

PRESS RELEASE

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The post-pandemic metropolis needs more than just a recovery

Barcelona, 8 March 2021 - A year after Covid-19 drastically changed our lives, especially in hyper-connected and densely populated metropolitan areas, recovering the rhythm of pre-pandemic life is no longer the most important issue.

The crisis has highlighted—and exacerbated—the acute inequality that exists in large cities, including [the gender inequality that women and girls](#) are subject to in both private and public spaces.

Of course we need a recovery. But we need a more equitable recovery, one that results in [more metropolitan spaces where people can meet, rest and play, safe streets and an inclusive public transport system](#), to name just a few examples. We need a recovery that focuses, first and foremost, on human rights and social justice.

The theme for UN International Women's Day on 8 March is "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a Covid-19 world". At Metropolis we are in complete agreement in advocating for a more egalitarian future, which can only be reached through [multi-level, empathetic governance](#). This means ensuring that collaboration, co-creation and support are included in the responses to complex emergencies, like the one we are currently going through.

It is imperative that we incorporate innovative public participation techniques in governance, to ensure inclusive policies that consider the needs of every section of society as we respond and recover from the pandemic. One such example is including the voices of women and girls in recovery plans and budget decisions, for the sake of equal leadership.

Women are still under-represented in politics and in decision-making processes in large cities and metropolitan areas. For example, [only 17% of Metropolis members are governed by women](#).

A crisis cannot create opportunities without a full reassessment. The current crisis will only turn into an opportunity if we implement changes. We firmly believe that society can be revitalised and strengthened after Covid-19. And this change should be led by cities.

To help local and regional governments respond to the global Covid-19 crisis, we launched the [Cities for Global Health platform](#) in early March 2020, together with United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the Euro-Latin American Alliance for Cooperation between Cities (AL-LAs), and with support from Barcelona City Council.

This collaborative platform provides a space for policymakers and representatives from local and regional governments, as well as individuals, members of the community and local organisations to share their inspiring ideas, tools and solutions to create the changes necessary to build a fairer post-pandemic future.

To commemorate International Women's Day, we encourage the community to share further cases of innovation and reinvention. Because if we want to achieve SDG 5—Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls—, we need to share knowledge.

This is the simple but deep-seated challenge we are now facing, one year later.

Check out some ideas for transformative innovations at: www.citiesforglobalhealth.org/

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About Metropolis

The World Association of Major Metropolises (Metropolis) is a global network of major cities and metropolitan areas.

Metropolis brings together the governments of 141 urban agglomerations worldwide. Founded in 1985, today the association is the focal point of expertise on metropolitan governance. By raising the voices of metropolises on the global agenda and building the capacity to deliver public policies and services,

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Metropolis contributes to finding common answers to the challenges of metropolisation.