

SOLUTIONS FOR AND BY CITIES



metropolis ●

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Metropolis, World Association of the Major Metropolises

Metropolis brings together the governments of 138 urban agglomerations worldwide. With 35 years of history, today the association is the focal point of expertise on metropolitan governance. Raising the voices of metropolises to the global agenda and building capacity to deliver public policies and services, Metropolis contributes to finding common answers to the challenges of metropolisation.

ABOUT THE GUANGZHOU AWARD



The Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation is co-sponsored by the City of Guangzhou, Metropolis and UCLG. It aims to recognize innovation in improving social, economic and environmental sustainability in cities and regions and, in so doing, to advance the prosperity and quality of life of their citizens.

For more information: guangzhouaward.org

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FOREWORD

NICHOLAS YOU

Executive director
Guangzhou Institute for Urban Innovation



As practical contributions to accomplish the goal of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda), I hope that the initiatives shown in this publication inspire the growth of a culture of innovation in the most diverse urban agglomerations in the world, placing citizens at the centre of urban policies in order to leave no one behind.

A total of 313 initiatives were submitted by 213 cities and regions from over 70 different countries and territories. The projects were assessed by an independent gender-balanced Technical Committee of 11 experts representing all the different regions, with a wide range of expertise and covering all the main stakeholders.

First of all, the Technical Committee identified a list of 45 commendable initiatives, followed by a shortlist of 15 outstanding city/local government initiatives. The shortlisted 15 cities and local governments were invited to present their initiatives at the 4th International Seminar on Learning from Urban Innovation, held in Guangzhou on 6 December 2018. As the Guangzhou Award is dedicated to cities and regions, members of the jury consisted mainly of former local elected officials and academics.

Seven members of the independent jury, five of whom were women, were shown presentations by more than 200 local and central government officials, as well as representatives from civil society organisations, academia and the private sector. Following the seminar and extensive Q&A sessions, the Jury decided on the five award-winning cities and regions.

Methodology of the Guangzhou Award

The Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation is dedicated to decentralised, city-to-city cooperation and sharing lessons learned from experience. Its focus covers the three pillars of sustainability: social, economic and environmental, and two additional domains—governance and technology. One of the key

criteria is how relevant submissions are to these thematic areas and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Within the context of the Guangzhou Award, urban innovation is defined as the deliberate act of introducing new policies, programmes and strategies, business models and types of partnership to tackle existing problems as well as new challenges. Urban innovation is thus different from “best practices” in that the Award does not just look at past successes, but focuses more on what measures are being taken going forward.

For both the Technical Committee and the Jury, the determining or deciding factor between two initiatives of similar merit was learning, namely what other cities or regions could learn or benefit from being exposed to a given initiative. This ultimate deciding factor is in line with the goals and objectives of the Guangzhou Award and the mission of its co-sponsor organisations—Metropolis, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG).

All fifteen initiatives are detailed in this publication. What is already clear from this snapshot of local initiatives from around the world is that cities and regions are finding new ways to solve old problems whilst positioning themselves to address new challenges arising from the mega-trends of urbanisation, globalisation and climate change. In the coming two years, before the 5th cycle of the Guangzhou Awards 2020, we will be working closely with local government partners and representatives from all the major stakeholders to learn the lessons from these and the 30 other commendable initiatives, with the goal of furthering our collective knowledge, expertise and experience in support of sustainable development.

FOREWORD

OCTAVI DE LA VARGA

Secretary General
Metropolis



For Metropolis, Guangzhou People's Municipal Government is a great champion for urban innovation. At our Board of Directors Meeting held in August 2018 in the Gauteng Province, Guangzhou was officially given the responsibility, as one of the association's Co-presidencies, of being our highest authority on Urban Innovation, representing Metropolis in various arenas related to the subject. Nonetheless, this role merely represents a humble acknowledgment of Guangzhou's long-standing work towards the identification, recognition and circulation of the world's best practices in innovative urban planning and management.

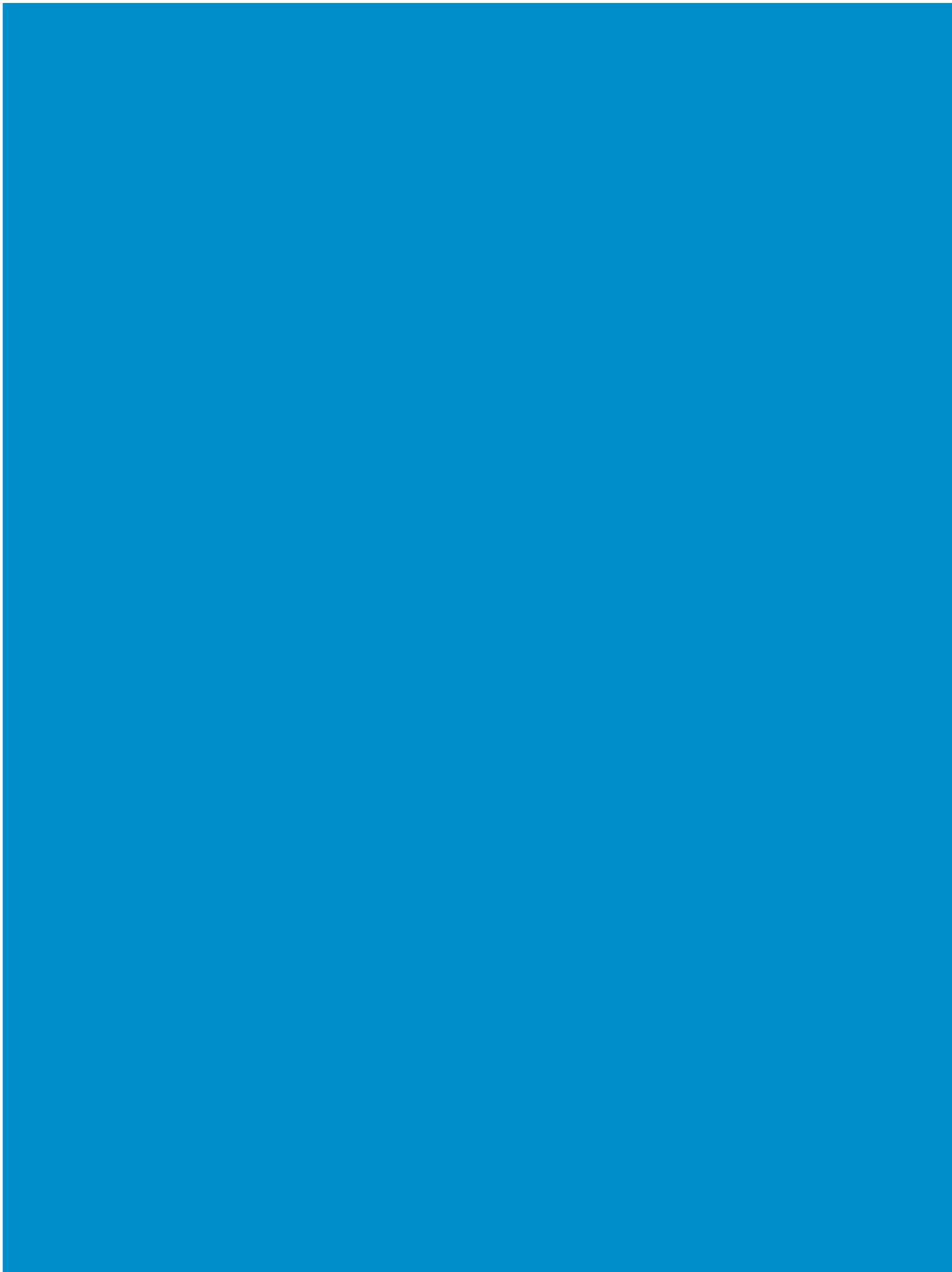
A Metropolis member for more than 25 years, in 2012 Guangzhou took a great step forward in boosting its leadership on urban innovation: the launch of the Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation. This award is a cornerstone for local governments to be acknowledged as the main actors in creating more innovative cities worldwide, which means more sustainable, egalitarian and open urban spaces for all. Since then until the present time, the award has consolidated itself as the main benchmark for urban innovation for both Metropolis and UCLG.

The best innovations do not lie in inventing new devices and the latest technology, but rather in generating new and better connections between us. For this reason, urban innovation goes hand in hand with learning and exchanging. It therefore comes as no surprise that the New Urban Agenda, the result of the Habitat III conference, highlights that there is a need for learning between cities within the same country and globally. There is a need, therefore, to bring together different stakeholders and approaches to better deliver urban policies and ensure the future of our cities. As a bustling metropolis, Guangzhou is also very much appreciated throughout our networks for its commitment to exchanges with other cities, and for its readiness to learn from and alongside its peers.

The fourth edition of the Guangzhou International Award for Urban Innovation was a remarkable show of these links between innovation and learning from different stakeholders. This publication is an attempt to extend the prestige of the initiatives that were shortlisted for the award, and to spread their legacy to even broader audiences.

As practical contributions to accomplish the goal of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda), I hope that the initiatives shown in this publication inspire the growth of a culture of innovation in the most diverse urban agglomerations in the world, placing citizens at the centre of urban policies in order to leave no one behind.

Stay tuned for the 5th edition of the Guangzhou Award next year. Its ceremony will take place in Guangzhou from 28 to 30th October 2020 under the framework of the 13th Metropolis World Congress.



METROPOLIS MEMBERS

Guangzhou Award winners



GUADALAJARA MEXICO

population
1,500,00



GUANGZHOU AWARD WINNER

GUADALAJARA MEXICO

CITIZEN LED METROPOLITAN COORDINATION OF GUADALAJARA

Although coordinated metropolitan planning is uncommon in Latin America, greater Guadalajara established a planning institute and the nine local municipalities agreed on binding land-use legislation after extensive public outreach that engaged residents unfamiliar with the workings of city government.

Guadalajara, Mexico's second-largest city, sits at the heart of a nine-municipality metropolitan area home to five million people. [Latin American cities have struggled historically to develop robust metropolitan planning mechanisms, but the Metropolitan Institute of Planning and Development Management \(IMEPLAN\) has successfully shepherded binding land-use legislation through all nine local governments. Moreover, the basis of the Guadalajara Metropolitan Area's ordinance comes from intense citizen engagement.](#)

"Instead of how [planning] has historically been done on a desk by urban planners, architects, and engineers, we decided that the tools that will define the future of the city have to be built with the people that enjoy, suffer, and experience the city every single day - its values and its challenges as well," said IMEPLAN's Badi Zárate.

In 2016, IMEPLAN conducted a four-month listening tour through the entire 3,265 square km region. Of residents, the institute asked three basic questions: What do you like about the city? What don't you like? What are you willing to do for the city? Of experts, the institute convened roundtables on waste management, air quality, urban mobility, and other pressing issues. Finally, for those who could not attend sessions in person, there was also a digital platform.

In the end, IMEPLAN heard from over 3,000 residents, civil society representatives, and academic experts. "People are not used to public participation processes and having the opportunity to decide for the city," said Zárate. "Their dialogues were based on their very own personal problems in the city, for example the light on my block doesn't work or the trash wasn't picked up yesterday - but those do not represent metropolitan matters."

From its experience in 2016, IMEPLAN learned that asking the same three questions in every community limits the potential feedback that different groups can offer and that it is unrealistic to expect meaningful public participation without educating residents on how city government works. As a result, IMEPLAN unveiled a long-term permanent process for public participation called Ruta 2042, a vision for what greater Guadalajara will be like on its 500th birthday. All large metropolitan decisions and policies now must have a public participation component based on IMEPLAN's iterative experience.

Ruta 2042-branded vans now drive around the metropolitan region, tailoring their request for input to the communities in which they find themselves, whether urban or agriculture, rich or poor, indigenous or non-indigenous. Such intentional outreach efforts are a conscious approach any city or metropolitan area hoping to engage with the public can do.

"We learned that no matter what we do, if we don't have raise people's awareness of their surroundings and the level of discourse they have, it was not going to be fruitful," Zárate said.

Guadalajara's efforts support the implementation of SDG11 by making the metropolitan area more inclusive.



“Instead of how [planning] has historically been done on a desk by urban planners, architects, and engineers, we decided that the tools that will define the future of the city have to be built with the people that enjoy, suffer, and experience the city every single day - its values and its challenges as well.”

IMEPLAN's Badi Zárate.



Source: Gobierno de Guadalajara



WUHAN CHINA

10,890,000
population



GUANGZHOU AWARD WINNER

WUHAN CHINA

THE “REBIRTH” OF URBAN WASTE DUMP- ECOLOGICAL TREATMENT AND RETURN OF PLURALITY

Wuhan’s ancient Chinese nickname was “Dreamland with Clouds and Wetland.” That ecological reputation suffered in the modern era, however, as the major Chinese industrial hub became home to Asia’s largest landfill as well as an abandoned dike from the early 20th century. Together these polluted areas blocked further city expansion and degraded quality of life.

The 45-acre garbage dump once smoldered with trash fires and belched so much methane across Wuhan that nearby residents could not open their windows. Wuhan decided to clean up this part of the city when awarded the opportunity to host the 10th International Garden Expo. The Chinese government sponsors this event in part to encourage cities to create or improve parks and green spaces.

Wuhan invited experts from 10 other countries and consulted 26 other Chinese cities before deciding on a remediation methodology for its landfill.

Wuhan’s \$690-million restoration of the Jinkou landfill and adjacent Zhanggong Dyke improved air and water quality for 400,000 residents, but ensuring the project was completed in a timely fashion required a new approach to project management.

“Our measure was to have lots of officials who come from 24 departments to set up temporary headquarters for the duration of the whole development,” said Project Director Fang Li. “Then we could more efficiently make decisions.”

Requiring city government officials with decision making authority to remain on site ensured that difficult decisions necessitating coordination between city departments happened quickly.



Now, the reclaimed trash heap is a green oasis so verdant it has become a popular wedding venue, one of the many activities like festivals and fun runs that generate revenue to sustain park maintenance.

Landscape architects adopted the “sponge city” model and planted gardens, green roofs, and permeable pavement that can absorb rainfall. Native plants have led to the return of native fauna once thought banished from the city, and the 30 km green belt has reserves set aside to encourage animal life to flourish.

“That is the lungs for our ecological living environment,” Li said.

Wuhan’s ecological restoration incorporates elements of SDG6 by improving a former landfill, SDG9 by creating “sponge city” infrastructure, SDG10 by improving the quality of life for residents near the landfill, and SDG11 for making the city more sustainable overall.

“Now, the reclaimed trash heap is a green oasis so verdant it has become a popular wedding venue, one of the many activities like festivals and fun runs that generate revenue to sustain park maintenance.”

“Wuhan invited experts from 10 other countries and consulted 26 other Chinese cities before deciding on a remediation methodology for its landfill.”

Project Director Fang Li



Source: Wuhan Municipal People's Government



SURABAYA INDONESIA

population
3,460,00



GUANGZHOU AWARD ONLINE POPULAR VOTE

SURABAYA INDONESIA

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN 3R WASTE MANAGEMENT FOR BETTER SURABAYA

Despite a limited local culture of recycling, Surabaya used out-of-the-box thinking to encourage residents and itinerant workers to recycle, reduce, and reuse without having to expend significant municipal resources.

Indonesia's second-largest city struggled with a surge of new residents, as well as a daytime population nearly double the nighttime population. This population growth along with an inadequate waste disposal system contributed to increasing amounts of garbage ending up in landfills. Surabaya hoped to turn the tide and become an eco-friendly city where the 3Rs - recycle, reduce, reuse - are normative behaviours.

Surabaya's efforts consisted of extensive public education to promote 3R principles to a poorly educated community unfamiliar with such concepts. One of the city's informal settlements, known as *kampung*, was selected to serve as a pilot community where more current waste disposal practices could be deployed in a dense, older neighborhood of alleyways.

"Before, Surabaya was hot and dirty. Garbage was everywhere along the roads and in the rivers," said Mayor Tri Rismaharini. "We are trying to make citizens care more about garbage."

Surabaya's most innovative tool in its 3R toolkit mandated that city-owned buses accept plastic bottles as a form of payment. The simple executive order accomplished three goals in one fell swoop: boost public transportation ridership, encourage recycling, and reduce sanitation costs like waste bins and pickup. As part of a broader citywide cleanup and waste management strategy, Surabaya reduced waste by 10 percent per year even as the city population grew 5 percent annually.



"If we involve citizens and work together with all the stakeholders, it's easier and cheaper," Rismaharini said.

Surabaya has been internationally recognized for its urban greening efforts and hosted the annual Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific in 2014.

"People who come to Surabaya, they change their behaviour because they know that Surabaya is cleaner than before," Rismaharini said.

Surabaya's 3R programme contributes to SDG3 by improving residents' health through reduced garbage, SDG6 by creating a waste management programme, SDG7 by creating new energy sources, and SDG11 by making the city more sustainable.

Surabaya's most innovative tool in its 3R (recycle, reduce, reuse) toolkit mandated that city-owned buses accept plastic bottles as a form of payment.

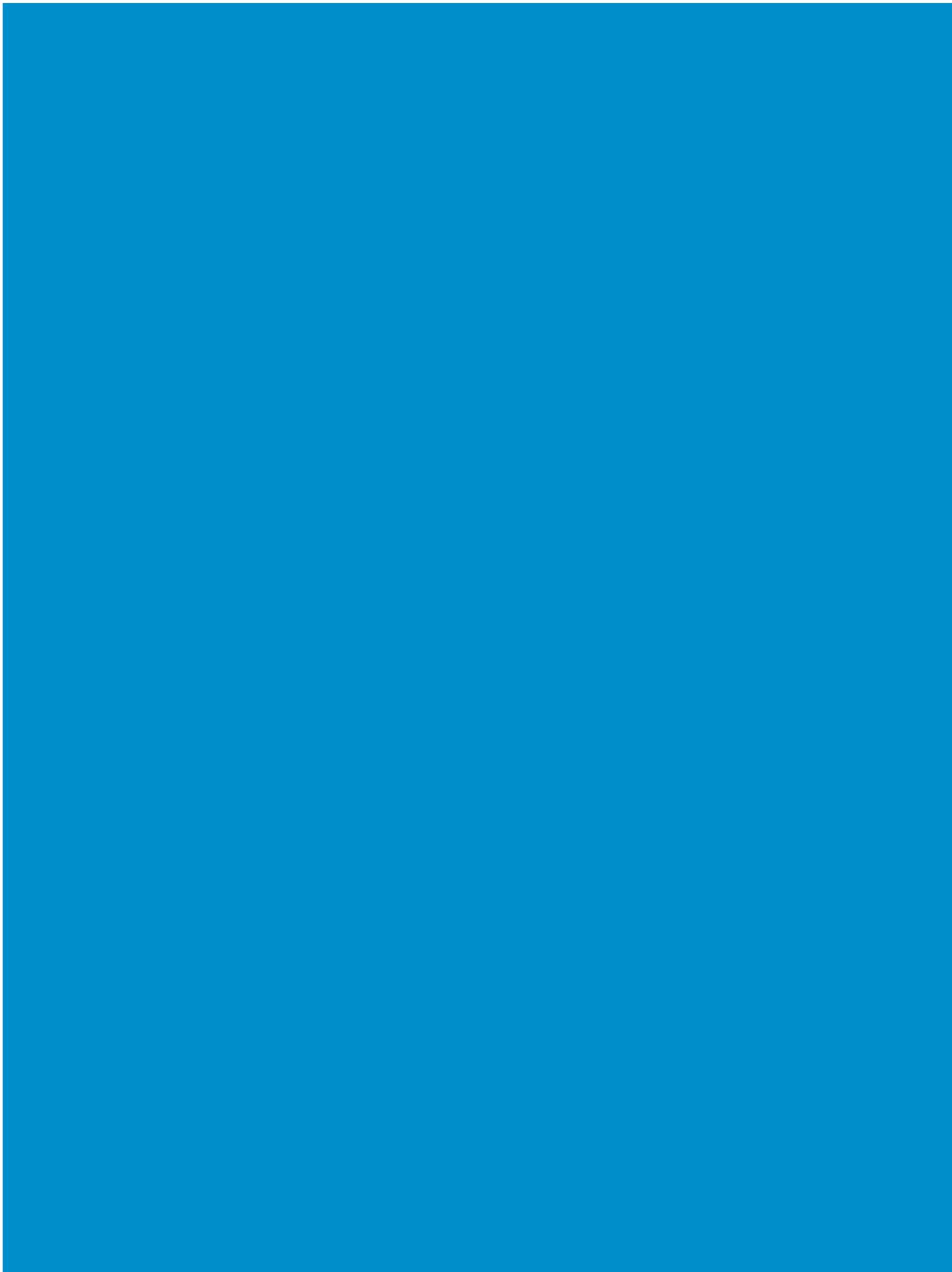


“If we involve citizens and work together with all the stakeholders, it’s easier and cheaper.”

Mayor Tri Rismaharini



Source: Surabaya City Government



METROPOLIS MEMBERS

shortlisted for
the Guangzhou Award



ETHEKWINI SOUTH AFRICA

population
3,900,000



SHORTLISTED FOR THE GUANGZHOU AWARD

ETHEKWINI SOUTH AFRICA

INCREMENTAL, PARTICIPATORY, PROGRAMMATIC INFORMAL SETTLEMENT UPGRADING PROGRAMME AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE SANITATION SERVICE PROVISION

With a large informal population whose house needs outpace the ability of the public sector to provide shelter, eThekweni shifted its upgrading focus to improving sanitation facilities in order to provide basic needs while residents can build and maintain their own homes.

eThekweni is a metropolitan municipal government that encompasses the port city of Durban and many surrounding towns into a single jurisdiction of both urban and rural land. Across eThekweni, some 226,000 households live in informal conditions - from underdeveloped rural areas lacking roads to urban areas consisting of shacks in slum-like conditions. The municipality is home to 550 informal settlements that suffer from higher rates of fires, natural disasters, and crime than formal parts of the city.

Since 1994, the Human Settlements Department has delivered 200,000 free houses to the poor without making a demonstrable improvement in the overall number of informal dwellers lacking basic services.

"This hasn't really touched our housing backlog or the informal settlements due to the rapid pace of urbanization," said Human Settlements Officer Sarah Watson.

As a result, eThekweni adopted a more cost-effective upgrading programme with a focus on providing basic infrastructure like water, sanitation, and electricity rather than investing all of the departmental budget in housing units. In turn, residents are encouraged to build their houses incrementally and benefit from their newfound access to public services.



"With this initiative, we are changing the model of service delivery from one which offers a Rolls Royce of development to only a few people to a model which aims to address a range of health, safety, and living condition challenges, but that will reach far more people within the same budget," Watson said. She estimates that for the cost of one house for a poor family, the department can provide the suite of public services to 10-15 families.

"Our project aims to integrate the rural and informal settlements areas into the urban form of the city and extend those basic services in a way that is appropriate and affordable for citizens of the city," Watson said.

Thus far, eThekweni has built 1,500 ablution blocks with toilets, showers, and handwashing stations; provided electricity to 102,000 informal dwellings; and installed over 80,000 urine diversion toilets in rural households.

Such a change in priorities is a major innovation for cities tackling the challenge of informal settlements and one that runs counter to a traditional belief that government is responsible for housing informal dwellers. Instead, eThekweni has acknowledged that they cannot provide housing for all, but they can provide basic services to most.

"One of the challenges has been going beyond the mandate of the Human Settlements Department," Watson said. "Traditionally we are providers of free housing for the poor."

eThekweni's programme contributes to SDG3 by improving the health outcomes of informal dwellers, SDG6 by better managing municipal sanitation, SDG7 by increasing access to electricity, and SDG11 by upgrading human settlements.



“Such a change in priorities is a major innovation for cities tackling the challenge of informal settlements and one that runs counter to a traditional belief that government is responsible for housing informal dwellers. Instead, eThekweni has acknowledged that they cannot provide housing for all, but they can provide basic services to most.”

Sarah Watson , Human Settlements Officer



KAZAN RUSSIA

population
1,200,000



SHORTLISTED FOR THE GUANGZHOU AWARD

KAZAN RUSSIA

INNOVATIVE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY OF KAZAN

Orthodox Christians and Muslim Tatars have lived side by side in Kazan, Russia's third capital, for centuries. As the city grows its international profile with the hosting of several recent mega-sporting events, Kazan has harnessed those opportunities to invest in the city's social, recreational, and environmental infrastructure to improve quality of life through a suite of formal and informal public policies with the goal of maintaining its diverse identity while opening itself to the world.

Kazan celebrated its 500th anniversary in 2005 and entered the world stage soon after when it hosted the XXVII World Summer Universiade in 2013. That event brought in \$3 million in investment and generated 23,000 jobs. Kazan seized on the cumulative potential of sporting events by reinvesting revenue from the first event to enhance its sporting infrastructure and land larger events.

"The early events were very helpful to compete for other events," said Ruslan Galiakhmetov, who heads the city's Investment and Innovation Unit.

In quick succession, Kazan hosted the FINA World Aquatic Championships in 2015, FIFA Confederations Cup in 2017, and FIFA World Cup in 2018. Although a FIFA-standard stadium was required for the football events, the city placed competition-regulation swimming pools inside the Universiade's football stadium in a bid to adaptively reuse infrastructure.

Mayor Ilсур Metshin hopes to use the city's sporting reputation to increase citizen participation in sports from the current 40 percent to more than 50 percent by 2030. Thanks to the sporting events it hosted, Kazan built 20 new sports facilities over the last decade for a total of 2,100 sport and recreational facilities citywide, from small playgrounds to high-caliber football pitches.

Kazan was careful to not spend these funds exclusively on sporting infrastructure. By leveraging state and federal money allocated for these international sporting events, Kazan built or renovated eight parks and public gardens. Those improvements catapulted the city from 45th to 7th place in Russia's environmentally-friendly city rankings.

"With sporting events, you can attract funding that can be used for improving infrastructure, roads, and parks, as well as doing green development in the city," Galiakhmetov said.

Finally, Kazan was cognizant that becoming a world-class city might dilute some of its multiculturalism. To that end, the city rebuilt the local House of Friendship where ethnic and religious groups can share their customs, traditions, and culture. "The goal is to preserve this diversity and heritage," he said.

Other city programs to encourage cross-cultural contact include summer schools for students to learn the language of other ethnic groups and a web portal with information about the city's diverse population. There is also an unofficial city policy to maintain parity in funding for religious buildings so that mosques and churches receive roughly equal public support for building maintenance and construction.

"With all these globalization processes the goal was to try to preserve unique ethnic traditions and try to keep this heritage so that people will also know their culture, tradition, and languages," Galiakhmetov said.

In an era when cities are becoming increasingly homogenous especially in the face of international events, Kazan's efforts to maintain its unique culture is noteworthy.

The city now aspires to host the Summer Olympics.

Kazan's toolkit touches on SDG3 by encouraging healthy living through sport, SDG11 by making the city more sustainable through parks, and SDG16 by encouraging ethnic harmony in a diverse population setting.



“With sporting events, you can attract funding that can be used for improving infrastructure, roads, and parks, as well as doing green development in the city.”



“With all these globalization processes, the goal was to try to preserve unique ethnic traditions and try to keep this heritage so that people will also know their culture, tradition, and languages”.

Ruslan Galiakhmetov
Investment and Innovation Unit
Municipality of Kazan



Source: Municipality of Kazan



YIWU CHINA

population
2,200,000



SHORTLISTED FOR THE GUANGZHOU AWARD

YIWU CHINA

INNOVATING FOREIGN SERVICE INITIATIVES TO BUILD A HARMONIOUS AND INTEGRATED YIWU

As a wholesale consumer goods and e-commerce hub, Yiwu has seen an influx of foreign business-people, which it hopes to integrate into the city by offering foreign resident ID cards, setting up an international trade dispute center, and organizing community centers where foreigners and locals can experience each other's culture.

In an era of increasing xenophobia, Yiwu has taken the opposite tack and welcomes foreign immigrants with open arms. The commercial hub - the world's largest wholesale market of consumer goods with exports to over 200 countries - receives 500,000 foreign business people annually with 13,000 residing in Yiwu.

In 2016, the city initiated a suite of services to ease the transition of business people navigating life in a foreign city. Yiwu started China's first-ever foreign business mediation center, where foreign nationals can resolve disputes between their fellow citizens. Yiwu took this approach under the theory that nationals of one country are most familiar with their country's customs and mores. Thus, while local judicial officials will step in if there is any serious violation of the law, the mediation clinic attempts to resolve basic disputes internally without escalating matters.

Second, Yiwu has pursued a "one-stop shop" model for both international trade inspections and foreigners' access to government services. Those services, such as education for children and healthcare, are easily accessed. Although national citizenship is often the determining criterion for eligibility to receive services, Yiwu issues a foreign merchant ID card that gives foreign residents equivalent services to Chinese nationals living in Yiwu.

"We want to make them feel like normal citizens," said Vice Mayor Duo Jia.



Finally, Yiwu hopes to promote a more integrated relationship between its expatriate community and local residents. Locals teach Chinese to foreigners in free regular classes. Community centers also provide opportunities for Chinese and foreign families to share in each other's religious, cultural, and culinary traditions.

"In one word we have tried to let the foreign friends come to our city and stay in our city easily and they can have a good comfortable life in our city," Jia said.

Yiwu's efforts support SDG10 by reducing inequality between foreign and local residents and SDG16 by promoting positive international relations in a globalizing city.

"Although national citizenship is often the determining criterion for eligibility to receive services, Yiwu issues a foreign merchant ID card that gives foreign residents equivalent services to Chinese nationals living in Yiwu."

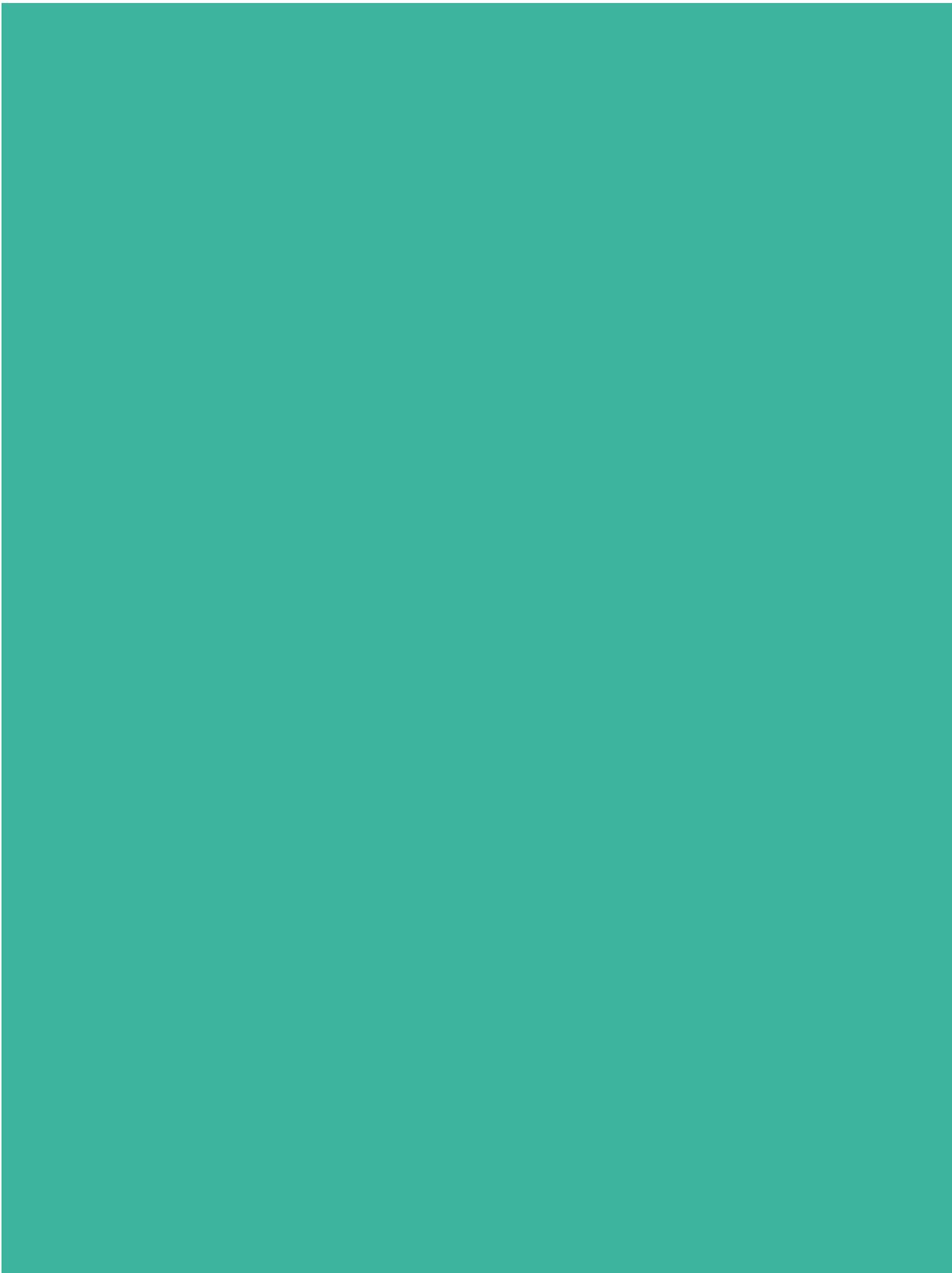
Vice Mayor Duo Jia



Yiwu Municipal People's Government



Source: Yiwu Municipal People's Government



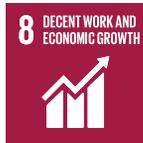
OTHER CITIES

Guangzhou Award winners



MEZITLI TURKEY

population
247,000



GUANGZHOU AWARD WINNER

MEZITLI TURKEY

MEZITLI WOMEN PRODUCERS MARKET

Bringing women into the workforce can be challenging in countries with socially conservative traditions. Turkey is no stranger to that set of attitudes, but one city on the Mediterranean has shown exceptional political leadership to buck those trends.

Mezitli, a coastal city of nearly 250,000 with some 60,000 registered Syrians, established a network of public markets specifically for women producers who grow agricultural products or make homemade goods from in and around the metropolitan area.

“In Turkey, you will be a woman, but first you have to be a mom, a wife, a daughter, a sister,” said Hürrem Betül Levent Erdal, a city planner in the municipal government.

“No one is waiting for you to do your own business or to work for an organization,” she said.

Mayor Neset Turhan holds weekly office hours for residents to share their views. Women residents expressed their dissatisfaction with the lack of jobs for women and concerns about domestic violence. On a site visit to rural parts of greater Mezitli, Mayor Turhan noticed the preponderance of gardens maintained by women. He responded by opening the first women producers market in August 2014. The network has grown to include 9 markets serving 612 women producers. Their wares range from produce like citrus and tomatoes to homemade goods like jams and spices.

Women pay neither fees for their market stalls nor taxes on their sales provided they grow or make their goods in Mezitli. Such preferential treatment has rankled male market sellers. “Men did not want the markets to open,” said Erdal. For Mayor Turhan to rectify gender discrimination by giving women preferential treatment was a politically risky move and one that demonstrated civic leadership.



The programme has helped spark entrepreneurship among local women and also served as a teaching opportunity. The city offers business classes and training sessions as well as incentives to switch from plastic to glass or paper. As a result, this women’s empowerment programme also includes elements of economic development and environmental sustainability - an admirable combination of achievements for a single policy.

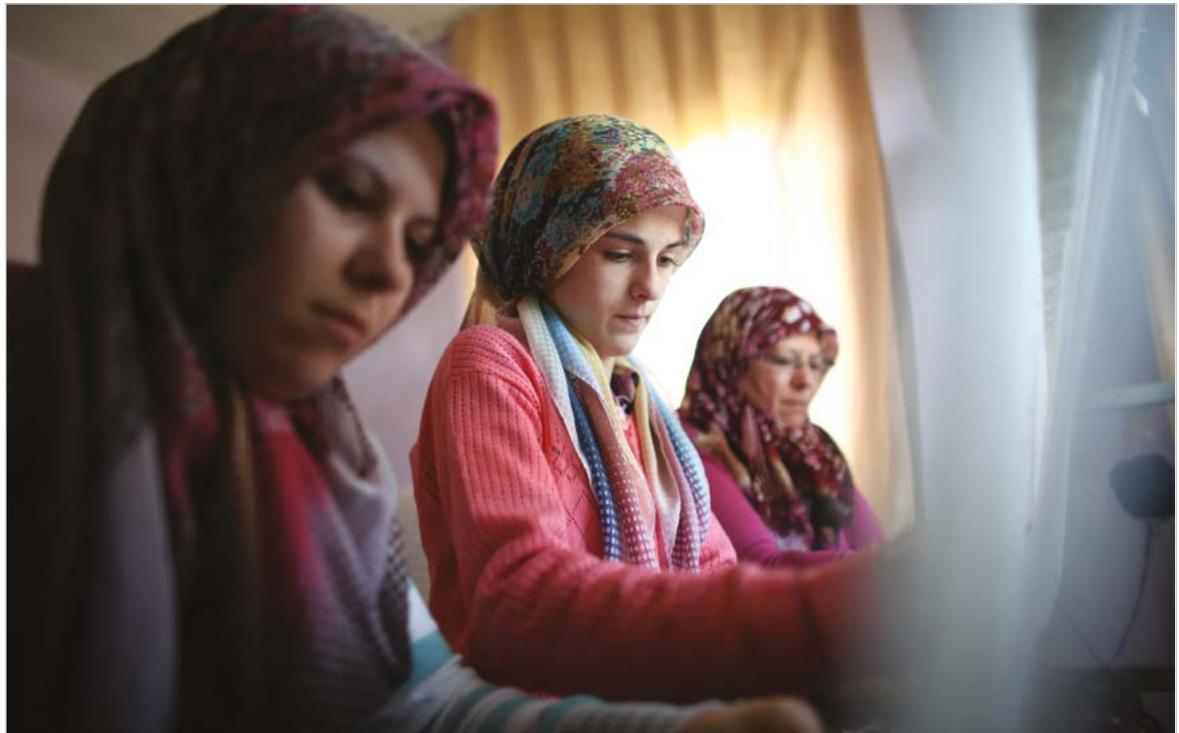
“We solved those problems with these women producers markets,” Erdal said.

Mezitli’s women producers markets support SDG5 by giving women business opportunities, SDG8 by creating jobs, and SDG11 by encouraging rural-urban linkages through agriculture.

“For Mayor Turhan to rectify gender discrimination by giving women preferential treatment was a politically risky move and one that demonstrated civic leadership.”

Betül Levent Erdal
City planner
Mezitli Municipal Government

As a result, this women's empowerment programme also includes elements of economic development and environmental sustainability - an admirable combination of achievements for a single policy.



Source: Municipality of Mezitli

MILAN ITALY

population
1,300,000



GUANGZHOU AWARD WINNER

MILAN ITALY

MILAN FOOD POLICY: AN INNOVATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR MAKING URBAN FOOD SYSTEM MORE SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE

As the host of the food-focused World Expo 2015, Milan created a post-expo legacy by adopting a comprehensive urban food policy to increase local food consumption, promote healthy eating, and reduce waste - while encouraging cities around the world to do the same.

Milan hosted the World Expo in 2015 with the theme "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life." That spotlight made Milan the centre of a global debate about food systems and prompted the city to establish a legacy from the event. The expo's CEO, Giuseppe Sala, became mayor in 2016 and enacted the Milan Food Policy with a corresponding city office. The food policy forces municipal agencies to think about the regional foodshed - the geographic radius from where Milan feeds its people - and discuss policy approaches that can encourage a more sustainable food system in the face of global climate change.

The scope of this policy approach is vast, covering five priorities and aiming for 48 interconnected actions. It encompasses food production in the rural areas around Milan, which are home to 3,000 farmers, asking if agricultural practices are environmentally friendly. The policy considers how food gets from producers to market and whether it is possible to reduce emissions in transport. Additionally, the food policy office looks at the habits of the urban consumer, right down to the proper disposal of packaging.

"We established a public consultation with different stakeholders and shareholders like universities, private sector, other local institutions and we created five priorities for our food policy: healthy diets, sustainability of food production, food education and raising awareness, food losses and waste management, and promotion of scientific research at the local level about food systems," said Food Policy Coordinator Andrea Magarini.

The food policy office has already taken concrete steps. For example, the city now rebates restaurants' food waste tax by 20 percent if they donate excess to charity. It has also succeeded in increasing the amount of local food served in the 85,000 meals that go out daily at the city's school canteens, where the kitchens now adhere to World Health Organization guidelines about the amount of added salts for children.

"We cut the added salts for the kindergarten and we want to move this program from each year to the primary school to change the food habits of children," Magarini said.

While the policy framework is in place, the food office works to expand beyond city hall. "The big challenge is to co-create different solutions with the city," Magarini said. "We have tried to create a metropolitan food council to engage all the stakeholders of the city to have a common effort and a common goal." Among those goals, the city aims to meet the Sustainable Development Goals target of halving food waste by 2030.

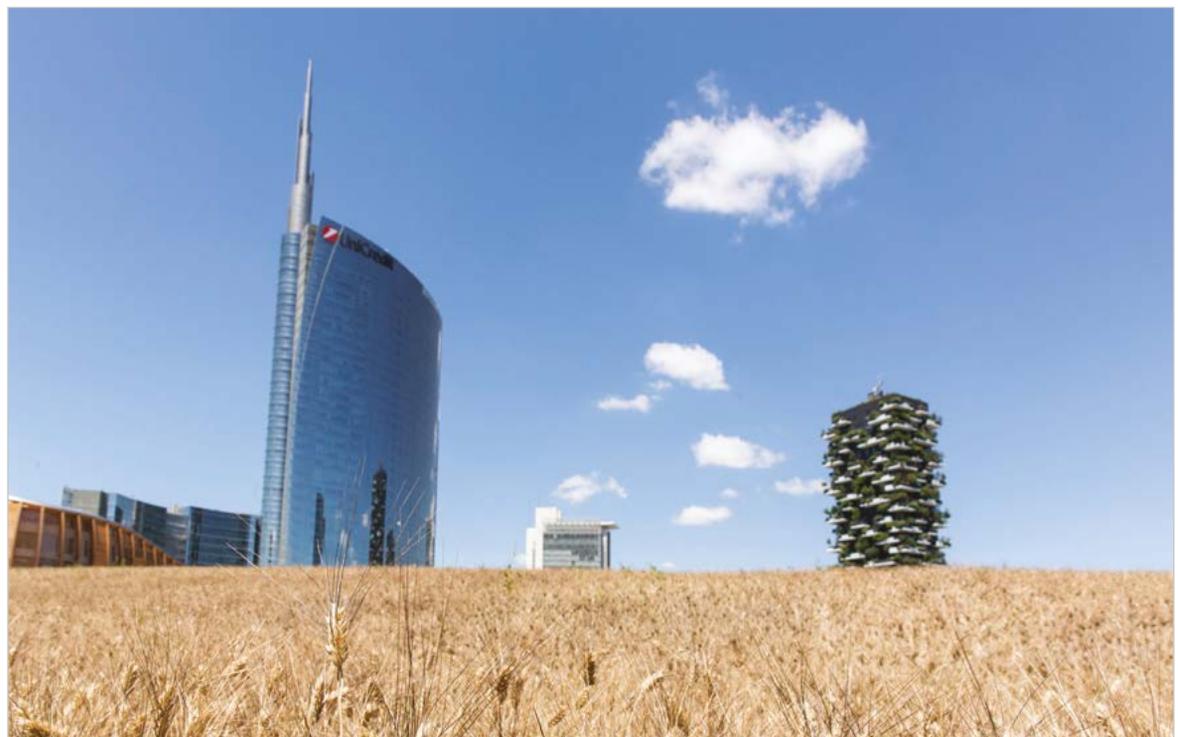
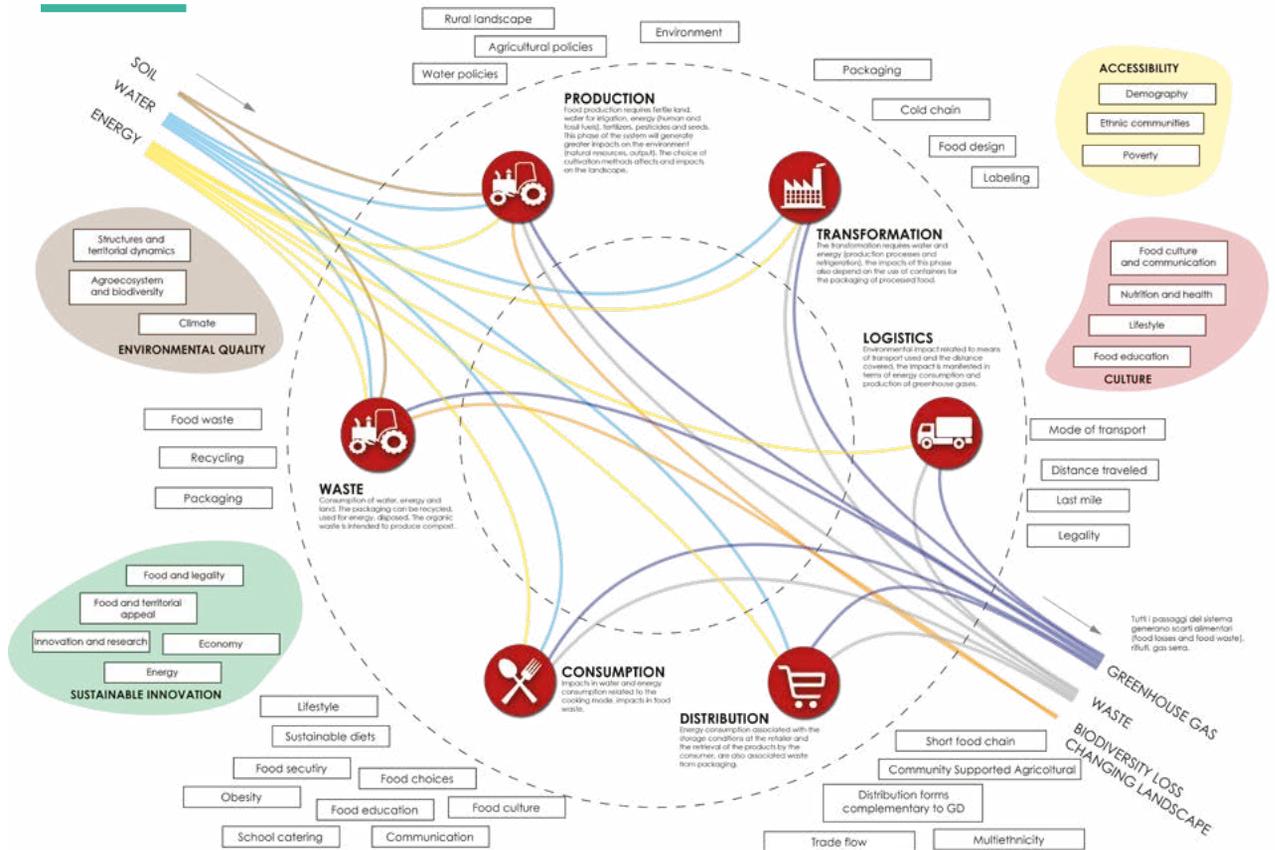
"We created this metropolitan food council to involve metropolitan stakeholders because we know that the future is to work at the metropolitan area," Magarini said.

Milan has also promoted food policy best practices in other cities by hosting the Milan Food Policy Pact, a voluntary agreement whereby cities commit to developing sustainable food systems. 180 cities around the world have signed the pact, which has hosted a members-only award annually since 2016.

Milan's urban food policy contributes to SDG2 by improving food security, SDG11 by making Milan more sustainable and resilient, and SDG12 by encouraging local food consumption and production.

“The big challenge is to co-create different solutions with the city. We have tried to create a metropolitan food council to engage all the stakeholders of the city to have a common effort and a common goal.”

Andrea Magarini
Food Policy Coordinator



Source: Milan City Council



NEW YORK CITY USA

population
8,600,000



GUANGZHOU AWARD WINNER

NEW YORK CITY USA

GLOBAL VISION - URBAN ACTION: NEW YORK CITY'S VOLUNTARY LOCAL REVIEW (VLR) OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) SHOWS LOCAL PROGRESS FOR GLOBAL ACTION

United Nations member states submit "voluntary national reviews" to chart their progress toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals, but there is no equivalent expectation of cities - until New York City created its own "voluntary local review" in an effort to spur local action on the Global Goals.

When all 193 UN member states agreed to the 15-year vision of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015, they also set up a voluntary method to keep track of global progress toward the ambitious agenda that seeks to eradicate poverty, end hunger, and improve health standards. Under the SDG framework, countries convene annually at UN Headquarters for an event called the "High-Level Political Forum" where each year a group of nations voluntarily reports on its progress with a special emphasis on a select number of goals.

This national focus leaves out the role of cities, who as home to the majority of the world's population and the lion's share of global GDP are essential to any national effort to deliver on the SDGs. In some countries, moreover, national governments neither disaggregate data to the local level and nor adequately incorporate local initiatives into their national reporting.

New York City, home to the world's largest diplomatic corps at UN Headquarters, decided to lead on this issue by drafting and submitting the first "voluntary local review" (VLR) in the dual hope of spurring more countries to accommodate cities and encourage more cities to report directly on their progress toward the SDGs.

The report is called "Global Vision | Urban Action" and consists of an adaptation of New York's existing sustainability plan, OneNYC, to the 17 SDGs.

"Our office, recognizing the links between our local strategy and the Global Goals, established [the voluntary local review] to highlight those links so we could both share what was working for us but also learn from other cities and countries in areas where we could do a little bit better," said Alexandra Hiniker, strategic relationships manager for New York City's Office of International Affairs.

Hiniker emphasizes that what New York City started is easy for other cities to follow, but they must do so working with their own existing plans, strategies, and metrics. She also recommended convening a multistakeholder body like universities or businesses in order to encourage buy-in from outside city government. Finally, the most important step is to make the effort of formally submitting the VLR to the United Nations.

"We had the information there - what we needed to do was reformat it into the framework of the SDGs," she said. "It wasn't that we created any new statistics or data, it was just translating what we were already doing into this global framework."

"There is no national standard, let alone city standard, for reporting from the UN - so we had to decide what we thought would work best in terms of what we put into our VLR," Hiniker said. "That's why we think it's so important to work with other cities to collectively discuss and agree on what are the key points to share with each other so that we can better understand how to improve our own processes."

New York City's local voluntarily review supports the implementation of SDG11 by emphasizing the city's sustainability plan and SDG17 by encouraging overall action toward the SDGs writ large.



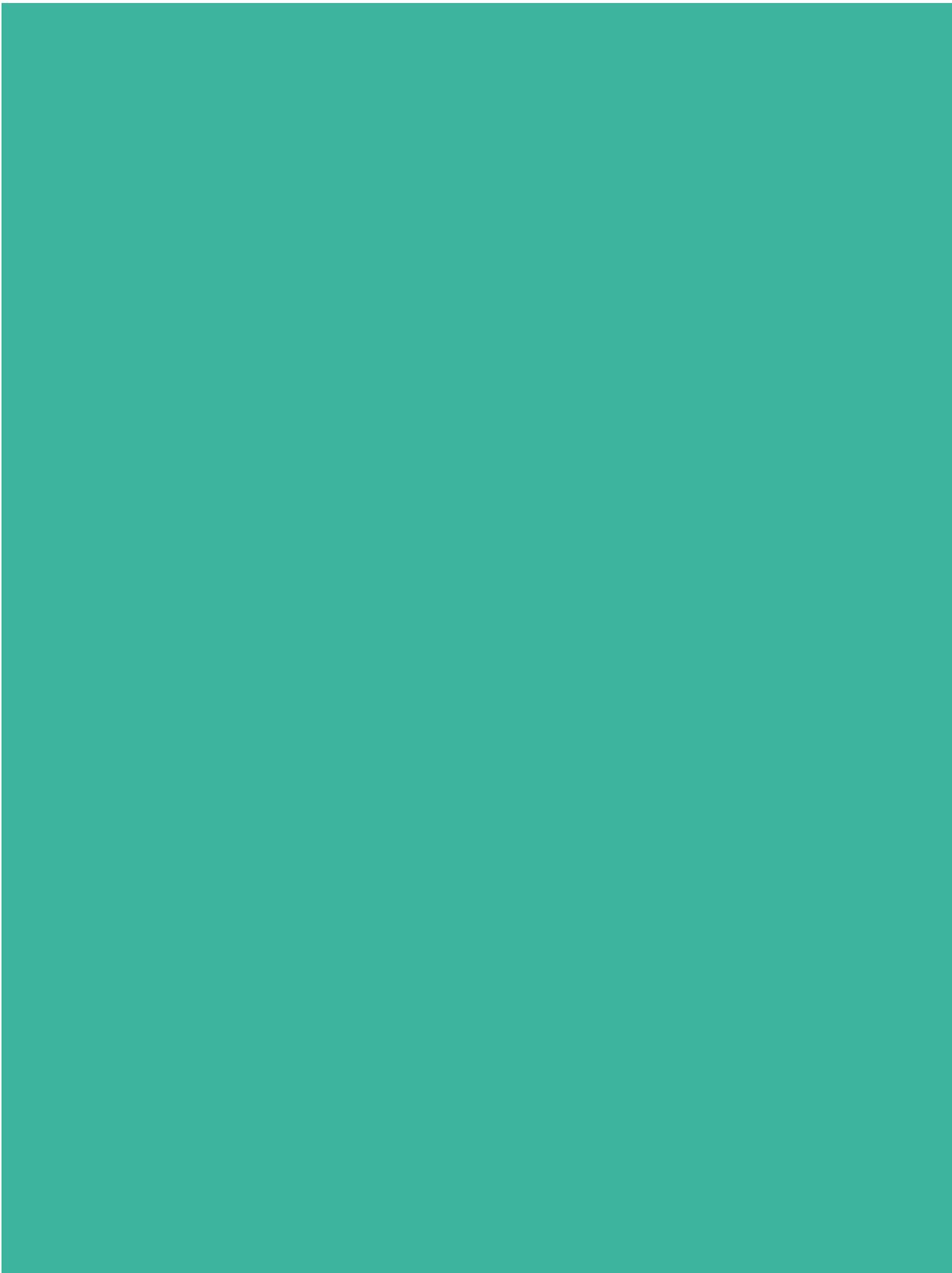
City of New York



Source: City of New York

“Our office, recognizing the links between our local strategy and the Global Goals, established [the voluntary local review] to highlight those links so we could both share what was working for us but also learn from other cities and countries in areas where we could do a little bit better.”

Alexandra Hiniker
Strategic relationships manager
New York City's Office of International Affairs



OTHER CITIES

shortlisted for the
Guangzhou Award



REPENTIGNY CANADA

population
85,000



SHORTLISTED FOR THE GUANGZHOU AWARD

REPENTIGNY CANADA

A CITY FOR ALL

Once a sleepy suburb of Montréal, Repentigny is now increasingly popular with newcomers less familiar with the city's public services. Through a youth-oriented library, personalized public information hotline, and an easy-to-use digital map, city hall is making it easier for residents to access basic services.

Repentigny is a bedroom community of Montréal located 30 km to the north of the CBD. In the last 30 years, its population has doubled and the small city now finds itself home to 10,000 adolescents and 10,000 people of different ethnic, cultural, and national heritage in a place that historically has been home to a predominantly French-Canadian community.

"The city grew very fast," said Mayor Chantal Deschamps. "We are facing a new reality: diversity."

Seeking to embrace rather than reject this new challenge, the city government pursued three concrete initiatives under the broader rubric of a "City for All" approach.

First, the city sought to engage youth ages 12-25 after discovering that library usage drops precipitously once children enter adolescence. To that end, [the city formed a focus group followed by a youth advisory committee that led to the co-creation of a new media and technology focused wing of the town library called the Créalab](#). Youth can use the multimedia lab to learn and produce photography and video, as well as work on traditional school projects. Teachers often refer students to the lab who are struggling in the classroom and the programme has found considerable success in aiding the social integration of foreign students.

"This opportunity has been a turning point for many," said Mayor Chantal Deschamps.

Second, Repentigny built on an existing regional telephone helpline to offer a supplementary service exclusively for local residents in vulnerable situations, such as older persons, women facing domestic violence, and single parents.

[The 211 operators refer Repentigny residents to the local service, called the Information and Social Crossroads, where they can receive one-on-one information from a person familiar with Repentigny's social services.](#) There is also a physical office where the caller can meet with a caseworker in person. From June to December 2017, the service helped 122 individuals, mostly with housing, food, and household goods.

Third, the city streamlined how residents can find available municipal services with an online map made in partnership with GIS firm ESRI Canada. The web-based portal, My Municipal Services, allows any resident to enter their address and view an easy-to-read list of relevant information: waste collection dates, electoral district, police precinct, nearest public transport stop, winter parking regulations, and closest wi-fi access point. The average visitor spends 2.5-3 minutes on the site, which receives 2,000 hits monthly.

Repentigny's investments are easily replicable by other municipalities. Its pioneering civic map, for example, has already been copied by other cities in greater Montréal.

"It's very useful for new residents, especially those who aren't from the region, because it immediately makes them members of the community," Deschamps said.

Repentigny's City for All suite of services contributes to SDG4 by enhancing educational opportunities, SDG5 by offering public service geared toward women, and SDG11 by making the city a more sustainable place for new residents to live.

“Repentigny’s investments are easily replicable by other municipalities. Its pioneering civic map, for example, has already been copied by other cities in greater Montréal.”

Chantal Deschamps, Mayor



Source: Ville de Repentigny



SALVADOR BRAZIL

population
2,900,000



SHORTLISTED FOR THE GUANGZHOU AWARD

SALVADOR BRAZIL

ENVIRONMENTAL RECOVERY PROGRAM OF THE CANABRAVA PARK - CARAVANA DA MATA ATLÂNTICA

Coastal Brazil was once carpeted with a biome known as the Atlantic Rainforest, but today the biodiversity hotspot has diminished to just 7 percent of its extent before Portuguese colonization. Salvador, the capital of the northeastern state of Bahia, is no exception. Although Charles Darwin wrote about Salvador's Atlantic Rainforest in his diaries during his fateful voyage to South America, today the city's forest cover has been severely reduced.

"We have a problem in Brazil in that we planted a lot of invasive species," said Salvador's Secretary of Sustainable Cities and Innovation, André Fraga.

As a result, residents have become disconnected from their native biome and are more likely to want nuisance trees removed than to plant more of them. After reviewing records from the city's info hotline, Fraga said, "We had 15,000 requests to trim or remove trees and not a single request to plant new trees."

That discovery prompted Salvador to enact a policy to grow the urban tree canopy with native species. However, the Sustainable Cities and Innovation Secretariat lacked an adequate budget and staff to conduct its own major tree planting campaign. "Our challenge is how to green a Latin American city that grew rapidly without adequate planning," Fraga said.

Instead, the city relied on citizens themselves to plant and care for native seedlings, distributing them throughout the city in vans branded with the green logo of the programme, "Caravana Mata Atlântica." Turning a city greening programme into a civic engagement and volunteerism project simultaneously boosted residents' connection with city hall and solved the department's financial and staffing challenge.



Nevertheless, social conditions in Salvador, a city sharply divided between rich and poor, were difficult for the newly planted trees. Vandalism and theft were common. Once local businesses and civic groups began adopting parks and green spaces where the new trees were planted, however, the plant replacement index dropped from 40 percent to 5 percent.

Finally, the city capitalized on the success of the Caravana Mata Atlântica to engage in a much needed restoration of the Nossa Senhora da Vitória Socio-Environmental Park. A former landfill turned to a park in the 2000s with funding from Canada, the site was a model biogas facility that was in need of restoration.

Salvador's urban greening helps Brazil implement SDG11 by making the city more sustainable, SDG13 by planting carbon sequestering trees, and SDG15 by increasing forest ecosystems.

Turning a city greening programme into a civic engagement and volunteerism project simultaneously boosted residents' connection with city hall and solved the department's financial and staffing challenge.

“We had 15,000 requests to trim or remove trees and not a single request to plant new trees.”

André Farga
Secretary of Sustainable Cities and Innovation



Source: Município de Salvador



SANTA ANA COSTA RICA

population
57,000



SHORTLISTED FOR THE GUANGZHOU AWARD

SANTA ANA COSTA RICA

SANTA ANA EN CLETA: ACTIVE MOBILITY AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

The bicycle has become an increasingly popular tool for urban mobility in cities worldwide that see reliance on automobiles as dangerous, inefficient, and polluting. Faster than walking and with no carbon emissions, bikes often prove ideal for journeys greater than one kilometer but less than 10 km. But biking in the city comes with its own set of challenges, from cultural biases to infrastructure investments. Santa Ana, a suburb of Costa Rican capital San José, embraced the bicycle as a tool for women's empowerment with its programme Santa Ana en Cleta.

City leaders saw the prosperous suburb, which ranked first place in Costa Rica's Human Development Index in 2017, increasingly clogged with cars and resolved to change the city's mobility paradigm. At the same time, they hoped to subvert traditional Latin American machismo attitudes that view the woman's place as in the home. Encouraging women's empowerment through an urban mobility policy is an innovative combination of two disparate social objectives, both of which align with separate areas of the Sustainable Development Goals. Such combinations are "transversal" in that they touch multiple SDGs at the same time, and consequently are an exceptionally efficient deployment of public resources.

Santa Ana en Cleta is a partnership of the mayor's office and city council with three local groups: the women's commission, accessibility commission, and the sports and recreation committee. The programme offers free lessons for women to learn how to ride a bike for the first time or relearn if they have not ridden since they were children. Most of the participants were women over 50 years in age.

"Costa Rica is still a very conservative country. Inviting women and teaching them to ride bikes has a cost," said City Councilor Norma Solis Gómez, who is also a member of the women's

commission. "It takes a while, but eventually they believe in themselves and respond to our programme."

The new riders are now demanding better bike infrastructure in Santa Ana, such as bike lanes that will allow them to travel to their places of business as well as for recreational purposes. Such a grassroots effort is an unintended but welcome byproduct of Santa Ana en Cleta.

"We are going out on our bikes and reclaiming public space," Gómez said.

Santa Ana en Cleta delivers on SDG5 by empowering women and SDG11 by encouraging sustainable mobility in the city.

"The new riders are now demanding better bike infrastructure in Santa Ana, such as bike lanes that will allow them to travel to their places of business as well as for recreational purposes. Such a grassroots effort is an unintended but welcome byproduct of Santa Ana en Cleta."

"We are going out on our bikes and reclaiming public space."

Norma Solis Gómez
City Councilor



Source: Municipalidad de Santa Ana



SANTA FE ARGENTINA

population
417,000



SHORTLISTED FOR THE GUANGZHOU AWARD

SANTA FE ARGENTINA

WESTERN URBAN NATURAL RESERVE: EMBRACING THE HYDROCLIMATIC RISKS

Santa Fe is among Argentina's oldest cities, but it sits in the floodplain of the Salado and Paraná Rivers. As the city has expanded outward in recent years due to rapid urbanization and the growth of informal settlements, periodic flooding has destroyed homes and cost lives. Particularly devastating floods in 2003 and 2007 prompted a serious municipal response through the adoption of disaster risk reduction policies.

In line with those policies, the municipality decided in 2015 to turn two reservoirs totaling 142 hectares into urban nature reserves. In order to accomplish this goal, families living next to the reservoirs had to be relocated and resettled in less risky areas. The city intended for this effort to accomplish multiple goals simultaneously: decrease flood risk, add more urban green space, support local ecosystems, and encourage socio-economic development for families living on the urban periphery.

Such large-scale efforts are expensive, but Santa Fe secured external financing from the French Facility for Global Environment (FFEM). Importantly, Santa Fe established a regulatory framework for the project before securing financing so that the infrastructure investment would occur under the appropriate legal constraints.

Over the last three years, Santa Fe has successfully moved the families to a safer location and provided job training. The reservoirs have become nature reserves with a nursery of native plants located on site.

The city is now in talks with Reims, France to share lessons learned from the Argentine experience.

"We believe that another city can incorporate the model we have developed with this initiative by thinking about how to rehabilitate vacant, degraded parts of a city not only for the use of all citizens who are the indirect beneficiaries, but also for the immediate neighbours who get the direct benefit of an improved quality of life," said Victoria Perales, director of the Santa Fe International Cooperation Agency.

Santa Fe's Western Urban Natural Reserve helps the city achieve SDG11 by making the metropolitan area more sustainable and SDG15 by improving resilience in the face of natural disasters.

"We believe that another city can incorporate the model we have developed with this initiative by thinking about how to rehabilitate vacant, degraded parts of a city not only for the use of all citizens who are the indirect beneficiaries, but also for the immediate neighbours who get the direct benefit of an improved quality of life."

Victoria Perales
Director of the Santa Fe International
Cooperation Agency



Source: Gobierno de la Ciudad de Santa Fe



SYDNEY AUSTRALIA

population
233,000



SHORTLISTED FOR THE GUANGZHOU AWARD

SYDNEY AUSTRALIA

GREEN SQUARE: FROM A RICH INDUSTRIAL PAST TO A VIBRANT, SUSTAINABLE AND CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Through the innovative financing tool of land value capture, Sydney is creating a new, sustainable urban neighbourhood for over 80,000 people to live and work on an old industrial parcel.

Australia's leading global city is facing a space crunch. With rising demand, especially from overseas residents who now represent over half the city's population, Sydney must think creatively about where and how to create new urban neighbourhoods to meet this demand. Green Square, Australia's largest urban redevelopment project, will transform a 278-hectare brownfield site that is 4 km equidistant from both the CBD and the airport into a mixed-use neighbourhood that will accommodate 61,000 residents and 21,000 workers by 2030.

The ambitious project launched in 1994 but stalled over land ownership issues, industrial cleanup needs, and a lack of funding. However, Green Square received a major boost in 2000 when Sydney built a rail line from the airport to the CBD for the Olympics and included a stop in the neighborhood. That accessibility to the rest of the city has led planners to brand the Green Square Town Centre as "Sydney's global village" that is "10 minutes from anywhere."

In 2006, the City of Sydney took the lead on the project, which had initially been spearheaded by the New South Wales state government, and came up with an innovative financing mechanism using value capture to pay for the infrastructure and rehabilitation of the brownfield site.

"One of the big challenges was the city couldn't do this very large renewal on its own. We had to partner with state government, federal government, and the private sector to deliver such a big undertaking," said Green Square Placemaking Manager Lila Contziu.

In total, the partnership has raised \$13 billion worth of total construction investment as of 2018 and consequently has been able to install infrastructure before residents and workers fully occupy Green Square. While it can be politically challenging to allocate resources to a part of the city without stakeholders like voting citizens and taxpaying businesses already present, that preemptive approach is cheaper and less logistically complicated than maneuvering around an already bustling neighbourhood.

"The key to success was to have a very strong vision and be committed to that vision," Contziu said. "Doing what it takes to realize that vision means significant funding commitments and delivering services and facilities in some cases before the population is there."

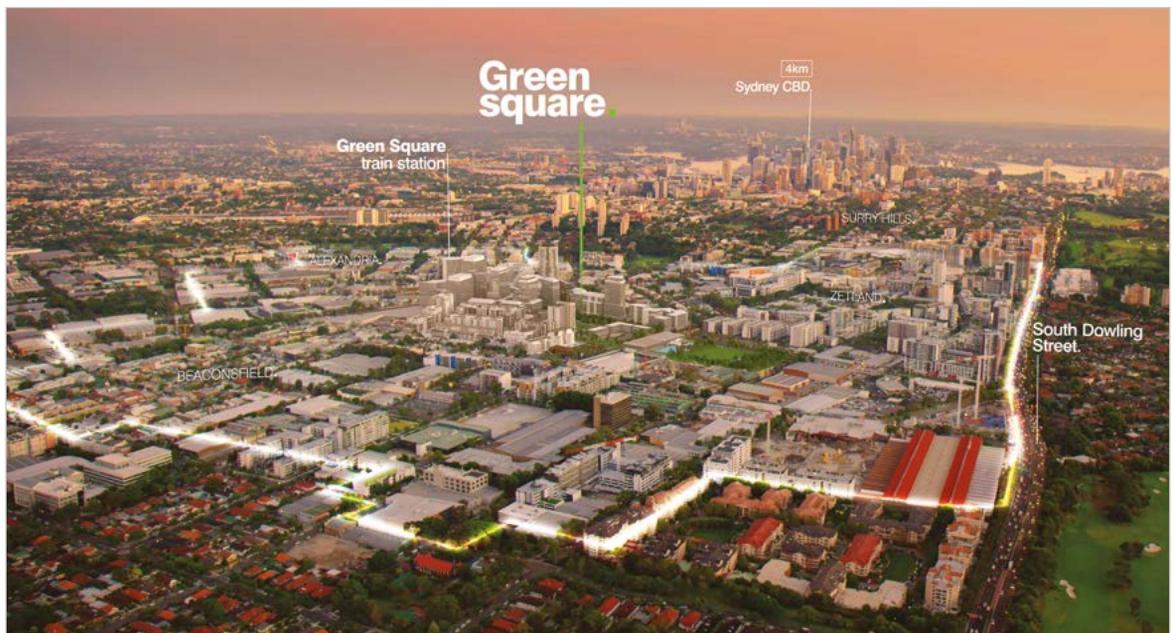
City leaders envision Green Square as a showpiece for the Sustainable Sydney 2030 plan. They believe the project demonstrates how the city can increase its population and job base, grow via high-density urban infill rather than suburban sprawl, and still maintain a low environmental footprint through energy efficient building design and high rates of public transport, cycling, and walking.

"An industrial area doesn't have much of a public domain, much permeability, but what we are trying to solve is to bring forth a new way of living in Australia," Contziu said.

Green Square contributes to SDG3 with its focus on a healthy living environment, SDG11 as a sustainable urban neighbourhood, and SDG13 by helping Sydney reduce per capita carbon emissions.

“One of the big challenges was the city couldn’t do this very large renewal on its own. We had to partner with state government, federal government, and the private sector to deliver such a big undertaking.”

Lila Contziu
Green Square Placemaking Manager



Source: City of Sydney



UTRECHT NETHERLANDS

population
345,000



SHORTLISTED FOR THE GUANGZHOU AWARD

UTRECHT NETHERLANDS

LOCALIZING THE SDGS THROUGH MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS

Utrecht takes its role as a “Global Goals City” seriously and has laid out a series of initiatives to promote awareness of the SDGs as well as apply the SDGs locally by measuring urban sustainability and encouraging healthier urban lifestyles.

While former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon once said that the battle for sustainable development will be won or lost in cities, few seem to be taking that mantra as seriously as Utrecht. The fourth-largest Dutch city has embraced the SDGs as both a guiding set of principles for municipal policy and an international brand it wishes to promote internally to its citizens.

Utrecht declared itself a “Global Goals City” shortly after the 17 SDGs were adopted by UN member states in 2015 and has taken several steps to turn that general affiliation into something more tangible. The city was drawn to the notion of embracing the SDGs because “healthy urban living” has been central to Utrecht’s identity as a model for a city with a vibrant economy and a healthy lifestyle. The city is young and home to many university students. It has the third highest cycling rate in Europe and is home to the continent’s largest bicycle parking garage. 12 Nobel laureates call Utrecht home.

“To really get to the level of healthy urban living for everyone we realized that we needed a more integrated partnership approach that also involves citizens, civil society organizations, businesses, and universities,” said Merel Limbeek of the city’s Department of International Affairs.

First and foremost, Utrecht has sought to create a customized local data dashboard that maps the SDG indicators onto the city. But an affluent, highly educated European city quickly found that many indicators do not apply to the city, such as the need to eliminate extreme hunger or poverty. In other cases, like water provision, a private utility company is in charge - not the city itself.

“We found some indicators not applicable to Utrecht so we are trying to find indicators that are relevant,” Limbeek said.

Eventually, the city hopes to invite citizens to participate in the dashboard and contribute their own information to complement official city data collection methods.

“We really want to inspire people to know about and take action on the SDGs - to take local action on something that is very globally oriented,” Limbeek said.

Other efforts are more externally focused on raising awareness about the SDGs among the populace. Key to this effort is a foundation for whom this component is their main mission, called Utrecht4GlobalGoals. For example, in October 2018, the foundation hosted a major climate change event outside the city’s main train station, drawing large crowds. The city also gives out a sustainable business prize, the U-award, to private sector participants in sustainability initiatives like a restaurant that hires and trains refugees.

“We can only reach the Global Goals if every city take these ideas into their planning and strategy,” Limbeek said. “Global ideas only work if something is happening on the local level.”

Utrecht’s initiative most strongly aligns with SDG3 on health as the city’s policy is “healthy urban living” and SDG11 for promoting urban sustainability.

“We can only reach the Global Goals if every city take these ideas into their planning and strategy(...) Global ideas only work if something is happening on the local level.”

Merel Limbeek
city’s Department of International Affairs

Utrecht: **Global Goals** City



Source: City of Utrecht

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