

NEWS



Urban design

Megacities: more vulnerable, but crucial to providing solutions in times of crisis

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Metropolis co-organized the Urban Thinker Campus: Megacities' post-covid planning in collaboration with the World Urban Campaign, the MTPA (Metropolitan and Territorial Planning Agencies), the FNAU (French Network of Urban Planning Agencies), ISOCARP (International Society of City and Regional Planners) and the Institut Paris Région. The online event - that took place on 3rd July 2020 - addressed **the impact and new paradigms raised by the Covid-19 crisis on megacities' planning**.

Together with representatives of megacities' planning agencies and departments, we discussed how global networks like Metropolis are dealing with planning megacities and how Covid-19 crisis changes the way to plan megacities. As highlighted by the Metropolis' Secretary General, Octavi de la Varga, we have seen a few changes in our membership after the pandemic, notably: **changes on the governance structures** and articulation with other levels of governance; a greater awareness of **the importance of a metropolitan approach** in many territories and, **the weaknesses we have in the way the services are being delivering**.

"Megacities are engines of development, but also places where people live (...) The pandemic has deepened inequalities, and we need to rethink the way urban space is designed and work on the areas of: digital gap, mobility, gender mainstreaming, among others", he assessed.

Some of our members also participated on the debate and exchanged experiences about the impacts and new paradigms in their cities. Gabriel Lafranchi from the City of Buenos Aires explained that they are in a moment of integrating the lessons learned from the pandemic to their ongoing Urban Environment Plan. And he emphasised: **"Many things will change in times of Covid-19, so it is a great moment to rethink the way we are designing urban spaces"**.

As for Mduduzi Mbada from the Gauteng Provincial Government, he explained that after Covid-19 they have put together a plan called "Growing Gauteng Together", which has been supported by all the cities and, also, at national level. "This plan seeks to build a sustainable future for all", he concluded.

Participants made it clear that **megacities have the largest concentration of humans and, for this reason, they are more vulnerable to pandemics**, but they also have a key role to play giving solutions to other cities. As Eric Huybrechts from the Institut Paris Region underlined, good **governance at different levels is crucial for our cities to be more resilient**, as well as new capacities to mobilise social solidarity at the same time that we work with NGOs and other actors to face any kind of crisis in the future.