of poverty has increased, as a disproportionately large number lost their jobs during the pandemic.

For home schooling, many children could not follow what was being taught online due to a lack of technical equipment and/or support facilities, resulting in learning delays; they also suffered as a result of reduced social contact. After a long campaign by the Berlin Senate, costs for digital devices were covered by the city for children entitled to certain benefits, and digital learning support was offered.



Brisbane, Australia

Brisbane, capital of the Australian state of Queensland, has a population of around 2.5 million, making it the third largest city in the country. Key challenges for urban inclusion are access to transport, employment, facilities, services and activities, and ensuring social inclusion and a sense of belonging.

The city is increasingly diverse. One in four residents now speaks a language at home other than (or in addition to) English, and one in three was born outside Australia. Over half of the city's 19,000 Indigenous residents are under the age of 25 (compared to 34% of Brisbane's overall population). The community is also ageing, with over-60s making up 17% of Brisbane's population, projected to be more than 21% by 2031. Around 45,000 residents (4% in 2016, up from 3.6% in 2011) report having a profound disability.

Housing affordability is a concern for residents. In the past 10 years, average rent has increased by 62%, but income has risen by only 48%. From 2011 to 2016, homelessness increased by 38%. Digital inclusion is also a challenge, and 39,000 homes (out of 464,000) have no access to the internet, even by mobile device.

Bristol, UK

Bristol has been working hard to build an inclusive, sustainable and culturally diverse environment. Nevertheless, there are 41 areas in Bristol that are among the 10% most deprived in England (14,600 children under 16 living in low-income families). More than 700 families live in temporary accommodation, and the average house price is almost nine times higher than average earnings,

Brisbane Council has invested more than AU\$230 million (\$175 million) in projects to increase accessibility since 2012, such as wheelchair accessibility on public transport and facilities, community programmes, English conversation groups in libraries and more than 250 multicultural festivals. The Inclusive Brisbane Plan 2019–2029²⁰⁰ outlines the council's commitment and sets out 101 actions to guide its work in making Brisbane a city for everyone over the next decade.

COVID-19 has increased social isolation in the city. The council has responded by livestreaming events such as library groups and health classes. The pandemic has threatened the financial sustainability of community organizations, and the council has waived rents and given grants and other forms of assistance. It has also frozen property rates, and provided rate rebates for certain residents and organizations.

In this growingly unpredictable and complex future, collaboration with other levels of government will be needed for Brisbane Council, as well as partnerships with community providers and the private sector to develop creative solutions able to maximize the available resources.²⁰¹

meaning that Bristol's affordability ratio is the highest in England.²⁰² In addition, Bristol has a shortage of homes, limited public transport capacity, traffic congestion, poor air quality and persistent educational inequalities. The worst inequalities at work and in education are faced by the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities.

“ The toppling of the statue of Edward Colston during a Black Lives Matter protest in June 2020 was a symbolic demonstration of Bristol’s complex relationship with race.

Although Bristol is a diverse and global city, in 2015 the Runnymede Trust ranked Bristol as the seventh worst area of England for racial inequality.²⁰³ It found in 2017 that “Black African young people are persistently disadvantaged in education compared to their white peers”, and that “almost all ethnic minority groups in Bristol experience employment inequality compared to White British people”.²⁰⁴ Black and Asian citizens are disproportionately more likely to be stopped and searched by police officers,²⁰⁵ and in line with national trends are at higher risk of mental illness nationally and are more likely to end up in crisis care than their white British peers.²⁰⁶

The toppling of the statue of Edward Colston during a Black Lives Matter protest in June 2020 was a symbolic demonstration of the city’s complex relationship with race. It highlights the long shadows cast by slavery and racism, including Bristol’s role as a port city involved in the 18th-century transatlantic slave trade that resulted in much of Bristol’s historic wealth.²⁰⁷

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing health and economic inequalities, with the city’s BAME citizens most exposed to the health impacts of the virus and the economic ramifications of lockdowns. The overlap of COVID-19, Black Lives Matter protests and Brexit foregrounded urban inclusion issues that citizens feel are not being addressed adequately, such as: issues of feeling included (Brexit, the EU Settlement Scheme); institutional issues relating to BAME citizens and their vulnerabilities; and housing issues (No Recourse to Public Funds [NRPF], the EU Settlement Scheme).

In 2016 Bristol and its mayor, Marvin Rees, started developing the One City Approach, intended to encourage the city’s stakeholders (including the city

council) to recognize that they are interdependent with each other, and that core issues, including systemic inequalities, cannot be solved by a single organization or leader.²⁰⁸

The One City Plan represents a collective vision for Bristol to 2050. It articulates concrete annual goals across six themes, and will be overseen by boards made up of city representatives across all sectors: connectivity, economy and skills; environment; transport; health and well-being; homes and communities; and children and young people. The goals in the city plan have been mapped to the SDGs.

This approach to city leadership has emphasized the city council as a convener of city partners, and deliverer of public services. Such modern city leadership is resilient to local, national and global challenges and uncertainties – from the climate emergency and migration to security and inequality. The One City Approach has been a critical part of the city’s response to COVID-19, with equality and inclusion (and the SDGs) now part of Bristol’s [Economic Recovery and Renewal Plan](#). Other programmes such as [WeAreBristol](#) and [Can Do Bristol](#) have helped tackle the most urgent effects of the pandemic, delivering culturally appropriate food parcels and support services, including the “Are you OK?” campaign to help those experiencing social isolation.

To ensure that the city recognizes and values the contribution its diverse communities make, Bristol has established a number of commissions and groups focused on specific actions, including the [Bristol Equality Charter](#), the [Bristol Transatlantic Slavery Legacy Group](#), the [We Are Bristol History Commission](#) and the Bristol International Diaspora Discussion Group.



Buenos Aires, Argentina

Buenos Aires ranks as one of the most liveable cities in Latin America. Less well known is that the city is home to more than 40 informal settlements, with a total of 250,000 inhabitants who are mostly migrants – both internal and external – under 25 years of age. Since 2016, Buenos Aires has been working towards the social and urban integration of informal neighbourhoods, to ensure that all residents can have the same rights and responsibilities.

An example of this work is the Barrio Mugica Social and Urban Integration Project. It takes a comprehensive and holistic approach to the settlement's problems, focusing not only on infrastructure works but also on developing policies aimed at improving living conditions, human development and the capacities of all residents. Similar projects are being carried out in other

informal settlements, such as Barrio Rodrigo Bueno, Barrio Fraga and Barrio 20.

The city's first major COVID-19 outbreak occurred in informal settlements, where the virus had the potential to be particularly dangerous. Measures to reduce the risks and impacts were inherently complex. People living on the street were another major source of concern. In response, the city opened 32 care centres for those in need, operating 24/7, where people can receive support and much-needed meals, attend courses and receive psychological counselling. People in need can pick up their ID cards and access other important documentation at the centres. In total, 30 prevention posts, eight testing centres and five vaccination centres were set up across informal neighbourhoods in the city.



Fukuoka City, Japan

Japan faces demographic change caused by a rapidly ageing population, with the average lifespan increasing and a drastic decrease in the number of children and workers. These trends are visible in Fukuoka City, home to approximately 1.6 million inhabitants. Finances are becoming tighter from increased social welfare spending. With limited financial and human resources, the city's urban development must make life easier for a variety of residents, such as disabled and elderly people.

E-government initiatives in Japan are behind those of other developed countries, but Fukuoka City has taken the lead in moving governmental procedures and residential services online. This digitalization

makes the services more convenient for residents and also reallocates human resources to areas that require friendly social interactions, such as welfare services for elderly and disabled residents.

During the pandemic, it has become vital to help older and disabled residents avoid COVID-19, since these can develop into serious cases. As a local measure, the city supported vulnerable residents who were left at home when their caregivers fell ill or were hospitalized. The city also provided financial support to companies that cared for residents, and prioritized vaccinating care workers for elderly and disabled people.



“ Helsinki is committed to nurturing social cohesion and fighting social inequality by creating equal opportunities for all.

Helsinki, Finland

In Helsinki, the capital of Finland with a population of approximately 650,000 residents, serious challenges include the social exclusion of young people from education and work, and rising unemployment among recent graduates. Helsinki also faces challenges in the social inclusion of migrants, who have higher levels of unemployment or are forced to take jobs for which they are overqualified. Labour market exclusion is most obvious for those seeking international protection in Finland, especially women from non-Western countries.

Even though residential segregation in Helsinki is relatively low, keeping it low remains a challenge. In particular, Helsinki wants to prevent a regional concentration of interconnected aspects of social marginalization such as unemployment, low income, lack of social and cultural integration.

In response, the city has developed a comprehensive and strategic youth social inclusion programme. It aims to systemically reduce the exclusion of children and adolescents, intergenerational exclusion and regional segregation in everything from hobbies and leisure to education, employment, social and healthcare services.

In terms of the integration of migrants, the main emphasis is on promoting employment and education of children and youth. Helsinki is

committed to nurturing social cohesion and fighting social inequality by creating equal opportunities for all. The city's housing policy is based on social mixing.

The groups most disadvantaged before COVID-19 have suffered the most from measures taken to handle the crisis. Although lockdown measures in Finland have not been as strict as in many other countries, they severely limited the availability and accessibility of many city services and the social and healthcare needs of many residents have not been met. Addressing these needs will take years and require additional financial resources. Learning has suffered among students in basic, upper-secondary and vocational education, which has had a negative impact both on youth making further education choices and on the employability of many vocational graduates. The mental and social well-being of children and youth has also been dramatically affected.

Immigrants have been over-represented among those infected by COVID-19. Many live in crowded apartments and work in sectors where remote working is more difficult to arrange. The city has launched new initiatives and community-based approaches to provide information about the pandemic in different languages, in cooperation with NGOs representing the largest language groups.

İzmir, Turkey

With a population of around 3 million, İzmir is Turkey's third largest city. It faces challenges regarding climate change and migration, and requires social cohesion policies in response to the rapidly increasing socioeconomic imbalance in the city. Vulnerable groups have difficulty accessing the most basic social rights such as education, health, employment and safe housing. The groups most at risk of social exclusion are women, LGBTQIA+ persons, refugees, disabled people, elderly people, children, people with low incomes and those from religious and ethnic minority groups.

İzmir has a strong historical and social heritage, thanks to its geographical location, commercial potential and good quality of life. It has received intense internal and external migration, both historically and today. The city's inclusive urban policies take a rights-based and holistic approach, developing inclusive and participatory policies to prevent social exclusion and discrimination, especially for disadvantaged groups. The city also studies the needs of the growing population, and develops its infrastructure accordingly.

Examples of activities that promote inclusion are: education and counselling services for women; safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems planning; educational and social activities for disabled people; multilingual service work for immigrants; vocational courses for disadvantaged groups; educational areas and social centres for children and youth; human rights and discrimination-based trainings; and cultural activities that increase intercultural dialogue.

COVID-19 has caused economic crisis, social exclusion and isolation in the city. Many groups do not have a safe home environment, have difficulty meeting their basic food and hygiene needs and are unemployed or work under difficult conditions with the risk of unemployment. Lay-offs and unpaid leave in particular have affected families economically. Digital inequality negatively affects the attendance

of children and young people in remote education. Violence has also increased against women and girls, and against LGBTQIA+ individuals.

The main urban inclusion problems arising from COVID-19 are: poverty, unemployment and lack of access to livelihoods; the increase in gender-based violence; the social isolation of older and youth populations; the need for psychosocial support; and the restriction of individual freedoms.

A great deal of work has been done to reach disadvantaged groups during the pandemic, including: food and hygiene aid; study centres with digital infrastructure for children; care for elderly people; a hotline and shelter for women and girls at risk of violence; psychological counselling services by telephone for all citizens; and guidance and information on health.



Johannesburg, South Africa

The city of Johannesburg is faced with myriad challenges in relation to urban inclusion, such as: a rapidly growing population; extremely high levels of poverty and inequality; a huge backlog in affordable housing; and other socioeconomic challenges.

Spatial inequality remains one of the defining characteristics of the settlement pattern of the city, left over from the apartheid era in South Africa. The location and concentration of jobs does not match that of the majority of people, who have to commute long distances to their workplaces. This job-housing mismatch significantly contributes to the high levels of inequality.

Some of the highest densities of housing, the “townships” inherited from apartheid, are also some of the most deprived areas in the city. They are

mainly residential with little land use diversity, and located far from areas of economic opportunity.

In response, Johannesburg introduced strategies such as the Spatial Development Framework 2040,²⁰⁹ which imagines an inclusive, integrated and socially cohesive city based on a compact polycentric growth model. The framework calls for the transformation of the inner city into a strong urban core that is linked to the peripheral marginalized areas, to stimulate economic growth and enhance access to opportunities for all. An inner city with ample mixed-use sub-centres could situate both residential and commercial spaces within a protected and sustainable environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated poverty and inequality within Johannesburg.



Unemployment, food poverty and homelessness have all worsened, but the city has introduced numerous interventions to help those most in need. For example, the city and partner institutions established 13 homeless shelters that provide three nutritious meals a day, along with medical care and skills training. To address food insecurity, the city provides food packs of vegetables, fruits and other dry goods. An expanded social package

programme uses a multipronged approach to give poor and vulnerable groups assistance to help lift them out of poverty, aimed primarily at: disabled people; elderly people; those with very low basic skill levels; child-headed, pensioner-headed and single-parent households; households with a history of abuse; those with a history of substance abuse and dependency; and military veterans.

Melbourne, Australia

The city of Melbourne is home to around 170,000 people, and lies within a metropolitan area of around 5 million. While the city is consistently rated one of the most liveable cities in the world,²¹⁰ inequities remain an issue. Reduced availability of support services, transport and housing for all in need is a key challenge to urban inclusion, and can result in people experiencing social exclusion, mental health issues, housing stress and homelessness. There are also health and well-being inequities, especially for women, children, young people, older adults (particularly those who are socially isolated and/or have low levels of digital literacy), people with a disability, international students, people who identify as LGBTQIA+, Indigenous Aboriginal people and culturally and linguistically diverse populations (especially migrants and refugees).

Melbourne is developing the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan,²¹¹ which will outline the key challenges and priorities and drive action to address them. This includes the allocation of capital funding to build and redevelop community facilities, and technology to improve access and inclusion. In addition, the city has a number of focused initiatives, such as:

- A coordination group with key food relief providers to address food insecurity
- A training programme that helps businesses understand and support people sleeping rough
- A libraries social support worker, who helps library visitors and staff respond appropriately to people who may require extra assistance
- A welcoming, safe and inclusive space for people experiencing homelessness, open from 23.00 – 07.00, 364 nights a year
- A team that works with people sleeping rough, with the aim of finding permanent pathways out of homelessness
- Notification for people experiencing homelessness about extreme weather event forecasts and, during extreme heat, the provision of swim passes, movie passes and drink bottles
- A partnership with Victoria Police, local service providers and welfare associations to improve amenity and safety on the streets for all residents and visitors

COVID-19 has brought several issues to the surface with regard to inclusion, such as:

- The importance of coordination between different levels of government in relation to funding and resources, to give everyone an opportunity to live a healthy and fulfilled life
- The need for open space, preferably green, for recreation, forming connections and fresh air
- The need for policy and programmes that address racism
- The need for adequate housing stock to meet the diverse needs of individuals and families
- The need for access to adequate healthy food
- The impact of exclusion when people are not connected digitally and must remain in their homes
- The impact on mental health of not having face-to-face connections with others
- The increase in contagion resulting from overcrowded living arrangements, which tend to occur far more in lower socio-economic groups
- Tensions between economic and social inclusion during city recovery

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

“ To encourage economic activity, Rio de Janeiro is offering microcredit lines and training programmes to place women and youth into the job market.

Rio de Janeiro has a population of around 6.7 million, within a larger metropolitan area of 12.3 million. The main challenges faced by the city are the provision of public services, including informal settlement areas where 22% of the population lives, and stimulating the productive sector to generate employment and income. Among the most vulnerable groups are informal workers, young people and women. Due to the economic slowdown from COVID-19, many informal workers lost their source of income. In Rio, 26% of people aged 18–24 years neither studies nor works, and the participation of women in the job market is at its lowest in 30 years.

The city aims to address these challenges through assertive policies targeted at the most vulnerable groups, including the creation of departments dedicated to those groups – the Secretariats for Youth, Women and Community Action (devoted to slum territories). In order to mitigate the economic impacts of COVID-19, City Hall also launched a cash-transfer programme benefiting poor families

and legal street traders. To encourage economic activity, the city is offering microcredit lines and training programmes to place women and youth into the job market.

The high concentration and lack of basic sanitation in slums make their inhabitants particularly vulnerable to infectious diseases. The city's dependence on the service sector (70% of the city's economy) and the high number of informal employers (40% of the population of the state) have aggravated the impact of social restriction measures, showing the need to diversify the economy and formalized sectors. The pandemic has also highlighted the importance of public health services. In Rio de Janeiro, data from the State Prosecution Office showed a 50% increase in domestic violence cases during the first week after the implementation of social isolation measures, with most cases being related to violence against women. Victims were allowed to make virtual domestic violence complaints during this period.²¹²



Yiwu City, China

As of 2021, Yiwu in Eastern China has a permanent population of 1.9 million, the largest among county-level cities in Zhejiang Province. Since 2010, its population has increased by 1.2 million, an annual growth rate of over 3%. The city's main challenges are insufficient preschool education resources for the children of migrants, a shortage of skilled workers and an uneven distribution of commercial complexes. The city's limited educational resources struggle to keep up with its rapid population growth, a problem that particularly affects migrants. In addition, the demand for skilled personnel continues to rise as companies and large state-owned enterprises have entered Yiwu one after another. Yiwu therefore needs to provide technical training to match the needs of the large-scale industrial enterprises that have attracted investment.

The Municipal Party Committee and the Municipal Government have taken several steps to address these problems. First, to provide preschool education, Yiwu proposed the "Hundred Kindergarten Project" in 2017, which now enrolls nearly 40,000 students. Second, to provide skilled technical workers, the city government explored a new model, the school/district-enterprise cooperation model, to train workers in the specific skill sets needed in industries. Finally, to address the uneven spatial access to jobs and amenities, the city is planning liveable and business-friendly communities, including commercial complexes, business districts and schools.



5

Making city recovery inclusive

The pandemic has exacerbated the financial difficulties faced by cities around the globe. Yet the pandemic has offered a once-in-a-lifetime chance to transform how cities are planned and financed and move towards an inclusive and resilient future.



5.1 Sources of financing for inclusive city recovery



Cities need reliable access to financial resources if they are to help their most vulnerable residents, particularly during times of crisis. Sustainable and resilient local finance is crucial for an inclusive recovery in cities.

Greg Clark, Chair, Connected Places Catapult

The pandemic has exacerbated the financial difficulties faced by cities around the globe. Many cities in the developing world have experienced severe budgetary constraints since their major funding sources – intergovernmental fiscal transfers and municipal revenues – have also been seriously affected. In Sibiu, Romania, for example, the city's revenues decreased by around 15% because of COVID-19 – and Sibiu is among the cities least affected globally.²¹³ Preliminary findings from a World Bank study suggest global city revenue declines ranging between 15% to 40%, and up to 60% in one case.

To cope with such unanticipated fiscal challenges, many cities have reduced their operating expenditures on urban infrastructure and basic urban services. This has disproportionately affected the urban poor and vulnerable groups, reinforcing inequalities.

Yet the pandemic has offered a once-in-a-lifetime chance to transform how cities are planned and financed and move towards an inclusive and resilient future. The pandemic reiterated the importance of strengthening intergovernmental fiscal transfer systems using transparent and predictable funding formulae (based on indicators such as population headcount, poverty rate and access to services). Providing incentives to different tiers of governments, such as performance-based grants, was also important. A prerequisite for a city's financial sustainability and resiliency is a sound municipal finance system, with a focus on own-source revenue mobilization from property taxes and expenditure rationalization. This requires secure property rights, up-to-date land registry systems and objective property valuation.

Private investment is also crucial for inclusive recovery from COVID-19. A World Bank report shows that in 2019 private commitments in developing country infrastructure reached \$96.7 billion.²¹⁴ In the post-COVID era, public-private partnerships (PPPs) will remain critical for financing inclusive and resilient infrastructure and service delivery systems. However, the potential of private financing sources can be realized only if cities are well managed and can overcome several issues that deter private investors (e.g. urban governance and transparency, contract management and enforcement). Diverse financing sources will be critical to make infrastructure projects less risky for the private sector and enhance their bankability. Cities must also enhance their creditworthiness and

that of their municipal utilities, reform regulatory frameworks governing PPPs and strengthen institutional capacity.

Financially constrained cities can leverage tradeable land and development rights to enable targeted interventions in underinvested neighbourhoods. São Paulo, Brazil, has successfully introduced an instrument called “Outorga Onerosa”, which offers property owners a density bonus.²¹⁵ This is an incentive-based tool that permits a developer to increase the maximum allowable development on a site in exchange for either funds or in-kind support for specified public policy goals. São Paulo allows a density bonus of up to 20% of the planned development in exchange for a predetermined fee, paid to the Urban Development Fund for projects in alignment with its development plan. In 2012, about \$175 million generated from the instrument was distributed through the fund for a series of public projects, including formalizing slums and informal settlements (giving residents the legal right to remain in these settlements) and upgrading parks and green areas, transport corridors, bus terminals and drainage.²¹⁶

Land readjustment is another financing scheme for infrastructure and basic services in development areas – often deteriorated central districts or urban fringes – without requiring upfront investment in land acquisition.²¹⁷ It has been used to pool privately owned land parcels and replan them, with some land allocated for public infrastructure and services (e.g. rights of way, open spaces). Once the planned infrastructure is developed, smaller land parcels are returned to landowners, but with a potentially higher market value because of the new urban services. This approach has been popular in East Asian cities equipped with the necessary legislative framework and institutional capacities. Several other land-based financing sources include tax-increment financing and transfer of development rights.

Another approach would be to consolidate publicly owned assets in a common investment vehicle, which Stefan Fölster and Dag Detter call an “urban wealth fund”.²¹⁸ All publicly owned assets would be placed in a public fund, regardless of which public institution owns them. The fund would then be allocated to the different public institutions according to their contribution in terms of public assets.²¹⁹ The fund would be managed transparently, in an accountable manner, led by city mandate but at the same time also directed by specialized professionals, in order to avoid

conflict of interests and political influence. While this may seem challenging, there are several examples of success in doing so, from HafenCity to Copenhagen. Both cities were revitalized by the City & Port Development Company using this type of development mechanism. These efforts resulted in an increased number of residential housing as well as key new infrastructures such as the Copenhagen Metro, schools and universities. Better management of city assets would also help cover required maintenance costs without competing with government budgets, leaving more for spending on healthcare, education and other social initiatives.²²⁰

Lastly, many cities also introduce policy-based financing tools, such as inclusionary zoning and linkage programmes. Inclusionary zoning (IZ) refers to a variety of local policies that require or incentivize private developers to include a certain percentage of housing units (often 10–30%) at below-market prices in residential or commercial

developments.²²¹ IZ policies have been gaining popularity in cities across the US since the 1970s, creating between 150,000 and 173,000 affordable housing units in total.²²² The most common incentive for developers is a density bonus, as applied by over 90% of all jurisdictions with IZ policies in US.²²³

Linkage programmes collect a fee-per-square-foot from new development to finance affordable housing units, in case securing on-site housing through IZ is impractical, as in some commercial developments. Linkage fees deposited in a housing trust fund help provide low-wage workers with affordable housing near commercial developments and the new jobs they create. In Boston, US, a commercial linkage fee has been levied on all new commercial developments larger than 100,000 square feet (930 square metres) at a rate of \$8.34 per square foot, averaging around \$6.46 million per year between 2004 and 2014.²²⁴

5.2 The role of leaders and governance in making city recovery inclusive



The leadership challenges ahead are almost as unprecedented as the crises of the past. But experience has given mayors both a roadmap and a shared destination: a future where our cities – and all our communities – move forward together.

James Anderson, Director of Government Innovation, Bloomberg Philanthropies

If there was never before a crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic that so cruelly targeted the vulnerable and powerless in cities, there was also never before a moment when local policy-makers brought more creativity, urgency and attention to the lives and conditions of these residents. The pandemic delivered both.

Now, as city leaders look to the future, they'll need to build upon this unprecedented focus and pace as they develop social infrastructure and inclusive governance to "build back better".

That means continuing to engage and listen. One of the most important ingredients for navigating a novel crisis is ensuring information flows are diverse, authentic and uninterrupted. That is why mayors, in the face of COVID-19, sent policy-makers into under-represented and marginalized communities. They used ethnographic enquiry, human-centred design, community partnerships and citizen-sourced data to better understand the situation on the ground. Mayors also embraced participatory strategies, giving residents a greater say in government and increasing trust.

It means continuing to innovate. A hallmark of local government response to COVID-19 was unleashing solutions wherever needs arose. City leaders devised innovative services and policies that went beyond their organization's traditional competencies and formal authorities. In Cape Town, South Africa, they opened pop-up pharmacies to serve older people. In US cities, they passed eviction moratoria and launched basic income experiments. In Sydney and Melbourne, Australia, they created online portals for residents to contribute to long-term recovery plans. And the East London council of Barking and Dagenham, UK, supported strategies to build social capital and cohesion.

It means continuing to "crowd in" all available resources. One of the biggest pandemic lessons was that cities cannot count on national governments to save the day. In fact, national government response often impeded local action. City leaders will need to reimagine local governments as platforms for citywide problem-solving, to galvanize the collective energy of business, academia, civil society and residents. Local governments on municipal budgets cannot do it alone; collaborations at the city-city, city-state-national and city-civic-private levels are key.

6

Conclusion and recommendations

This report is intended to inspire leaders in various roles to act to make their cities more inclusive. Few cities will be able to do everything at once, but all cities can take steps to advance inclusion.



To do this, they need a strategy. Figure 4 details the steps that cities can take to create and implement an urban inclusion strategy.

FIGURE 4 A ten-step action plan for urban inclusion

- 1 Identify key groups** that face systemic exclusion.
- 2 Work together with key groups** to understand their perspectives and needs.
- 3 Enlist support** from a wide range of stakeholders (public, private, civic, academic, etc.).
- 4 Identify and prioritize urban inclusion goals** for the short, medium and long term.
- 5 Develop programmes** to achieve goals that address the various dimensions of inclusion (spatial, digital, economic, social and institutional).
- 6 Review regulations** to ensure that programmes are enabled by the regulatory environment.
- 7 Develop capacity** to ensure successful implementation and resilience of the programmes.
- 8 Identify financial resources** to support the programmes.
- 9 Target quick wins** to demonstrate the benefits and viability of the programmes.
- 10 Monitor** the implementation and course-correct in response to obstacles and feedback.

Source: Adapted from World Economic Forum & PwC Research (2016), "Inspiring Future Cities & Urban Services – Shaping the Future of Urban Development & Services Initiative".

Table 1 below lists a sequence of actions to enable urban inclusion in the spatial, digital, social/institutional and economic realms on a spectrum from getting started to advanced action.

TABLE 1 **Sequence of actions to enable urban inclusion**

Sequence stage	Spatial inclusion	Digital inclusion	Social and institutional inclusion	Economic inclusion
<p>Getting started</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Making progress</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Advanced action</p>	<p>Map under-served populations</p> <p>Extend basic services to poorly served areas</p> <p>Promote universal design for new developments</p> <p>Ensure equitable distribution of public amenities, including trees, parks, critical infrastructure and public spaces</p>	<p>Understand who has access to broadband infrastructure and the level of digital skills and literacy among citizens</p> <p>Ensure universal access to broadband infrastructure</p> <p>Expand access to basic services through digitalization, where feasible leapfrogging traditional types of infrastructure and modes of service delivery</p> <p>Use digital technology to build social capital and combat social isolation, including of elderly people and other vulnerable groups</p>	<p>Assess the barriers faced by potentially vulnerable groups in social and institutional processes</p> <p>Build channels of communication, social capital and reciprocal trust by creating mechanisms for communities to collaborate to inform the design and build of urban infrastructures and services. To get started, a city may consider a pilot initiative, creating space to learn from mistakes and scale and replicate successful collaborative mechanisms</p> <p>Confront historical inequalities through public education and dialogue</p> <p>Create infrastructure that supports social integration and institutional participation (e.g. community centres for marginalized groups; intergenerational spaces, including housing, for elderly people)</p> <p>Develop targeted programmes to ensure social and institutional inclusion reaches the highest levels (e.g. corporate or political leadership training for members of marginalized groups)</p>	<p>Document access to financial services and social support to establish overall need</p> <p>Work with formal financial institutions to expand access to services</p> <p>Provide tailored support services for social groups that face challenges to financial integration (including migrants)</p> <p>Establish mechanisms for financial support during emergencies (e.g. income support for daily-wage and self-employed workers)</p> <p>Create targeted programmes to foster the inclusion of vulnerable groups in quality employment (e.g. employer-employee matching for disabled people)</p>

Phase 1: Getting started

Even cities that have limited control over local taxes, receive low shares of local revenue generation and are highly dependent on intergovernmental grants and funding can act to improve inclusion – including in cases where expenditures are greatly influenced by federal/central/regional regulation.

In such cities, especially in low-income and conflict-affected countries, inclusive approaches to mapping vulnerable groups, building links and

social capital among diverse groups, and, where feasible, providing basic services, such as access to water, gas and electricity, can unlock significant benefits. The UN-Habitat case studies from Somalia, Tanzania and Palestine serve as examples of how projects in challenging environments can incorporate the voices of vulnerable groups through public engagement. Such projects help establish trust between stakeholders and create community and solidarity among people facing extreme hardship due to poverty or conflict.

“ Cities making progress on urban inclusion can more proactively assess the barriers to inclusion faced by vulnerable groups and begin establishing targeted infrastructure and programming.

Especially at the early stages of spatial expansion, cities can reserve land for future public transport rights of way, open public spaces, schools and other amenities. This can counteract unhealthy spatial development processes – for example, reducing the likelihood that poor people will be relegated to peripheral areas with limited access to amenities and long commutes. Inclusive planning of broadband infrastructure at an early stage can also pave the way to digital inclusion and provide opportunities for vulnerable groups, facilitating a broader transition to urban inclusion.

Cities experiencing these challenges may lack adequate resources or well-established institutions such as large firms, universities, philanthropies and civic groups, but they can start building financial capacity by establishing regulations and processes for property tax, intergovernmental fiscal transfers and land-value capture. Where appropriate, they can work with state/national financial institutions to extend access and provide economic support to those without steady employment, documentation, fixed addresses, etc. Having a firm fiscal foundation can help cities provide safety nets for the most vulnerable residents in times of crisis.

Phase 2: Making progress

Cities making progress on urban inclusion can more proactively assess the barriers to inclusion faced by vulnerable groups and begin establishing targeted

infrastructure and programming. Examples might include community centres for vulnerable groups, emergency income support for daily-wage workers and self-employed people during emergencies, intergenerational spaces (including housing) for elderly people and tailored economic support services for migrants.

Cities with some technical and fiscal capacity and experience in implementing complex projects can draw inspiration from cases such as Bogota’s rent solidarity scheme; Medellin’s *Bancuadra* banking and financial literacy programme; and the Abjad Sociocultural Centre for youth and women in Tripoli, Lebanon. Such projects help address immediate daily needs, but also invest in the longer-term success of vulnerable communities through economic and cultural inclusion.

Cities at this stage can identify easy wins to digitalize public services and promote universal design in new developments. Equitable distribution of parks, trees, public spaces and infrastructure, and the preservation of land for future amenities, can prevent the emergence of new spatial inequalities or avoid locking in existing ones. In some contexts, cities “leapfrog” traditional types of infrastructure and modes of service delivery through the application of new technology, bypassing historical patterns of urbanization that have caused the exclusion of vulnerable groups.



Phase 3: Advanced action

Cities that have taken important first steps and made progress towards inclusion can aim to take more ambitious actions. Wealthier cities that have greater control over their local tax base and revenue generation, low dependence on intergovernmental financial transfers and relatively minor interference from national/regional regulation often have the greatest capacity to take advanced action on urban inclusion. However, even cities that are not necessarily wealthy can achieve ambitious goals. This is exemplified by the city of Medellín in Colombia, which has implemented initiatives to foster spatial, financial and social inclusion in a challenging economic and political context.

Cities that have succeeded in providing services and amenities to low-income neighbourhoods may face the problem of gentrification of such neighbourhoods, resulting in the displacement of the intended beneficiaries of inclusion-promoting initiatives. These cities may establish policies to confront any issues that create and amplify spatial inequalities. The case of Lisbon, described in this report, provides an example of such policies.

Even if vulnerable groups such as elderly people have their basic needs met, they may still face social isolation. Cities can combat this problem by making innovative use of technology to combat social isolation, as Barcelona has done through its *Vincles* programme.²²⁵ They may also create intergenerational housing for elderly people, such as Singapore's Kampung Admiralty.

Business leaders can work with local governments, universities and NGOs to ensure that private-sector employment does not leave vulnerable

groups behind. This may involve creating targeted programmes to facilitate the inclusion of vulnerable groups in quality employment; for instance, through employer-employee matching for disabled people. They can develop targeted programmes to ensure that social and institutional inclusion reaches the highest levels. This may be through corporate or political leadership training for members of marginalized groups, as exemplified by Bristol's BeOnBoard programme.

Regardless of a city's level of resources, none of the approaches described above can be identically replicated from one context to another. A city must tailor an approach to its specific context. Initiatives can emerge from government bodies, the private sector or civic organizations, but they must actively involve the communities they aim to include. No matter the city's level of access to technical expertise, the biggest experts on the needs of city residents are the residents themselves. While finance and leadership are essential, the first step towards urban inclusion is tapping into this expertise, with residents actively involved in making the decisions that shape their daily lives.

This report is a call for action to cities around the world to accelerate urban inclusion. The crises of recent years have made the interconnectedness of our communities clearer than ever, showing that true resilience in the face of crisis can be achieved only if everyone is included. Many urban populations around the world remain vulnerable. However, cities have also shown that when empowered to do so they are often the best vehicles for the innovative and flexible urban inclusion-promoting action the world needs if it is to achieve a just recovery and transition, leaving no one behind.

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